

2018 Press Pack



La Pedrera

A masterpiece of nature

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Casa Milà - La Pedrera

La Pedrera is the culmination of Antoni Gaudí's work, as it is the building in which he concentrated all his knowledge of form in its purest and most coherent state. It is a **total work of art**.

Gaudí's last work of civic architecture, La Pedrera represented a break with the conventions of his day due to its constructional and functional innovations, as well as its ornamental and decorative solutions.

La Pedrera encapsulates nature in brilliant style. In it, Gaudí combines aesthetics and function and was clearly inspired by the world of plants. The architect designed a totally undulating building with a beating heart like a living being. La Pedrera is, in short, a masterpiece of nature.

"Beauty is the radiance of Truth,
and as art is Beauty, without
Truth there can be no art."

Antoni Gaudí



Casa Milà (1906-1912) is a building designed by the architect Antoni Gaudí and commissioned by Pere Milà and Roser Segimon. Known as 'La Pedrera' (stone quarry) due to its rough outer appearance, reminiscent of an open quarry, it was the home of the Milà family. The couple occupied the main floor and rented out the other apartments.

"When the building simply has what it needs with the available resources, it has character, or it has dignity, which is the same thing."

Antoni Gaudí

Its uniqueness and its importance as heritage and art were amply accredited when it was included on the List of Artistic Heritage of the City of Barcelona in 1962, when it was declared a Monument of National Historical and Artistic Interest by the Spanish government in 1969, and when UNESCO declared it a World Heritage Site in 1984 due to its outstanding universal value.



The Architect, Antoni Gaudí

Antoni Gaudí i Cornet (1852-1926) is a world-famous architect who transcended his own era and the various architectural styles of his day.

Original in his thinking and methods, he was working at the height of Modernisme in Catalonia in the 20th century.

Unique and remarkable, Gaudí's work defies classification. Throughout his life, he was a close observer of nature, seeking rationality in its forms in order to extract from them their full potential and usefulness to construction.

Intuitive, reflective, tenacious and a perfectionist, he had an innovative spirit and built La Pedrera with a clear determination to recognise the forms of nature in it.

"My ideas are of an indisputable logic; the only thing that makes me doubt them is that they have not been put into practice before."

Antoni Gaudí



La Pedrera over the Years

When Antoni Gaudí was at the height of his professional career, having already achieved a style of his own and moved away from those of the past, he designed what was to be his last civic architectural project and one of his most innovative buildings, Casa Milà (1906-1912).

Over the years, the building has provided accommodation for distinguished guests, a couple of hotels, a consulate, a bingo hall, company offices, shops and even a prince and his retinue.

The assessment of Gaudí's oeuvre, including La Pedrera, has altered over the years: initially seen as controversial, it was later neglected but is now admired and regarded as one of the most important bodies of architectural work.

"I have that ability to feel, to see the space because I am the son of a boilermaker. The boilermaker is a man who makes a volume out of a surface; he sees the space before he begins to work."

Antoni Gaudí



Pere Milà i Camps (Barcelona, 1873-1940) and Rosario Segimon i Artells (Reus, 1871 – Barcelona, 1964) marry and purchase a house on Passeig de Gràcia. They commission the architect Antoni Gaudí, then aged 54, to build them a new property. The main floor is to be their home, while the remaining apartments are to be rented out.

1925



© Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation Archives



© Gaudí Chair Archives

1926

The plans for the project, signed by Antoni Gaudí, are submitted to Barcelona City Council and a building permit is requested.

Construction work on La Pedrera begins.

1906



© Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation Archives



© Dr. Comas Archive

1907

Barcelona City Council fines the owners because one of the pillars of the façade occupies part of the pavement on Passeig de Gràcia.

Barcelona City Council opens proceedings because the building is larger than the permitted volume. The owners are obliged to legalise it by paying a fine amounting to 100,000 pesetas or by demolishing the attic and rooftop.

1908



© Gaudi Chair. UPC.

1909

The Eixample Commission certifies that the building is a monument in nature and does not need to conform strictly to municipal bylaws.

The building permit is finally granted.

1910



© Barcelona City Council Archives

1911

Permission is granted by Barcelona City Council for the main floor to be occupied. The Milàs move in.



© Barcelona City Council Archives

Gaudí completes La Pedrera and hands the building over to the Milàs.

1912



© Roisin Collection/Catalan Institute of Photographic Studies



© City of Barcelona History Archives.
Bru-Net El Diluvio.

1912

The unusual structure of the building and the relationship between Gaudí and Milà are the subject of cartoons published in satirical magazines of the time.

Rosario Segimon, who has been a widow now for six years, sells the building to the Immobiliària Provença real estate company, but she continues to live on the main floor till her death in 1964 at the age of 93.

1946



© Goldner, Paris



Photograph: Xavier Miserachs

UNESCO lists La Pedrera as a World Heritage Site due to its outstanding universal value (ref. 320 bis).

1953

Immobiliària Provença commissions the architect Francisco Juan Barba Corsini to build 13 flats in the building's attic. He is also commissioned to turn the first floor on Carrer de Provença into four apartments, each one measuring 100 m².

1962

La Pedrera is included on the List of Artistic Heritage of the City of Barcelona. This is the first list drawn up by the Spanish government with a view to preserving the sites and monuments in the city (Category A/Cap.1.).

1984



1986

Caixa Catalunya purchases the building from Immobiliària Provença.

The rooftop of La Pedrera opens to visitors, having previously been inaccessible to the public. Restoration work begins – and continues for ten years – to turn Casa Milà into a cultural centre open to everyone.



La Pedrera contributes to the International Gaudí Year celebrations by mounting the exhibition *Gaudí. Art and Design*.



1987



© Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation Archives

1996

The restoration works on the entire building are completed.

La Pedrera is symbolically handed over to the city on 27 June with the slogan: "For Barcelona, we aren't giving a grain of sand but an entire Pedrera [quarry]."

1997

The Government of Catalonia awards the National Prize for Culture in the Cultural Heritage Category to the restoration of the attic and the rooftop of La Pedrera.

2002

2006

The newly refurbished Espai Gaudí (in the attic) opens as an interpretation centre on the life and work of Antoni Gaudí, with a special emphasis on La Pedrera.

2013

The Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation is constituted on 1 January to respond to a new social reality, and to do so with a new vision. La Pedrera has been the central offices of the Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation ever since. The revenue it raises goes to fund social, environmental, educational and cultural projects.

2014

The last complete restoration of the main façade of La Pedrera.



2018



La Pedrera adds new features to the visit to make it even more spellbinding and to emphasise the inspiration Gaudí drew from nature.

To learn more about the timeline of La Pedrera, visit lapedrera.com

La Pedrera Today

La Pedrera is currently the central offices of the Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation. At the same time, it continues to serve its original function as a block of rented residential apartments.

Today La Pedrera fulfils five different purposes:

- Tourism usage: the building is open to the public and can be visited by day and night.
- Cultural and social usage: it is a cultural centre that hosts exhibitions, conferences and other activities.
- Residential usage: there are still rented residential apartments.
- Administrative use: it is the headquarters of the Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation.
- Commercial usage: space hire, company offices and shops on the ground floor.

It is the only building in the world that fulfils these five different purposes, while retaining, despite the passage of time, its essence and singularity: the reason why it was built.

The same entrances and exits are used for all the building's functions. The top floors, with small lifts and staircases for going up and down, are the ones that receive the most visitors.

The foundation strives to ensure all the uses of the building are compatible with the large number of visitors, while maintaining an optimal standard of quality for tours and the conservation of a World Heritage Site of outstanding importance.

"Reflection and action need to alternate so they can complement and correct each other."

Antoni Gaudí



The tour of La Pedrera

Once inside La Pedrera, the impression is that the architect has allowed nature in its purest state to speak: columns that are palm tree trunks; plaster ceilings that are caves with white stalactites; and the wrought-iron that is the fossilisation of ancient plants.

«The great book, one that is always open and which you must strive to read, is that of Nature»,

Antoni Gaudí

The interior of the attic is the belly of a huge whale, and we can feel it breathing and the beating of its heart. The metal canopy over the staircase in the courtyard on Carrer de Provença up to the main floor is the vast wing of an insect taking a flight of colour. The rooftop is alive, and the stairwells actively represent the four elements of nature.



La Pedrera adds new features to the visit to make it even more spellbinding

This year, the Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation has introduced a series of changes to enhance visitors' experience of Casa Milà: new projections, sound effects, dynamic lighting and improvements to the graphics that make the tour of the building a fascinating experience that emphasises Gaudí's vision of nature. In short, this new visit brings La Pedrera to life.

Our immersion in Gaudí's natural imaginary begins on the ground floor, in the Carrer de Provença courtyard, where the staircase canopy is like a huge insect wing that moves, beats and sets off on a flight of colour.

In La Pedrera, the courtyards are spaces where everything comes to life. The walls are a display of shapes, light and colours, contrasting with the soberness of the façade.

The colour comes from the wall paintings that decorate the courtyards, with mainly floral motifs that can also be found on the ceilings and the side walls of the two entrance halls and the main staircase, and various scenes that make reference to myths and nature.



Everything in La Pedrera is inspired by nature. One of the most fascinating spots is **the attic**, which can be interpreted as the huge skeleton of an animal that has swallowed up the visitor.

The **Espai Gaudí**, in the attic, is a unique museum space that presents a broad view of the architect's work.

The **roof**, one of the most remarkable in the history of architecture, with its oneiric forms, is a compendium of natural outgrowths that may look more stone or plant-like depending on how you view them.

The roof is like a natural landscape. The stairwells, striking sculptural features that guard the staircases, are the expression of ancient nature. These figures represent the four elements of nature: earth, water, air and fire revealed to visitors through their astonishing structure and sounds.



The tour continues with the **Pedrera Apartment**, a recreation of the home and life of a bourgeois family in Barcelona in the first 30 years of the 20th century.

The **temporary exhibition rooms** are on the main floor of La Pedrera, the former home of the Milàs, and are open to visitors when an exhibition is being shown.

The tour ends in the **Passeig de Gràcia courtyard**, which, like the **Carrer de Provença courtyard**, is structured by columns and large windows. The courtyard façades are notable for applied-arts details such as the wrought-iron railings and the naturalist wall paintings.



Visitors to La Pedrera

Since it opened as a cultural centre in 1996, La Pedrera has been visited by more than 22 million people from around the world. In 2017, it received a total of 1,182,536 visitors, including people attending cultural activities.

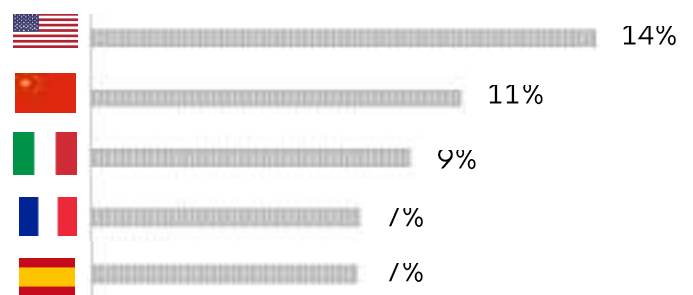
Visitor profiles

Over half (52%) of visitors to La Pedrera are aged between 24 and 44; the average age of visitors is 37.4. Most people who include La Pedrera in their route do so with a partner (34%) or as a family with children (20%). People visiting La Pedrera with friends account for 19% of the total, whereas those who visit on their own make up 12% of all visitors.

With regard to country of origin, Americans make up the largest proportion of all visitors, followed by the Chinese. Almost 40% of visitors are of European origin. Italians, the French and Spaniards were in the top five nationalities for visitors to La Pedrera in 2017.



TOP FIVE NATIONALITIES OF VISITORS TO LA PEDRERA IN 2017



La Pedrera: A Beacon for the Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation

La Pedrera is the central offices and the main amenity managed by the Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation, an independent private foundation that allocates all the revenue raised by its activities to social, environmental, educational and cultural initiatives. More than 400,000 people throughout Catalonia benefit from these projects every year.

The Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation was constituted on 1 January 2013 to respond to a new social reality, and to do so with a new vision. Its priorities include creating jobs for people with disabilities or at risk of social exclusion; helping the elderly to improve their quality of life; supporting children and teenagers to enable them to succeed at school; contributing to ensuring scientists have the best possible training; innovating in education to foster creativity and imagination; preserving natural sites of outstanding value to society; promoting good habits to ensure everyone eats a better diet; encouraging artists and young people to develop their creative talents; and sharing cultural heritage with society.

The foundation works in five main areas: social initiatives, culture, territory and the environment, knowledge and research into food.

However, the foundation's transformative action extends across the entire territory, not just La Pedrera, and the effects of its intensive efforts can be seen in cultural and environmental amenities such as Món Sant Benet, MónNatura Pirineus and MónNatura Delta de l'Ebre, as well as the espaiSocials and the natural sites it manages.



For further information, contact:

Press Catalunya La Pedrera Foundation

Tel. 93 214 25 39

premsa@fcatalunyalapedrera.com

www.fundaciocatalunya-lapedrera.com

www.lapedrera.com