

# A B I Z A R R E B U I L D I N G

In the heart of Barcelona's busy downtown, Gaudí's architectural masterpieces continue to fascinate visitors. The interior of the Casa Milá apartment building can now be admired from the street thanks to non-reflective "Amiran" glass made by Schott Desag.

**A**ntoni Gaudí (1852–1926) revolutionized Spanish architecture with a truly unique building style. His creations include arcades that resemble caverns and houses that remind passers-by of fantastic fairy tale palaces. Yet his best-known masterpiece is the gigantic church honoring the Holy Family, the "Sagrada Familia." Like a monumental sand castle, it rises majestically over the surrounding smaller buildings in downtown Barcelona. His unique style influenced and inspired a new genera-



*The room ceilings in the raised ground floor of the architectural masterpiece named "Casa Milá" can be clearly seen from the street under all kinds of lighting conditions and without any reflections.*

tion of artists, like the Austrian Friedensreich Hundertwasser decades later.

Gaudí's teacher was nature. Gentle swings, bizarre rock formations, delicate leaf structures and daring wavy patterns characterize his constructions, sculptures and furniture. Obsessed with detail, the architect sought in all his work the formative and harmonious elements that nature put at his disposal. Precisely because there are no two identical entities in the natural world, Gaudí's creations are an endless source of fascination and always original.

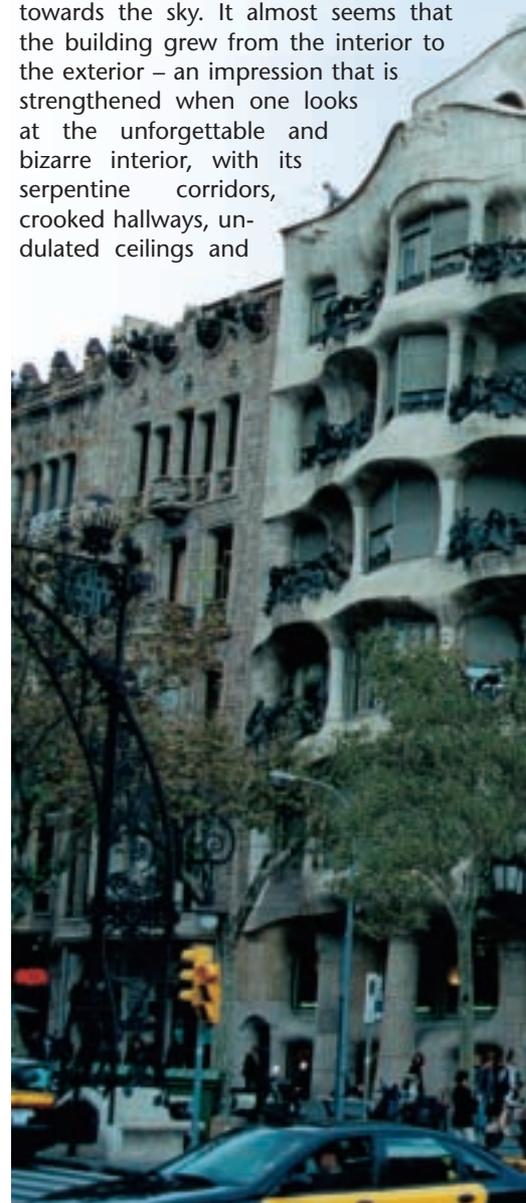
## Nature is the model

This fusion of architecture and nature can be best appreciated in the Parc Güell, a colorful combination that features a witches' cottage, a serpentine bench, water-spouting reptiles and a maze-like covered market. He built and designed all of this under the condition that not a single tree be felled during construction.

Yet the fascination that his works elicit today was not shared by many of his more conservative contemporaries. For example, he was not allowed to continue with the renovations he had planned for the cathedral of Palma de Mallorca because he was accused of not respecting the original style. While overseeing the construction of none other than his world-famous Casa Milá, the architect was often opposed by the municipal authorities for not following their specified dimensions.

Nowadays, most art critics and historians agree that the large apartment

house built between 1906 and 1910 is his best finished masterpiece. Giant, parabolic arches spring from the floor, only to continue in the façade as stony waves until they fuse majestically in the rooftops, where chimney structures twist into enormous fantastic shapes pointing towards the sky. It almost seems that the building grew from the interior to the exterior – an impression that is strengthened when one looks at the unforgettable and bizarre interior, with its serpentine corridors, crooked hallways, undulated ceilings and



bent rooms. The furniture accentuates the impression. Wardrobes made from kneaded wood are nestled against the wavy walls and even the chairs don't need right angles here.

### A clear view thanks to "Amiran"

The present owner of the building is the "Caixa de Catalunya" Savings and Loan Bank, whose foundation and social work offices are located in the ground floor.

Here, visitors can admire Gaudí's creations in miniature – the models are lit with fiber optics from Schott.

All the rooms on this floor, built with much imagination and attention to detail, have been fitted with glazed windows made of "Amiran" from Schott Desag. Contrary to ordinary float glass, which has a reflective value of 8% in the case of a single window pane and

15% with insulating glass, "Amiran" reflects only one to two percent of the light depending on the coating. Now it is even possible to admire the impressive shape of the ceilings from the street like never before thanks to the laminated safety glass designed by the Cricursa sales and marketing company. Visitors will no longer be blinded by the sun's reflection on the windows of "La Pedrera" as they try to catch a glimpse of the bizarre interior, rather only by Gaudí's unique artistic creations ■

*The Casa Milá, known in Barcelona as "La Pedrera" and now owned by a Spanish bank, was declared a World Heritage Site in 1984.*



**Casa Milá/La Pedrera**  
Passeig de Gràcia 92, Barcelona  
Mon to Sat, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Tours: Mon to Fri at 6 p.m.,  
Sat, Sun and holidays at 11 a.m.

For a virtual tour of the building go to:  
<http://www.caixacat.es/cc/home-a.html>