



Gran Teatre del Liceu

Barcelona Opera House

The **Gran Teatre del Liceu** stands in the central part of Barcelona's bustling Rambla, the emblematic promenade of the Old Quarter, which has retained its leading role and personality over the years.



Of the traditional building, the part of the central façade on La Rambla, the main vestibule with the staircases and the Hall of Mirrors were saved from the 1994 fire and are maintained just as they were. **The façade** has a relatively modest aspect compared with the interior. Inside, the broad, **large-columned vestibule** leads to the great marble staircase (1861) – dominated by a Modernista sculpture by Venanci Vallmitjana called Al·legoria de la Música (1901) – which gives on to the amphitheatre and the **Hall of Mirrors**. This room is the first Foyer or rest room in the theatre, restored in 1877 by architect Elies Rogent in the characteristic late-Isabeline style of the period

The faithful reproduction of the main **hall** and **the stage**, which had been completely destroyed by the fire, has allowed a number of changes and improvements. The main hall of the first building, explicitly inspired by Milan's Teatro alla Scala, is laid out as a horseshoe, with stalls and five levels. Seating capacity is 2,292, one of the largest opera houses in Europe.



The ornamentation of the hall also reproduces the 1909 decorative refurbishment, made with gilt and polychrome plaster moulds, which obeys the superposition of elements from different periods and tastes within the usual sumptuousness of nineteenth-century opera houses. The lamps are of brass, with their characteristic dragon shape and glass shades. The seats in the stalls are made of cast iron with red velvet.

Of the contemporary elements included in the final ornamentation, we should highlight the work of artist Perejaume, who decorated the eight oculums on the ceiling and the medallions on the proscenium arch, which recreates the Liceu's stalls as a natural landscape in which one can discern mountains, the sky and, in the shadows, some pictorial images of the old theatre. The curtain at the front of the stage is the work of fashion designer Antoni Miró, with a large, sober ripple of red velvet, crowned by a draped rope guard, also in velvet. The lamp, in the shape of part of a sphere in the centre of the ceiling, is a very useful technological platform.

The stage of the new Liceu is fitted with equipment of a large scope and complexity, which allows a great deal of agility in changing stage and, consequently, the alternation of titles in the programme.



The new Foyer, a rest and meeting area for the public, located under the main hall, is a multi-purpose area where the theatre's main bar-restaurant is found. It is also used as a room for small-format concerts and performances, information sessions prior to each opera performance, a social area for meetings, banquets and parties, and so on.

The route covered by the tours includes the visit to the **Cercle del Liceu**, the private club which shares the building with the Theatre and which is a stunning example of Catalan Modernism. It contains exceptional pictorial and decorative works of art and a collection of paintings by Ramon Casas.