

1 *Alaró and its geography*

The geography of a region intimately linked to the background of its people. In this case, it offers us the keys we need to understand the events that took place in the area: Alaró cannot be understood without first understanding its terrain.



The municipality of Alaró is situated on the southern foothills of the *Serra de Tramuntana* mountain range. The seemingly tranquil rise of the mountains is the result of a violent series of layers being forced and compressed upon even more layers of millions of tons of rock. The municipalities nestled along the southern base of this mountain range make up the county known as Raiguer.

The municipality of Alaró is characterized by



its distinct silhouette which is defined, in part, by the *Serra de Tramuntana*, but also by the

mountain valley that opens up towards the southeast and melds into a plain.

There are two distinct mountains that characterize the municipality *Puig d'Alaró* (Alaró Peak; 822m)—which is also known as *Castell d'Alaró* (Alaró Castle)—and *Puig de s'Alcadena* (s'Alcadena Peak; 815m). The position of these two land masses creates an optical illusion: it appears as if a mirror is reflecting the image of one or the other along a longitudinal knife's edge



which is where the *torrent de Solleric* flows. It is certainly one of the more notable images in the entire county.

The municipality itself covers 4,570 hectares and is bordered by Escorca, Mancor, Lloseta, Binissalem, Consell, Santa Maria, and Bunyola. The large number of neighboring municipalities is due in part to the elongated shape of Alaró, which extends from the mountains into the valley below, and also to the ancient breaking-up of the districts of Canarossa and Qanarúsha thanks to the land distribution that took place after the conquest led by James I.



ter and more arable lands to the south where the historic center of the town of Alaró is located—although part of the urban growth does cling to the skirts of the rugged mountainous terrain to the north.

Holm oak and pine

groves as well as scrublands still make up the forest fauna in the area, while cultivated lands are

dominated by almond orchards, and carob and olive groves.

The water

Towns and communities have always been set up around possible water supplies. The expansion of cities, or lack thereof, can be explained by looking at hydrography. The Ses Artigues and Sa Bastida springs have been known since ancient times, and many texts describe their location and even their flow rates. Water from these springs was once used for human consumption, for water-



The mountains define a large part of the municipality, but it is in the flat-



The witches of *s'Alcadena* and *el Castell*

These two very similar peaks (Alaró Castle and S'Alcadena Peak) are seemingly inaccessible due to the tall rocky cliff faces that surround them. This has been the cause of much folklore. One legend tells that the horse of king James I jumped up to the castle gates and left his footprints on the rocks from where he took off.

Another legend, from another era, tells of the witches that quietly travelled the world. All of them that came near Alaró would meet up on Saturday nights on the top of s'Alcadena Peak and Alaró Castle. They would take thread with them, and they would stretch it out into a bridge across the two mountains. From there, they would drop down and perform unspeakable acts of sorcery until sunrise, when they would return like owls to their caves or hideouts.

Rondallas mallorquinas (in English: Majorcan Tales), compilation by Jordi d'es Racó (Father Antoni Maria Alcover). Volume V.

ing crops, and as a source of energy for the mills located along waterways.

But times have changed, and the waters from municipal springs have been diverted through canals or have been bottled to be sold. Now the water supplied to the general population is extracted from wells. Management of the *font de ses Artigues* (Ses Artigues Spring) is in the hands of the Irrigation Association (*Comunitat*



de Regants), and although it once provided water for a variety of uses,

today it is almost exclusively used for watering crops.

Other springs have turned to bottling water, too. In 1964, facilities were built to sell the water from the *font de sa Basti-*

da (Sa Bastida Spring; 335 L/hr), and since 1988, water from *font*



Sorda (Sorda Spring; 2,100 L/hr) on the *son Cocó* grounds in the *Clot d'Almadrà* (Almadrà depression) has been bottled and sold.

The weather

As with the rest of the island, the climate in Alaró is nothing less than Mediterranean.

There are both seasonal rains—around 40% of all precipitation falls during the autumn—and irregular rains from year to year. Levels of precipitation increase as one approaches the mountains. Thus, Alaró registers, on average, 800 mm of annual rainfall in higher areas, while lower areas see an average of 600 mm. During cold winters this precipitation occasionally falls as snow.

The temperate climate produces mild winters



and dry hot summers. The average annual temperature is around 15°C, with summer maximums averaging 30°C and winter minimums averaging 6°C. These clement temperatures are partly caused by the sea that surrounds the island. The Mediterranean ensures mild winters, and in the summer provides the *embat*—fresh sea breezes that blow inland from the sea thanks to the contrasting warm temperatures of the land and the

cooler temperatures of the sea.

Language dialect

The Catalan dialect spoken in Alaró, along with Binissalem and Lloseta, has a peculiar feature: speakers tend to change the neutral “e” [ə] into an open “e” [ɛ]. This characteristic can also be found in Central Catalan, Eastern Minorcan, and Ibizan.

2 *The roots of Alaró*



Portrayal of the martyrdom of Cabrit and Bassa, by Miquel Bestard (Palma Town Hall)

There is some controversy regarding the origin of the name “Alaró.” Various authors seem unable to reach a consensus. An etymological search for the word led linguists Antoni Maria Alcover and Francesc de Borja Moll to consider the place name “llurone,” which is believed to be of French origin but was Latinized to “Oloron” and eventually became “Alaró.” However, an Andalusian tale seems to refute this theory. Among the texts that recount the conquest of the islands by the Arabs, the geographer

and historian Al-zuhrí (12th century) describes the Byzantine resistance against the Muslims in a large fortress in the year 903. He calls these fighters “*Hisn al’rûm*” or “*Hisn Alarum*”: the old Christians in the castle.

Al-Zuhrí (12th century) recounts the fall of Alaró castle:

On this island there is a great fortress built on a place that is high and barren; it is unlike any other place in the populated world. It is known by the name *Hisn Alarum*. There are Majorcans who, when

the island was conquered in the time of Muhammad, got strong in this fortress during the eight years and five months following the conquest. Nobody could do anything against them, only a lack of provisions forced them to leave.

This fortification rises up on the top of a mountain of hard stone where there is a plentiful spring.

The village’s first inhabitants

The first signs of early settlements in the municipi-

pality of Alaró are in the form of Talayotic buildings. The Talayotic culture was present in Mallorca from the Iron Age to the Roman conquests of 123 AD. These structures, called Talayots, are characterized by the building technique used to make them, which involves a series of interlinked stones one on top of the other without the use of mortar to join them. The name comes from the term “atalaya” which means watchtower, as many of the structures were located in defensive positions or in places that served as vantage points. These structures are also believed to have been used for ceremonies or residences because, as with many ancient buildings, the doorway is aligned with some star or constellation that was significant to people in those days.

In Alaró many Talayotic sites have been found in various states of conservation. The remnants of many of these sites are located on private properties, but they have been designated as *Bé d'Interès Cultural* (BIC; in English: goods of cultural interest), which allows them to be visited as long as it has been authorized beforehand. The legal recognition as a BIC is the highest level of protection that can be afforded to cultural assets. The archeological sites, which are listed hereafter, were declared BICs in 1966:

Es Picó and Son Palou

This is a group of two

Talayots, both from the Iron Age. The first is in a good state of conservation even though it is covered with vegetation. It has a trapezoidal floor that is 9



Claper des Gegant

by 11 meters, and it is 4.5 meters tall. The linteled doorway faces south and is intact, although it does show signs of stress and wear. The inside of the Talayot is obstructed but apparently not due to a collapse. Rather, it seems that a wall was built to close it off. The second structure has a round floor, and only the first row of stone is left standing. To everyone's surprise, an electricity pole has been erected inside.

S'Alcadena or es Claper des Gegant

This is an oval-shaped mountain Talayot that is about 8 meters in diameter and almost 3 meters tall. Strangely, it is isolated on a high plateau of the s'Alcadena estate. Its doorway, which faces the southeast, looks directly over the valley situated below. One side of the structure is unrecogniz-

able as it is covered by a pile of stones (commonly called “clapers”) taken from the surrounding area for future use. The chamber is inaccessible

because the roof has collapsed.

The frame of the building is made up of large irregular blocks that seem not to have been altered. They are crudely layered together which seems to indicate that

they were taken from the area near the Talayot and that not too much work went into its construction.

Bànyols (*Puig de s'Apit*)

This is another circular Talayot made up of large crudely worked, interlinked stones. One stone measures 2.5 meters in length, 1.4 meters in height, and at least 1.1 meters in width. While this talayot is presently isolated, it is impossible to determine whether or not there were other structures nearby as the land on which it is situated has been divided many times and heavily used. It is situated on the eastern slope of s'Apit Peak, and it measures 11 meters in diameter. Its current maximum height reaches 3.3 meters. The doorway cannot be seen, and the main chamber has been walled off by a collapse.

Can Cabrit or s'Era Vella

In this area there are the remains of a Talayotic town, and its largest features are two circular structures and another two rectangular structures. It is likely that if excavations were to be carried out, other similar constructions would be found nearby. Of the group, the best preserved Talayot is one that is rectangular and measures 10 by 11 meters. Other structures are located on the eastern and southern facing sides of the site. Even more Talayots can be found in the surrounding area, but they are in an advanced state of ruin.

On *Puig de Can Cabrit* (Can Cabrit Peak), the remains of a second Talayotic village have been found. The most well preserved structure is rectangular and measures 10.4 by 11 meters. Its maximum height is 2.2 meters. The doorway is unrecognizable, and the main chamber is inaccessible due to the collapse of the

roof. On its western side there is a third building, and in the vicinity there are other prehistoric structures in an advanced state of ruin. On the far southern side of the town there is a circular Talayot that is about 11 meters in diameter. It seems possible that in ancient times both of these villages were one.

Barbarians and Byzantines

The occupation of Majorca, and invariably of Alaró, has been constant. Alaró served as an exceptional defensive position thanks to the mountainous backdrop of the Tramuntana mountain range. For a long time, this safeguarded the various people that lived there.

The sites located near the craggy cliffs of Sa Bastida and Alaró Castle

attest to this. The ruins there serve as a reminder of their ancient (4th and 5th century) use as late Roman defensive positions.

From the centuries that



A view of Alaró from Sa Bastida

followed the fall of the Roman Empire, no elements that reference the Vandal invasion and later settlement of the Genseric Kingdom from Africa (5th century) have survived. The remains housed in Alaró Castle are silent witnesses of what transpired in the 600s in Majorca.

By the late 7th century, the Arabs controlled North Africa, and in 707 they made their first landing on the island. But it was not until 902-903 that the Muslim conquest fully came to Majorca, even though it was already within the realm of the Byzantine empire and paid taxes to Cordoba. It was at this time that the geographer Al-Zuhri made reference to the eight-year siege carried out against the fortress in Alaró.

One of the most important features that remains



Remains of the wall of the fortress from Sa Bastida

from the Arab reign in Alaró is the *qanat* or *font de Ses Artigues*, an ancient well-like vertical shaft that drew its supply from underground water.

Conquest and Repopulation

The conquest of Majorca by James I the Conqueror and his troops was framed as a crusade against the infidels, even though the main motivation behind it was, as with any invasion, economic. As long it was successful, the retaking of Majorca would translate into riches and land for the king as well as for the noblemen involved, and of course,



Jaume I the Conqueror

power and prestige for the conquistadores.

Furthermore, while the islands were under Muslim control, the waters and coastlines of the western Mediterranean were unsafe for Christian vessels, as they were subject to constant pirate attacks. So, merchants could also benefit from the campaign as it would set up safe zones in the area.

Although the conquest was sustained by the



The main gate to Alaró Castle

Catalan prelates and magnates, other communities from Provence (France) and Liguria (Italy) also participated, as did the cities of Tortosa, Tarragona, and Barcelona, which were most affected by the pirates' looting.

On September 5, 1229, a massive fleet set sail from Catalonia towards Majorca with more than 155 ships, 800 knights, and thousands of soldiers under the command of James I. On December 31, 1229, the capital Medina Mayurqa fell, and with it, a large part of the resistance on the island.

In the mountainous areas a kind of guerrilla warfare prolonged the war until 1232, and given the difficulty involved with taking the rocky fortress, king James I did not try to take Alaró Castle until his second expedition in 1231. It was not until this and the other fortifications overlooking Felanitx and Pollença were taken that the conquest of Majorca could be considered complete.

And so the legend surrounding the castle was forged; it continued to be

of vital importance for many centuries. Its proverbial invincibility ensured that whoever held the fortress would be able to hold out a final resistance in the case that a new attack on Majorca were to take place.

James I sealed Majorca's destiny with a few actions that would determine the rest of its history: the founding of a kingdom with its own institutions, the "*Repartiment*" or distribution of lands (division among magnates that was agreed upon before the conquest and was proportional to their military and financial contributions to the campaign), the repopulation (creation of settlements with new inhabitants in Muslim farmlands), and the Christianization of the people.

With the division of lands in Alaró, it became part of the Canarossa district, whose lord was Viscount of Bearn.

In his will, James I distributed lands among his children, and the Kingdom of Majorca was passed on to James II. In the year 1285, Alfonso III

The legend of Cabrit and Bassa

In 1285, the troops of Peter III set sail from the Catalan coast under the command of his son Alfonso III. After reaching Majorca and hearing of the death of his father, the young king set out to conquer. Alfonso's troops seized Palma on November 19, 1285, and took over the rest of the island, except for Alaró Castle.

The entire Kingdom of Majorca was overtaken by king Alfonso, but a lone castle called Alaró refused to yield. The young king marched to the castle and ordered the defenders to surrender. One of them said, "Who demands that we turn over the castle?" To which the king replied, "I am Alfonso, King of Aragon and of Majorca." Incredulously, the defender responded, "We know no king but king James, to whom we have sworn and will keep our loyalty, and *anfós* is what we eat for dinner." (*Anfós* in English means grouper, the fish, but sounds like the name Alfonso which is Catalan for Alfonso). Alfonso answered, "What is the name of he who speaks?" To which the soldier responded, "My name is Cabrit and my friend is Bassa." Then, king Alfonso said, "It is fitting that you are named *cabrito* (goat), because it is like a *cabrito* that I will roast you over the fire!"



And that is exactly what he did. When the fortress finally fell, the two were burned to death over coals and on a grill.

Pope Honorius IV threatened to excommunicate the King of Aragon for his cruelty, and in response to Alfonso's plea for mercy, the pope ordered that he return the Kingdom of Majorca to his uncle, the original owner. The kingdom was eventually given to James II by the son of Alfonso of Aragon years later.

We do not know the backgrounds of the two heroes in this story, but it is clear that they were not mere soldiers guarding the castles. Rather, they were ardent supporters of James II of Majorca. In the Cathedral of Palma an altarpiece was built in honor of the Most Holy Virgin Mary and All Saints, listed among them are the names of

Cabrit and Bassa as martyred saints. On the Sunday following All Saints' Day, their deeds are commemorated in a mass at the cathedral. The martyrs' remains are kept in the Chapel of Our Lady of Piety, save two of their ribs which were taken to the *Oratori de la Verge del Refugi* (Oratory of the Virgin of the Refuge) in Alaró Castle and placed in a nave where they can be viewed.

The Majorcan population revered them as the perfect example of honor, remaining loyal to one's oath, and even as saints until well into the 17th century.

of Aragon, nephew of the magnate, wanted to take the island, so he began an attack using his father's troops. He had nearly reached his goal after receiving an oath of allegiance from many Major-

can settlements when he set off toward Alaró Castle. It was here that both history and legend met, as the passing centuries have blurred the lines between fact and fiction.

Upon arriving to the

fortress, Alfonso III was met with the resistance of Alaró residents Guillem Cabrit and Guillem Bassa who barricaded themselves in the castle in the name of the true King of Majorca. They refused to

give in to the authority of the new king. In the end, the fortress was taken, and Cabrit and Bassa were captured and burned to death in the *plaça de Los Damunt*.

The Middle Ages and the “Dark Ages in Alaró”

In the years following the new conquest of the island, much focus was placed on agriculture. Diversification in this sector is what maintained the economy of Alaró for centuries. Among the many trades that existed in those days were: *tragers* (those responsible for transporting and selling the oil that was made on large estates and farms), *carboners* (who made charcoal from holm oak trees), *calciners* (who were in charge of running lime kilns), and *margers* (master dry stone builders, a trade that stood out in mountainous areas). One notable good that was made in Alaró was silk, and to do this, white mulberries had to be grown in order to sustain the silkworm population.

The first church in the town was located in the Los Damunt neighborhood, probably near the area where the Sa Bastida houses currently lie. Building a parish in the mid-14th century planted the seed that would become the modern day center of Alaró town. It is in this area that the Los

Davall neighborhood grew along the irrigation canals that ran down from Ses Artigues. This area was created and remained separated from the Los Damunt neighborhood by the *torrent de Na Marranxa*. The area around Los Davall became the most dynamic area in Alaró. It was where urban and economic activities flour-



ished throughout the following centuries.

During these years, Alaró's exemplary oil production was a powerful means of trading with the rest of the island, especially Palma.

Tafones or olive presses were another successful part of agricultural industry throughout the history of Alaró. In 1871, Archduke Ludwig Salvator of Austria noted that Alaró was the third-placed municipality (behind Sóller and Lloseta) when it came to oil production.

St. Roch (in Catalan: *Sant Roc*)

The 17th century was one of hardships across

Majorca, which was hit hard by the plague. The 1652 epidemic spread across Majorca, but it was especially cruel in Alaró, resulting in 360 deaths. This tragedy awakened in the people a devotion to St. Roch, who is traditionally invoked against the plague. He was prayed to en masse, and the end of the plague is generally attributed to him. In 1771,

he was declared to be the patron saint of the town, and every year his feast day is celebrated on August 16.

Eventually, the strategic importance and upkeep of the castle as a military position was forgotten. During this time, the importance of the castle as a defensive fortress waned,

and its importance as a place of piety grew until it was eventually turned into a sanctuary. The castle area was also used as a hermitage in the mid-17th century by Joan Mir Valès of Alaró, who lived there for years. He dedicated himself to meditation and the preservation



The houses of Sa Bastida

and protection of the small chapel there as a part of his spiritual retreat and commitment to the Christian faith. As the site became more popular for religious use, he decided to retire to Valldemossa.

The building of the *Oratori de la Verge del Refugi* (Oratory of the Virgin of the Refuge) and the *Via Crucis* (Way of the Cross) to help people along their pilgrimages make the steep climb up to the fortification also date to the 17th century.



Joan Mir

Alaró, a town of pioneers: modernity and innovation

Towards the end of the 19th century, the municipality began the unstoppable process of industrialization and innovation. Citizens of Alaró were pioneers when it came to manufacturing. This, along with widespread entrepreneurial spirit, meant that Alaró would become the first town in Majorca to have electric lighting, and it would be the first place on the island to have a cinema.

But, one industry in the municipality quickly stood out: shoes. The shoe industry rapidly



Working in the Can Fullana shoe factory

began to overtake agriculture as the main economic endeavor. This, along with the recession that the oil market suffered in the 19th century, meant that working in the olive groves or with the olive presses was no longer as lucrative as it once was. The prosperous development of shoe factories along with lignite (brown coal) mines were the drivers of Alaró's economy. In 1881, a railway line was opened up between Alaró town and Consell.

Although the significant economic resurgence of these years defined the evolution of Alaró, one event drastically changed the history of the municipality: Consell separated from Alaró in 1925; up until then it was a hub under the authority of the municipality of Alaró.

The arrival of electricity

In 1901, Alaró put the first power plant in Majorca into operation, even before Palma. The start of the power plant brought about significant growth and high levels of modernization, which were

positively reflected both economically and socially speaking.

The Alaró Electricity Company (*Compañía de Electricidad de Alaró*) was created by the brothers Gaspar and Josep Perelló Pol. On a trip to Barcelona, Gaspar visited a power plant and was given schematics for its machinery. On his return to Alaró, the two brothers decided to set up a similar power station.



Gaspar Perelló

Their ingenuity paid off, and a 100 horsepower steam driven generator clicked away, producing electricity. Officially started up on August 15, 1901, the power plant's opening ceremony drew in many



Recreation of the opening ceremony of the power plant

visitors from both towns and the big city (Palma). There were even special trains scheduled to bring people in.

Reports from the era tell the story like this:

There was no shortage of bagpipes or drumrolls. The *Cossiers* (typical Majorcan dancers) danced in the church offertory and in the machine room. At night, when the lights were turned on across the town, the multitude of people in the streets erupted in applause.

In 1917, the Perelló brothers sold their plant along with the distribution grid that brought electricity to Consell, Binissalem, and Lloseta to the Majorcan Electricity Company (*Compañía Mallorquina de Electricidad*).

Today, only the old plant's smoke stack remains, and it was refurbished in 2001 in commemoration of the 100-year anniversary of the power station's opening.

Cinema

The Perelló brothers, not content with the opening of the power plant, also suggested bringing a cinema to Alaró. And so it was; they started the first cinema in Majorca in 1903. For a period of time, people from across the island came to Alaró to enjoy the shows because it was not until years later that more cinemas would open in Palma and other municipalities.

The shoe industry

At the end of the 19th century, the production of shoes was still big business in Alaró. Even today, the industry has survived and thrived. In 1870, Jaume Pizà Jaumico opened the first shoe making workshop in Alaró, and he progressively added new factories to his burgeoning business, including *Can Pau Coll*, *Can Joan Vidal*, and *Can Pericàs*. The first exports were sent to the United States, and during WWI special orders were made to supply boots to the French army. In 1955, there were more than 50 shoe making workshops throughout the municipality.

Other production lines were also set up around the commercialization of the shoes. Two cardboard

factories were built, originally for shipping the shoes that were made in Alaró. Eventually though, they were supplying cardboard to half of the island. Some

carpenters were even dedicated to making wooden boxes for transporting shoes.



Film poster from Alaró

Coal mines

One of the major players in the economic bonanza that took place in Alaró was coal. Mines were opened up during the first third of the 19th century. Archduke Ludwig Salvator of Austria described two: *La Fortuna* and *La Dolores*. By the mid-20th century six mines were operating, and in the 1970s the National Institute of Industry (*Instituto Nacional de Industria*) acquired all of them. After their subsequent purchase by GESA (a Majorcan power company), they were used exclusively for providing fuel for thermal power stations. In 1988, the number of sites operating decreased drastically until the next year when lignite extraction was ceased altogether as it was not economically viable.

The tramway

Today, few traces remain of the late Alaró train company. The expansion and new trajectory of the Consell-Alaró roadway makes it very difficult to appreciate the old layout of the railway line.

In 1875, the path from Palma to Inca was the starting point for the idea of having a railway line on the island that would leave no village behind in the process of industrialization and would give

way to increased trade within the island. The initiative became reality on May 22, 1881, when the line opened up. It was 3.4 km long and linked the town of Alaró with the main railway line that connected Palma and Inca.

A lack of funds meant that the line that opened up would initially be drawn by animals—



Interior of a lignite mine

mules pushed loads from Consell to Alaró, and the return journey worked simply with gravity—and eventually would switch to an engine based tramway. The trains eventually stopped running in



Declaration of the Second Spanish Republic in Alaró

the 1930s though, due to the competition they faced from road transport.

The Republic, the Spanish Civil War, and the post-war period

Globalization, and its consequences, are not exclusive to the present. The end of the First World War led to a dramatic reduction in the

number of military boots ordered from Alaró, and as a result the local shoe making industry suffered greatly and forced some craftsmen to emigrate to France and Argentina.

The years leading up to the 1931 declaration of the Second Spanish Republic

were critical to the nascent social and labor movements which planted the seeds for and spurred the events that would take place later on. During the years that the Republic was active, Alaró focused intensively on education, which translated into cultural services such as the opening of the library; the implementation of adult education programs; and, perhaps most importantly, the construction of a new school that is still in use to this day.

The October 1934 uprisings did not take place in Alaró; but, they were the cause of arrests, and they did away with the left-leaning government. The coup d'état that fol-



lowed the 1936 elections gave way to the darkest years in recent Spanish history. For Alaró, as with the rest of Spain, the Civil War was one of the saddest events in the municipality's history.

Present day Alaró

After the post-war period, Alaró was once again host to strong industrial and mining activities, and after the 1970s it changed from being a place of emigration and instead became a place of immigration. In the 1980s, overdependence on exporting to the United States and a loss of competitiveness in the market led to a crisis in the shoe making industry that almost resulted in the complete loss of all shoe factories. Currently, only a few



companies tied to shoe making remain, including Tony Mora and the corporate headquarters of the well-known brand Camper, which is the most internationally recognized Spanish shoe. Many municipalities in Majorca, including Alaró, once thrived on industrial textiles, but this market has all but disappeared. Alaró is now a quiet residential municipality with

moderate commercial activity. There is also a moderate level of tourism thanks to its privileged location and vibrant social life.

3 *Walking around Alaró*

To really get to know the municipality, three routes are suggested hereafter that cover some of the municipality's most emblematic streets and pathways.



● **Center of town**

Getting to know Alaró town means rambling through and getting lost on its winding streets, seeing history brought to life in ancient reminders, and experiencing the town itself.



● **Alaró Castle**

The hike up to Alaró Castle is one of the most spectacular outings to be found in this beautiful mountainous area of Majorca.



● **The path from ses Artigues to Orient**

This trek will take travelers past the old system that provided water to the town of Alaró and was developed during the Arabic occupation of the island.

Walking around Alaró:

Center of Town

DIFFICULTY: EASY

DISTANCE COVERED: 3.3 TO 3.7 KM.

TIME: 2 HOURS





● *The Rectory*



● *Alaró Theater*



● *The Can Xalet townhouse*



● *Plaça del Mercat*



● *Can Jaumico*



● *S'Olivaret*



To really get to know the heart of Alaró, one must walk down and get lost on its winding streets, see history in the building façades and ancient ruins scattered about, and experience the town itself. This route, which reveals more than 700 years of Alaró's history, takes visitors past some of the most noteworthy buildings and landmarks of the town's center. For more information, take a look at the attached map.

The trek starts in the **plaça de la Vila**, which was built towards the end of the 1930s as part of an urban reformation project that saw the construction of this public area and of the current town hall.

Sant Bartomeu Church (*Església de Sant Bartomeu*)

The plaza is dominated by the **Sant Bartomeu Church**. The history of this parish goes back to the 13th century with the Santa Maria Church, which is located in the

Los Damunt neighborhood. In the mid-14th century the population outgrew the original oratory, so a new one was built along the southern edge of the expanding town center, in the Los Davall neighborhood. Only the base of the bell tower of the original church still remains where the current one now stands. The original church was replaced in 1626, and the construction of the new place of worship was carried out over many centuries. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the majority of the chapels were completed, as was the main doorway and the inscription



● **Son Mallol**



● **The sculpture
"Retorn al bon camí"**

on it which dates to 1785.

From the plaza, the main façade of the church can be appreciated. It is defined by large amounts of bare unornamented stone, and the only elements that stand out are



The church bell tower and the tower on the town hall

Plaça de la Vila E/6



● **Creu del Cós**



● **The town hall and its portico**



● **The town hall fountain**



● **S. Bartomeu Church Portal del Fossar**

the main doorway and the rose window, which were popular in 17th-century religious architecture. The walls contain more than 20,000 pieces of cut stone.

The main doorway is Baroque in style and made with sculpted marble in various colors. The archway, framed by pillars with bases and capitals with moldings, serves to support the gable which is ornamented with curled details. Above it there is a small opening in the form of a window. A fig tree juts out of the opening, and the citizens of Alaró affirm that it has always been there and has always been the same size.

The rose window



The main doorway to the temple

has gothic tracery, and to its left is a clock mounted in wood and stone. Above the clock there is a small rounded arch bell gable made with voussoirs.

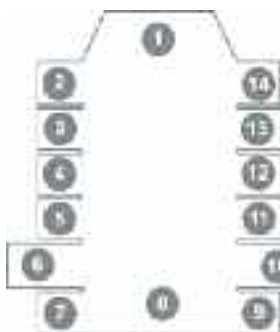
The doorway that leads to *carrer del Campanar*, known as the **Portal de**

Sant Antoni is simple and could be the oldest one in the church. It dates back to sometime between the 16th and 17th centuries, and it is made out of stone and two pilasters that support the doorway. The façade on this side of the building supports the rectangular bell tower, is divided by relief lines, and is topped with a cupola. The unfinished doorway in the façade that faces *plaça de Jaume Sebastià*, also known as *Portal del Fossar*, is a low arch with bell-shaped borders carved out of pudding-stone.

A piece of artwork by the artist Enrique Broglio can also be found on top



The Portal de Sant Antoni, which leads to carrer del Campanar.



Sant Bartomeu Church:

1. The main altar
2. The Chapel of St. Joseph
3. The Chapel of the Virgin of the Refuge
4. The organ
5. The Chapel of St. Gabriel
6. The Chapel of the Rosary
7. The Chapel of Carmen
8. The choir
9. The Chapel of Lourdes
10. Portal del Fossar (Fossar Doorway)
11. All Souls Chapel
12. The Chapel of the Holy Name of Jesus
13. The Chapel of St. Anthony
14. The Chapel of the Immaculate Conception



The church's main altar, made out of marble

of a rock in this plaza. This well-known artist is one of the many that have chosen to settle down in Alaró.

The interior of the church has only one nave with chapels between the buttresses that support the cross-vaulted roof. What is really interesting is that at the point where the arches come together, the builders put the date that they finished the work. The lateral columns of the vaulted ceiling show the crest of Alaró on their capitals.

The main altar, towards the back of the

nave, boasts a unique piece of Baroque Majorcan art from the 18th century. There is no other all-marble altarpiece on the island that is as big this one. Traditional stories tell that the citizens of Alaró worked the stone pieces in their own houses which led to significant problems when it came time to putting all of them together.

Another notable element in the church is **the choir**. Built during the last quarter of the 18th century, it is the masterpiece of

Italian artist Antonio Solдати. Notice the overall motifs and design of the piece which incorporates delicate floral and angel ornaments as well as the use of blues and violets.

The baptismal font, located just next to the choir, was made out of one solid piece of marble and dates back to 1655.

Of the set of altarpieces from the rest of the chapels, the majority are Baroque in style. Of special interest is the altarpiece in the **Capella de les Ànimes del Purgatori** (All Souls Chapel), created by Joan Antoni Oms in 1660.

The Sant Bartomeu Church celebrates mass daily at 8:00 pm and on Sundays at 9:30 am. The building can be visited in



Baptismal font



Every Saturday morning, the church puts on an organ concert that coincides with the weekly market.

The organ

The instrument that is currently in Alaró's Sant Bartomeu Church is not the original one. There is nothing left of the first one that was installed. The current organ was built in 1754, by Pere Joan Bosch, a member of the well-known dynasty of Majorcan craftsmen who built, among others, the instruments in Madrid's Royal Palace and the ca-

thedral in Seville. A looting in the 1960s led to the loss of some of its original parts. But in 2006, it was restored by the organ builder Gerhard Grenzing at the behest of the choir Orfeo d'Alaró. A large part of the town's residents wanted to help in the restoration of the organ, so they made the symbolic purchase of one of the instrument's ancient pipes. Every Saturday, at 11:30 am, organ concerts are held that anybody can come and enjoy!





The **Creu del Cós** has an octagonal capital with elements from the crest of Alaró and figures representing St. Sebastian, St. Barbara, and St. Paul.



the mornings from Monday to Saturday.

Located to the left of the main doors of the church is the **Creu del Cós** which dates back to the 16th century. It was a wayside cross; these were structures that were usually located along paths to mark the end of a municipality and to provide some kind of spiritual protection. A storm with strong winds destroyed the cross in 1884, and after having been abandoned for many years, it was finally restored in 1958, by sculptor Francesc Salvà. It was declared a BIC (good of cultural interest) in 1963.

This crucifix has an octagonal capital, and on its faces are six figures and two elements from the

crest of Alaró: a wing and a tower. The figures accompanying Christ are St. Sebastian, St. Barbara, St. Paul, and a saint carrying a palm branch to represent martyrdom.

Above the capital, the cross itself is extensively decorated with plant moldings, and arms stretch out holding medallions with a figure on each one: a pelican—the symbol of the Eucharist, the Virgin, St. John, and Mary Magdalene. On the back side is a representation of the Virgin with the baby Jesus in her arms and her foot on a full moon with a human face. There are also symbolic images for the four evangelists: an eagle, a man, a lion, and an ox.

Under the protection of the cross, people used to pray the Blessing of the



The crucifix has a representation of Christ on the front and a representation of the Virgin Mary holding Baby Jesus in her arms.



The town hall has a Baroque civil Majorcan style which is characterized by low archways supported by wide columns.

Fruit on May 3, the Feast of the Cross, to protect their crops.

The town hall E/6

Located in the same plaza is **the town hall**, which is made up of two bodies, each pertaining to different buildings built in different eras. The first, overlooks *carrer Petit* and dates to the end of the 19th century. It was acquired by the government when construction started on the new regionalist-style town hall after the Civil War.

The façade (also regionalist in style) is made up of a portico on the ground floor, a first floor with balconies, then an attic, and finally a tower.



The town hall portico



Town Hall of Alaró

The roof of the building has two slopes and Arabic roof tiles. The stone ash-lars, which form the entire structure of the building, can be seen on parts of the façade and the attic.

The overall style of the building was inspired by the Majorcan civil Baroque form, which is characterized by, among other elements, low archways supported by wide columns.

The tower on top of the building is opposite the church bell tower, which gives a purposely balanced look. The ledge, with a wooden overhang protects the building from onslaughts of water.

There are various cu-

riosities housed within the town hall. Under the portico on the ground floor, there is a **fountain** that dates back to 1742. In the interior courtyard one of the oldest crests (1681) can be found; it was rescued from the previous government building. The old town hall, a Baroque building, was located just in front of the current one. It was situated in the area that is currently the *plaça de la Vila*.

Plaça de la Vila E/6

Without leaving the plaza, one can find the Hotel Traffic and the Can Punta restaurant on the



The streets of Alaró are signed with hand-crafted plaques.

corner opposite the town hall. The location of these establishments was, at one time, just one building called the **Posada de Can Xalet** (located at *plaça de la Vila*, numbers 8 and 9). The so-called *posades* were the townhouses of the estate owners who would make use of them when they were in town. The building's façade is the original one, and it is an example of the painstaking building techniques that were used at the end of the 17th century and beginning of the 18th



The Can Xalet townhouse

century in Alaró.

Llorenç Rosselló (1867-1901) was a well-known sculptor from Alaró. He is famous for designing the piece the *Forner Balear* (The Balearic slinger),

which is on display in the gardens in front of the cathedral in Palma. In the *plaça de la Vila* an 1899 bronze piece of his, titled **Retorn al bon camí** (Back on the right track), is on display.

Behind this sculpture, in another corner of the plaza, is the **Casal de Son Mallol** (located at *plaça de la Vila*, number 14). It is a house that was acquired by the town, and its history goes back to the 16th century. Among other notable features are the large windows, decorated with ogee stonework and the small bell-shaped window on the side of the house. A door attached to the building houses the last olive press that was used in Alaró, and some of the machine's structure has been preserved. The ground floor was reformed to host the Acros Bar—a place where Alaró's citizens meet both during the day and at night—and a restaurant.



The “Retorn al bon camí” sculpture by Llorenç Rosselló

Even through the remodeling, some of the original layout of the building and some of its original decorations, including ceramic tiles, have been kept.

Among the characteristics that define the majority of the **main doorways** in Alaró are the large lintels—stone slabs



The Son Mallol manor



S'Olivaret is one of the largest manors in the town center of Alaró.



In the center of the plaça del Mercat there is a sculpture by the artist Solveig Pripp.



The 'passatge' de Sa Gerrieria is a pretty space that takes us to the area known as Ses Rotes.

that make up the upper horizontal part of the doorframe—and sandstone doorframes and thresholds—the lower horizontal part of the doorframe. In some cases, crosses or the Greek letter Tau, a symbol of St. Anthony, were carved into the center or sides of the stone doorframes.

Going up *carrer Can Xalet*, visitors can see two 17th and 18th-century buildings located opposite one another: the *Posada de s'Olivaret* (located at *carrer de Can Xalet*, 5-11) and the *Celler de s'Olivaret* (located at *carrer de Can Xalet*, 12-16).

The *Posada de s'Olivaret* is one of the biggest feudal manors in the town, and its main façade faces *carrer d'Enmig*. Although the original manor is quite old, the interior of the building was updated in the 20th century. The house keeps the image of the Virgin

Mary that is used in the Easter Sunday procession. The ***Celler de s'Olivaret***, or s'Olivaret bodega, is on the other side of the street on the corner, and it still houses its original wine casks.

The *plaça del Mercat gardens* are located at the end of *carrer de Can Xalet*. As the name suggests, in days past trading activities took place here. But eventually they were

moved to *plaça de la Vila*.

The route continues along *carrer d'Enmig* and turns down the first street to the right until reaching *carrer Síquia*. Following the marked path, the 17th-century ***Casal de Son Vidal*** (*carrer Síquia*, 21-23) can be found at the end of the street. The

importance of this dwelling lies in the state of conservation of the elements preserved within. In the past, it housed an ancient water mill that was part of the *qanat* (Arabic water system) that supplied the town with water. Unfortunately, only a few pieces are left of the mill. It is said that the hermit Joan Mir, founder of the Miramar hermitage in Valldemossa lived here.

Going up the sloped *carrer de Son Sitges*, visitors will find *carrer Gerrieria* on the right-hand side. This is one of the many nice little areas that can be explored in the old town. Return to *carrer de Son Sitges* and find ***Son Bieló*** (*carrer de Son Sitges*, 11), a manor that



The Greek letter Tau inscribed on the lintel of a doorway



Son Vidal



Son Bieló has pieces of one of the town's old water mills.

housed yet another water mill—of which very little is left—belonging to the previously mentioned water system. This manor dates back to the 18th century; its doorway is neoclassical in style, and the foyer still has the original cobblestone floors from when the building was erected. The house has its own chapel with an ancient altar and a small sacristy.



The Son Bieló alleyway

Ses Rotes

C-D-E-F/3

The path carries on towards the most elevated area in the town center: *carrer del Pujol*. Here, there were once a set of small farm houses. Now, **Ses Rotes** is a developed

Art in Alaró

During the 1960s and 1970s, some renowned artists moved themselves or their studios to Alaró. Many of them no longer live in or frequent the town, but in some way or another, they have left their mark. Many anecdotes can still be heard and pieces of art found around the town center. Some of the artists coined the term “the group from Alaró,” and they even put on some joint international expositions under the name. Some of the more famous names tied to Alaró include **Manolo Coronado, Manuel Hernández Mompó, Celedonio Perellón, Aleix Llull, Amelia Viejo, Josep Maria Llambias, and Solveig Pripp.**



Manuel Mompó along with one of his pieces called “Alaró” (above). Below, a sculpture by Coronado in the plaça dels Horts and a painting by Perellón.



These years do not represent an isolated incident. In fact, this area continues to attract artists from all over the world, including: **Sandra Lehnis, James Lambourne, Rafa Forteza, Álvarez Frugoni, Alfred Lichter, Nathasha Lébedeva, Menéndez Rojas, Diego Delgado, and Von Treskov.**

The municipality has a relatively new but reputable gallery that specializes in contemporary art: *Addaya Centre d'Art Contemporani*. The owners of the gallery focus their activities on exhibiting pieces by renowned artists who have some relationship with Alaró and on exposing new artists.



Ses Rotes was an area with small plots of land that were used for farming.

neighborhood, but it was the historical location of the town's *rotas*—small farms that were given for farming in exchange for something, or simply to have some farming land without any personal expenses.

During the 1960s and 1970s, some well-known artists chose to move to Alaró, and they were con-

centrated, for the most part, in this neighborhood.

At the end of the walk through this area, visitors arrive to the **plaça de Ses Rotes** which offers a beautiful panorama of the whole town center with the Los Damunt neighborhood in the forefront.

Going down the steep *carrer de Son Rafalet*, on

the left-hand side is another landmark that illustrates the once vital water network: the *Rentadors de Son Rafalet* (the Son Rafalet wash-house).

These public wash basins were built in the 19th century and were supplied with water from the Ses Artigues Spring. They were used for decades by the women of the town to

Font de Ses Artigues (Ses Artigues Spring)

The *font de ses Artigues* is the spring that supplied water to a large part of the municipality in centuries past. It was mentioned as early as 1232 by Gastón de Bearn. The construction around this spring is a qanat system: an Arabic method for making use of underground water. It employs the use of a shaft that goes many meters into the ground. In Majorca they tend to be made out of dry stone. Along the conduit, vertical perforations were made at regular intervals to serve as vents. Canals had to keep a certain slope so that gravity would keep the water flowing.

In the case of Ses Artigues, the shaft goes 60 meters into the mountain and only the exit point is visible. Recently it was closed off for health and safety rea-



sons. Here, the qanat forms the starting point of the water system that transported irrigation water to farming terraces, the water that would power the machinery in the mills, and of course the water that was used by the residents of Alaró. It is possible that the Los Damunt neighborhood used water from another qanat: the one from the **Sa Bastida Spring**.

Los Damunt

A-C/3-4-5



wash clothes. The installations have one large basin with three interior compartments all made of stone and white plaster. The roof is presently made with modern day beams and Arabic roof tiles.

From here, the way to the original town center of Alaró crosses the *plaça dels Horts*. It was built in modern times, and the sculpture by Manolo Coronado, somewhat hidden in a corner, should not be overlooked.

Los Damunt

Finally, the journey takes visitors through the Los Damunt neighborhood, the original town center of Alaró referenced as early as the 13th century. The reduced size of this ancient area makes it possible to take a leisurely stroll through its major streets, where some important buildings and many simple houses with aged façades can be appreciated. In this area all kinds of doorways can be observed: ones with

rounded arches, segmented arches, and reduced arches, as well as those made out of stone, sandstone, and even some with wooden lintels (upper part of the door-frame).

The planned route continues down *carrer de son Duran*, towards **plaça de Cabrit i Bassa**. Before reaching the plaza, visitors are encouraged to take a look around and get lost in the alleyways that make up the Los Damunt neighborhood.



● **The Chapel of Cabrit and Bassa**

(Cabrit and Bassa) were cruelly executed by king Alfonso II of Aragon.

On one side of the plaza a **chapel** was built in the 12th century to commemorate the martyrdom of Cabrit and Bassa. Later, it was reformed, and now it houses an altarpiece of the Virgin, by Manuel Coronado.

In the center of the plaza there is an elevated **cistern** that sits upon an octagonal stone slab, with elements made of iron. This kind of water cistern, and others like it, once provided water to the town's population.

In the plaza, which is dominated by an old manor that once housed the offices of the Guardia Civil (a Spanish law enforcement agency), visitors can find what are very likely the oldest houses in Alaró. They date back to the gothic period and can be found at *plaça Cabrit i Bassa*, 8 and 9. These two houses were originally one building. The old doorway is still intact and is proof of this. Though when the house was divided into two, a new low archway was installed next to the original one



● **The cistern in the plaça de Cabrit i Bassa**

In *plaça de Cabrit i Bassa* or *plaça de Los Damunt*, visitors are once again confronted with either history or myth: it is said that this is where the local heroes

Los Damunt, the beginnings of Alaró

After the Catalan conquest of Majorca, writers referenced Los Damunt as the Arabic farmstead of Oloron, included in the district of Canarossa or Qanarúsha after the division of lands. This ancient farmstead would become the first population center (known as *pobla antiga* [the old town] or *partida d'Amunt*) where a church was erected. Throughout the 14th-century, the population grew, and this required that a new church be



built in the lower part of the town. The Los Damunt hegemony would carry on through the 16th-century, after which more construction took place around current town center and the new parochial church in the Los Davall neighborhood. Despite the numerous renovations that the area has undergone, some of the medieval structure still remains (in the narrow and dead end streets, and in the small plazas, for example). And many of the houses clearly date back to the 14th or 17th-centuries. Some might see Alaró as two towns bundled up into one, given that the Los Damunt neighborhood even has its own festivities. See the chapter "Alaró and its festivals".



Son Borràs is a 16th-century manor that served as the town home for the farmland of the same name



The Los Damunt neighborhood is Alaró's original town center, referenced as early as 1395. The small size of this area makes it possible to take a short pleasant stroll through its main streets.



to provide an entrance to the new dwelling. The appearance of the façade has been altered by the addition of mortar.

Continuing the trek takes visitors out of the plaza and directs them left onto *carrer de Son*

also some treasured remains of an ancient watermill.

Still in the Los Damunt neighborhood, following *carrer Tià Roig* downhill and turning onto *carrer de Sa Bastida*, visitors finally arrive to **Sa Basti-**

da (numbers 18 to 24), an old piece of land that was absorbed into the town center of Los Damunt. This set of buildings gets its name from a 13th-century fortification that today is only a scat-

terring of ruins. It is possible that these houses were built very near the first church in Alaró.

tering of ruins. It is possible that these houses were built very near the first church in Alaró. The side façade of the building opens up into an interior courtyard, dominated by a large hackberry tree, where the *Universitat de la Vila*, that is, the ancient seat of the municipal government, was said to have met during the Middle Ages.

Now leaving the first neighborhood of ancient

Alaró, continuing down *carrer de Sa Bastida*, visitors cross the **torrent de Na Marranxa**, which physically separates the historical neighborhood, and continue onto *carrer Can Coxetí* to return to the Los Davall neighborhood.

The **Can Pinoi** building rises up where *carrer Can Coxetí*, *d'Enmig*, and *Porrassar* meet. It is a 17th-century house that boasts an impressive stone doorway and sandstone cross embedded in the main façade.

Continuing onto *carrer Porrassar*, a little farther down, visitors can see a new cistern called **el Carregador del Porrassar**. It is octagonal in



The Sa Bastida manor

Borràs and eventually to the front of a property with the same name as the street (**Son Borràs**) at numbers 9 and 11. It is a manor that was built towards the end of the 16th- or beginning of the 17th-century. It is said that it was the old *posada* (townhome) of the Son Borràs estate. Inside, the house has been divided into two. One of them still has the stone pieces of the old olive press. There are



The doorway of the Sa Bastida manor



Can Pinoi is a house from the 17th-century with an outstanding stone doorway



In the area of the Porrassar we find an octagonal cistern or *carregador*



Typical manor house from de 17th-century sited in Can Palou street and today divided into three houses

shape and sits atop a large stone slab. It still has its top cover, the wheel for pumping water, and the drainage line, all made of iron. The small basin attached to the base collects overflowing water and trickles from the drain.

Following the street, visitors will pass the **Alaró Theater**.

Going down *carrer de Can Palou* (at numbers 2-6) visitors will pass in front of a **typical feudal manor from the 17th-century**. Today, it is divided into three dwellings. The first of them is an exemplary 17th-century home. It has an impressive portico built with pillars that have stone capitals with moldings. For those who enjoy curious details, one of the window frames has a Maltese cross engraved on the side of it. If visitors are observant, they will notice that there is no shortage of engraved crosses on doorways and window frames in Alaró.

Along the street, at the curve, lies a small plaza divided by the road, with two buildings on either side: **Can Pere Ric** and the **Posada de Son Guitard**.

Teatre d'Alaró (Alaró Theater) D/6



The Alaró Theater was recently reopened, in 2008, after significant renovations. Up to the 1950s it had been the old parish cinema. Now, the theater has been beautifully redone: outside there are murals by **Menéndez Rojas**, and inside a piece by **Pep Llambías**. The space has been designed for different kinds of artistic and cultural activities, including cinema, performing arts, concerts, and seminars, among others.

The former (located at *carrer de Can Palou*, 1; *carrer de Son Antlem*, 19) is a 19th-century building with meticulously crafted geometric decorations as well as the use of pieces of contrasting sandstone and polished stone to decorate the ground floor.

In front of **Can Pere Ric** lies the 18th-century **Posada de Son Guitard** (located at *carrer de Can Palou*, 20). Various renovations have been carried out here, including on the

exterior façade and the traditional mortar covering, thus leaving open stone which allows for the perfect framing of the windows and the doorway to be observed. Like many of the houses from that era, the property had an olive press. Today, the olive oil receptacles and milling stones remain.

Turning down the street to the left visitors can once again see the **Sant Bartomeu Church** in the distance. **The recto-**



Of note in the 19th-century Can Pere Ric manor are the meticulously detailed decorative elements



Son Guitard (18th-century) underwent a renovation in order to expose the stonework of the façade



In the orange tree garden at the rectory a sundial from 1768 can be found on the interior façade

ry (located at *carrer Rec-toria*, 8-12) is on this same street. It is a building from the 18th-century, and it was constructed on top of a previous building.

The main doorway, an interior Renaissance doorway, and some other interior elements and recycled materials are the only parts of the former building that still remain. From the street, visitors can only appreciate the still intact neo-classical doorway inspired during the *Protorenaiement*

(Spain's first Renaissance). It has a large door with a lintel carved out of stone and topped with a triangular gable. In the gable there is a crest and two dates, 1630 and 1803. The last date almost certainly references the date that the reformations were carried out. The living area can be reached by passing through the outer doorway, and carrying on through a small courtyard with orange trees—formerly a vegetable garden. On the main façade of the house

there is a sundial from 1768 painted in black and white. If it is open, peek in a little bit, the rector won't mind.

On this same street,



The exterior façade of the rectory

visitors can find **Can de Haro** (at numbers 7-9), a magnificent 18th-century building whose reception hall doors can be appreciated if the doors to the street are opened. These inner doors are modern in style and are made of wood and glass. The doorway of the house is also noteworthy: a beautiful, rounded, voussiered, stone archway. The famous Majorcan poet Joan Alcover lived in this house.

Here, the route returns

to the starting point, the *plaça de la Vila*. From here we propose two further options: visiting the southern part of the town or taking a look around

the western part of the town center. The first option will take visitors past, among other things, the *Son Sant Joan* farmstead and some exemplary modernist buildings. The second choice will take visitors past some of the most impressive manors in Alaró.

The southern option (to *Son Sant Joan*) **E/10**

Returning to the first of the forks, this route leads partly down the last stretch of the original itinerary back to *plaça de la Vila* and the **Casal de Can Pere Ric**. From there the new path continues downhill. At *carrer Can Cladera*, number 25, visitors can stop at the end of the street to observe a colonial art deco style manor from 1931. Of



The Escola Graduada was inaugurated in 1934, and it was the symbol of Alaró during the Second Spanish Republic



The colonial art deco styled manor located on carrer de Can Cladera



The Can de Haro manor

note here is the stone molding with circular geometric patterns and modern trellis (similar examples can be seen in other buildings from the same period).

The flagship project and symbol of Alaró during the Republic was undoubtedly the **Escola Graduada** (located at *carrer Pere Rosselló Oliver*, 24) which has a 1920s regionalist style. The project was carried out by the architect Guillem Forteza, and it was finally opened on April 14, 1934.

Passing in front of the school, downwards on *carretera de Santa Maria*, visitors can admire a set of houses that lie outside of the town center and which make up the old *Son Sant Joan*

farmstead. Its origins can be dated back to the 13th-century, and it was originally made up of the farm houses, a stable, and an olive press (first described in 1458). A large part of the buildings that appeared afterwards were updated in the 19th and 20th centuries along with the renovation of the farmstead itself. If visitors reach the *Son Sant Joan* farmstead, they will have to return to the school and continue along *carrer de Pere Rosselló Oliver* (a street that is dedicated to the town's republican mayor who was executed by firing squad during the Spanish Civil War) and turn right onto *carrer Son Amengual*, to enjoy an example of a new modern dwelling, **es Casats** or **els Casals** (located at *carrer Son*

Amengual 26). This building is isolated from the rest of the nearby buildings as it has its own garden area. It is, without

a doubt, a beautiful example of modern architecture, which is embodied in the two semicircular parts of the structure that stand out from the central axis of its austere façade as well as the florally decorated exterior fence, the railings on the terraces and balconies, and the use of iron as a decorative and structural element.

Further up, *carrer Son Amengual* joins up with *carrer Can Pintat* to head towards another one of the many points where water was once distrib-



Son Sant Joan

uted, the pump at *Can Pintat*. This circular cistern, has a vertical wheel with a drainage line, all made out of iron.



Els Casals is a building that allows passersby to appreciate another example of modern architecture



The pump on carrer de can Pintat is circular and has an iron wheel



Can Marrigo is a 17th-century manor that has a notable doorway and iron balcony

This route comes to an end at an important piece of modern history for the municipality: **the Torre de l'Electricitat or electricity tower**. Situated on *avinguda de la Constitució*, just a little way down from *carrer de Can Pintat*, this is the only landmark that remains of the first power plant in Majorca (1901), opened under the auspices and hard work of the brothers Gaspar and Josep Perelló, two oil and soap salesmen. Actually, the remains are that of the base of the plant's smokestack which is made up of two concentric walls in the form of a pyramidal trunk, joined by a ladder. In the section titled "Alaró, a town of pioneers," this chapter in the history of Alaró is described in great detail.

This structure was classified as a BIC (good of cultural interest) in 2000, and the town government worked on its restoration one year later, the 100th anniversary of its inauguration.

This is the final stop on this route. Visitors need only return to the *plaça*



The electricity tower



Can Bereiol, the headquarters of the electricity plant (building located next to the electricity tower)

de la Vila, the starting point for all other treks.

The western option (to Pontarró) G/4

The second of the two alternatives starts in *plaça de la Vila* and continues onto *carrer Petit*, then *carrer Alejandro Rosselló*, and finally *avinguda de la Constitució* where the tour begins by turning onto *carrer del Camp Roig*. At number 20, visitors will find **Can Marrigo**, a 17th-century house with a stone façade



In front of the Son Manyes manor there is an area with a round cistern



The Bànyols townhouse



Rationalist style manor on carrer de Can Ros

covered with mortar drawn in irregular panels. Of note is the doorway and a balcony with an ornamental railing made in a modern style out of wrought iron.

There are many buildings that stand out along this stretch: numbers 25, 27, and 48-50 on this street are 19th and 20th-century buildings with carefully looked after façades where sandstone is the central element (both architecturally and aesthetically). At the end of this street, number 52, is **Son Manyes** a 13th-century building where the rounded arch doorway has been cut to give it more height. On this same doorway, a row of hanging roof tiles protect those entering or leaving the house from rain. Now

almost unrecognizable, the old house number—once used to organize the payment of taxes—can still be made out over the arch.

In front of this house, and somewhat hidden behind an olive tree, is the *Carregador de Son Manyes*, a cistern similar to the others which sits on a round stone slab that has been absorbed into the sidewalk.

The tour continues upwards along *carrer Can Manyoles*, and almost immediately at the intersection with *carrer Can Ros* and *carrer Pontarró* there are three elements worth taking a look at. On the

corner, at *carrer Can Manyoles*, number 1, is the **Posada de Bànyols** from the 18th-19th centuries. It was the house of the sculptor Llorenç Ros-selló. On the opposite corner, at *carrer Can Ros*,

number 30, there is a rationalist style building with a unique shape. Along the central vertical axis of the main façade protrudes a semicylindric body. The balconies are adorned with ornamental iron railings and, like the enclosure walls, trellises decorated with floral elements. We can see similar decorations at number 25 on *carrer de Can Clade-*



Son Manyes

ra. The third noteworthy building can be found at the beginning of *carrer Pontarró*. It is known as **sa Creu**, or “the cross,” because of the cross embedded in the wall. Made



Sa Creu



The Can Jaumico manor

out of sandstone, the only engraving is a token of Jesus Christ in its center. This is the meeting/starting point for the Easter Sunday procession.

A brief stop in front of **Can Jaumico** or *Ca s'Indiano* (carrer Pontarró, 11-15) will allow visitors to appreciate a modern manor, built towards the end of the 19th century. It is the fruit of the

economic boom that took place in Alaró thanks to the process of industrialization.

Jaume “Jaumico” Pizà opened the first shoe workshop here in 1870 and quickly began exporting to Puerto Rico. The building is reminiscent of typical Native American dwellings, and thus it was given the nickname *Ca s'Indiano* (the Indian

House). It is a large isolated manor surrounded by a large outdoor garden which boasts a large star pine tree (*Araucaria heterophylla*) that is over 100 years old. The floral elements etched into the stone corbels are also present in the balcony.

Continuing on *carrer Pontarró*, visitors will find another public washhouse: the 19th-century

Casal de Son Tugores (Son Tugores Manor)

Since 1994, this property has belonged to the municipal government. It hosts a large part of the cultural activities that take place in Alaró, and it consists of several different spaces, like the municipal library, presentation rooms, and other multipurpose rooms.

Passing through the farmland of *Son Tugores* was the irrigation canal that went to *Son Vidal* before emptying out into a large 25-by-5-meter reservoir located just behind the houses that used the flowing water to power their mills. The farmland associated with the manor was included in the Ses Artigues Spring qanat system, and even after the building's renovation, the remains of the watermill can still be seen in the public estate.



Some pieces of the ancient olive press, like the oil receptacles, have been conserved. Of course the manor can be visited, as long as it is open. Just next to, and sharing a wall with, this building is another that also belonged to the houses that made up *Son Tugores*. Although it is privately owned, it was built in the same time period and underwent a renovation in the 19th century.

The adjacent terraced gardens, or *Jardins de Son Tugores*, are also impressive. Once the property's olive grove, they are now a public area complete with a botanical garden and a children's playground.



The public gardens at the Son Tugores manor

Rentadors del Pontarró (the Pontarró wash-house). It consists of a rectangular wash basin made of stone and mortar, and it lies beneath a recently reformed portico.

Very nearby, just up the street, lies **Son Mas** (*carrer de Solleric*, 5), a 17th-18th-century manor that is presently divided into two separate properties. Originally, each one had a unique function: one served as a residence and the other was for agricultural and farming use (including an olive press). This manor is also



The Pontarró wash-house

known as *Antiga Tafona dels Deumes*.

Retracing our steps, the path continues up

carrer Camí de ses Barreres (an old part of *carrer de Sant Roc*) and turns at the intersection towards *plaça de Son Tugores*. Here visitors can find the 17th-century **cases de Son Tugores**—although the layout of the building only dates back to the 19th-century—and their attached gardens. The farmland associated with this urban residence once bordered the town center; today they have been completely absorbed by the town.

Returning to *carrer del Camí de Ses Barreres*, linking with *carrer Verge del Refugi*, and turning onto *carrer Jaume Colom*, visitors are left with the last part of the



Casal de Son Mas





The façade of Can Roua is notable for its well-crafted hewn-stone ashlars

itinerary which passes in front of the **casa de Ses Caves** or **Can Morro** (*carrer Jaume Colom*, 21). This 17th-century dwelling houses the best stone staircase in Alaró. The manor that includes numbers 9 and 13 on this same street serves as a good example of the mid-17th-century academism style, which here, is present in the decoration and composition of the building. The main façade has been preserved in its original state.



The manor on carrer del metge Jaume Colom

Finally, continuing onto *carrer de Can Ros*, at number 25 sits the **Can Roua** building (or *Can Jaumico*). The material and technique with which the façade was built is worth mentioning: the whole wall is made up of rough-cut stone ashlars ordered regularly along the façade and set with very tight joints, almost the only specimen of its kind in Alaró. It was the first house to have been converted into a shoe factory,

and afterwards it was converted into a chicken and rabbit farm. Today, it has been converted once again, this time into a house with a bar and restaurant on the ground floor. The building has undergone a complete renovation as the upper floors were large rooms designed for industrial use. The route finishes where it began, in the *plaça de la Vila*.



The house of Ses Caves or Can Morro



The corner of carrer Can Ros and carrer Jaume Colom



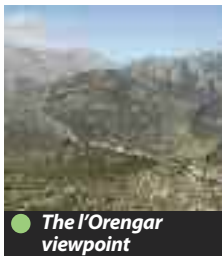
Walking around Alaró:

● *Alaró castle*

DIFFICULTY: EASY-MEDIUM

DISTANCE: 4,2 KM.

TIME: 3 HOURS AND 45 MINUTES (WALKING) / 1H AND 15 MIN (VEHICLE)

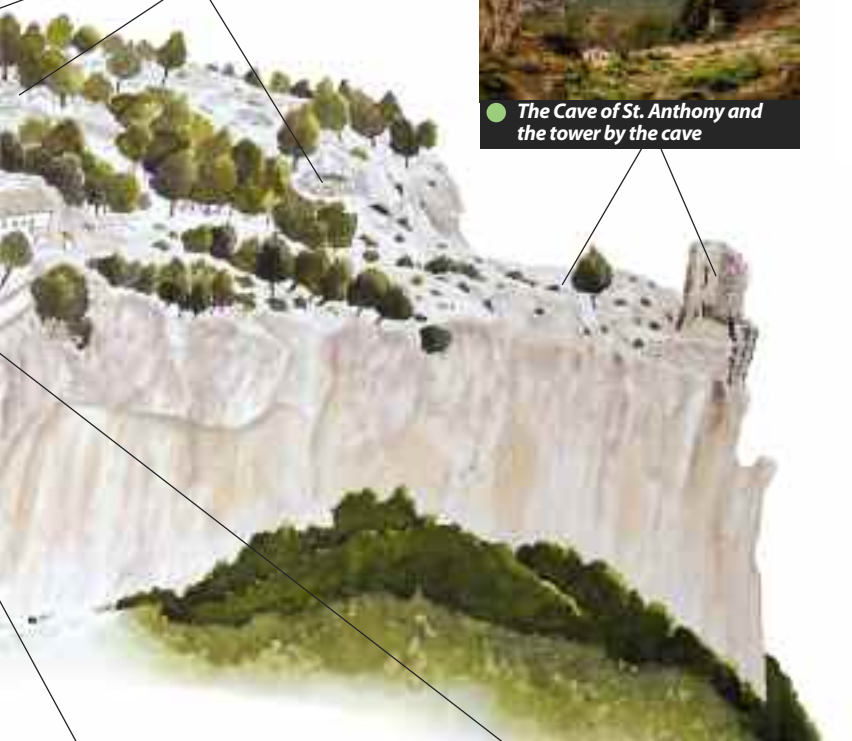




● *Water cisterns*



● *The Cave of St. Anthony and the tower by the cave*



● *Guest house*



● *Oratory of the Virgin of the Refuge*



orway



The way up

The climb up to Alaró Castle is one of the most spectacular

outings in this beautiful mountainous region. The path makes up part of the Dry Stone Trail (*Ruta de Pedra en Sec*) that has been cared for and way-marked by the Majorcan government (*Consell de Mallorca*).

The castle is located on top of *Puig d'Alaró* (Alaró Peak). The strength of the fortress is clearly evidenced by its location; the vertical mountain walls make it inaccessible from nearly all sides, save one, and the only point of entry is the path that leads to the monument.

The *camí del Castell* (Castle trail) is paved at the beginning, and thus vehicles circulate on this stretch. The last part of the trail—past the *Pla del Pouet*—can only be traversed on foot.

This route starts in the town center of Alaró, and visitors need only follow the signs that point towards *carretera d'Orient*.



Here, the path is clearly marked, and it is difficult to get lost. Once on *carretera d'Orient*, signs

point walkers in the right direction, and a sign post marks the turn left towards the ascent to the castle. The first part of this section is paved and goes past the **Son Curt** farmland. In fact, the path is bordered by the farm's fence. A little further on are some houses that are part of the **Son Penyafior** farmland, which is currently an agro-tourism destination.

From here the trail splits. The original one is more direct as it shortcuts the more frequented concrete path.

If walkers cannot find the ancient pathway and instead continue along



The façade of Son Curt



Es Verger



The walk up to the Castle is one of the most spectacular hikes in this beautiful area.

the roadway, a little farther ahead, just behind the boundary wall that divides the *Son Penyaflor* and *Es Verger* estates, there is a marker that will direct those who wish to leave the cement path towards the original trail.

The itinerary continues upwards through olive and pine groves, following curves designed to ease the intense slope of the climb and crossing over the direct trail many times until finally leaving it behind a few hundred meters before reaching



The beginning of the trail that leads up to the Castle



The interior courtyard at Son Penyaflor

the cases *d'Es Verger*, where it continues on through a forest and ends up at the base of the mountain's cliffs on top of which lays the castle. From here, the trail is unmistakable, and it leads directly to the first line of the fortress' defensive walls. On this last part of stone path, visitors are treated to magnificent views of the municipality and its surroundings. On the rugged reddish cliff faces (which according to legend are red from the spilled blood of the defenders the castle), behind trekkers as they make their final upwards



push towards the castle, are a number of native endemic plant species that would certainly interest any naturalist.

Reaching the top

The structural military elements of the stronghold include an outer wall that is adapted to the undulations of the craggy rock and an interior wall—the castle itself—that is made up of three close range watchtowers and a main watchtower designated for the lord of the castle.

The first enclosure is accessed via the main outer door, a large rounded gateway that houses no trace of the double doors that once kept intruders out. Once past this first wall, stairs lead visitors to a crenellated tower known as the *Torre de l'Homenatge* (tower of homage) or the *Constipador* (congestor), which must be passed through in order to enter the fortification. The *Constipador* got its name from the fact that, after making the difficult ascent to the castle, visitors would take a rest and escape the heat under the

tower, where the pleasant but deceiving breeze has caused more than a handful of colds!

This tower has become the stalwart emblem of the castle, and of the citizens of Alaró, for that matter.

The military installations that can be seen are the 14th-century ruins of a gothic period castle. Due to its strategic importance, many walls were planned and built and much maintenance was carried out in the decades following the *Reconques-*

ta (reconquering), at which time the castle also became a permanent military post.

Among the elements that were included in the building of the rocky castle were rooms for servants, kitchens, many flour mills, ovens for baking, and water cisterns.

The most important time in the history of Alaró Castle was during the 13th, 14th, and 15th-centuries, when the Royal House of Majorca reigned and was eventually incorporated into the Crown of



The Tower of Homage or “The Congestor”



View of the Tramuntana mountain range from the l'Orengar viewpoint

Aragon. The fortification was progressively abandoned, although a military garrison was kept there until 1741. Despite efforts to the contrary, most of the medieval towers have not been able to stand up to the passing of time, and thus they are partially collapsed as no recent renovations or archeological excavations have been carried out in the area.

Once making it through **the wall** and visiting the watchtowers, there is a winding path that leads uphill from the plateau to a group of more modern buildings: the oratory and the guest residence. There are two dry stone walls near this sloped portion of the path; they serve as viewpoints: one called the *Orengar* and the other the *Mirador*.

From the **Orengar** visitors can see a beautiful panorama of the largest mountains in the *Serra de Tramuntana*. The name “*Orengar*” comes from the wild oregano that grows on the cliffs. The view spans from the *Serra d'Alfàbia* to *Puig de Massanella* and includes the mountains *l'Ofre*, *Tossals Verds*, and Majorca's largest: *Puig Major*.

The second lookout offers visitors a view of half of the entire island at a glance: from the Bay of Palma to the mountains in Felanitx. On clear days even the silhouette of the Cabrera archipelago is

ings have been erected.

As was normal in medieval fortifications, the castle had a gothic chapel so that the personnel stationed there could comply with their spiritual obligations.



Viewpoint from where visitors can see the southern part of Majorca

visible. From here at night, thousands of lights from across the island flicker, seemingly at the foot of the castle.

All of the area has been included in the Natura 2000 network as a Site of Community Importance and a Special Protection Area for birds. Furthermore, it makes up a part of the protected natural area in Majorca's *Serra de Tramuntana* mountain range.

Upon reaching the top, visitors will find an open area where a series of build-

Over the years the defensive role of the fortress subsided and religious services and gatherings became more and more important. With the 1622 construction of the *Oratori de la Verge del Refugi del Castell d'Alaró* (Oratory of the Virgin of the Refuge of Alaró Castle), the site was definitively converted into a sanctuary for the inhabitants of Alaró. The building was made possible thanks to the initiative of the parish priest at that time, Joan Coll, who was also in-



involved with the enlargement of the Sant Bartomeu Church and was a fervent defender of the worship of the martyrs Guillem Cabrit and Guillem Bassa.

The first stone in the construction of the **oratory** was laid on March 29, 1622, during a largescale pilgrimage to the site to beg for rain after a long drought. After it was completed, on November 6 of the same year, two ribs from the martyrs Guillem Cabrit and Guillem Bassa were transferred to the oratory from their tombs in the *Capella de la Pietat* (Piety chapel) below the organ in the Palma Cathedral.

The building is rather small and has austere architecture. The main doorway, made out of sandstone, is designed in a Renaissance style. The doorway is preceded by a portico covered by a double sloped roof with Arabic roof tiles that is held up by a rounded arch and

octagonal pilasters. Under the portico are two wooden braces that support the roof. The apex is topped with a sundial.

The interior of the oratory is made up of only one room with a barrel vault, ceramic floors, and

ures from Alaró, Guillem Cabrit and Guillem Bassa, who reached martyr and almost saintly status after they bravely defended Alaró Castle. In the sacristy there is a shrine of Cabrit and Bassa, and a substantial collection of

offerings made to the image of the Virgin. In 1622, the chapel and sacristy were added to the original building.

The use of the castle as a religious site is further evidenced by the modern *Via Crucis* (Way of the Cross)—installed in the 1990s after the original tilework disappeared in 1907—which

serves to lead visitors from the last fork in the path up to the castle. The original *Via Crucis* was a trail with multicolored tiles depicting the Stations of the Cross. Now, due to vandalism, there are scarcely remains of the original work. The last Stations were depicted on the walls of the buildings in the *plaça del Oratorio*,



Oratory of the Virgin of the Refuge

walls decorated with embossed plant motifs by Italian artist Antonio Soldati.

The apse is semicircular and contains an altar situated behind a Baroque altarpiece with an image of the Virgin Mary.

On either side of the altarpiece are the representations of the two most well-known historical fig-



Sa Taverneta

which have recently been renovated.

Celebrations at the castle

On the Sunday following Easter, a climb up to the castle is organized to celebrate the *Festa de l'Àngel* (The Feast of the Angel) or *Pancaritat*. In Majorca, hikes to hermitages and sanctuaries have always been organized during the week following Easter so that trekkers can share and enjoy the last of the previous week's empanadas.

On the first Sunday of September, the Nativity of the Virgin Mary is celebrated with a collective meal in front of the oratory.

The stronghold was never properly populated, but it has had various inhabitants throughout the centuries: from military units to 17th-century hermits to today's inkeepers (*donats*) who

manage the guesthouse and open the hermitage daily from 9:00 in the morning.

Somewhat separated from the main set of buildings lays a set of six well preserved **water cisterns** with Arabic design features and which provided water to the main

structures on the site. Even farther away, visitors can head to the southeast of the mountain to visit the most remote tower, complete with crenellated walls and arrow slits. This tower has been popularly referred to as the ***Presó dels Moros*** or the ***Torre de sa Cova***.

Very near this last watchtower is the opening to the ***Cova de Sant Antoni*** (the Cave of St. Anthony). Visitors, however, will find no signs to help them locate it. This impressive and irregular opening breaks through the same craggy cliff face that defines the castle and can be seen from the foot of *Puig d'Alaró*. From inside, it offers a spectacular view of the surround-



The celebration of the Feast of the Angel or Pancaritat



The guest house



ing lands. This cavern served as a 17th-century hermitage, too.

In 1931, the entire set of buildings on the site was declared a *Bé d'Interès Cultural* (good of cultural interest).

The area where all of the buildings are located is public property, managed by the *Fundació Castell d'Alaró* (Alaró Castle Foundation), which is made up of the Alaró Town Hall, the Diocese of Majorca, and the Majorcan government (*Consell de Mallorca*). For years, however, the citizens of Alaró have fought to put the castle in the hands of the municipality. This bizarre story begins in 1811, when the federal government put the fortress up for sale. Through the incredible financial effort of the citizens of Alaró, the monument was purchased. The main symbol of the municipality was finally in the hands of its inhabitants. But, thanks to an expropriation law drafted in 1885, the central government once again auctioned off the property

Staying at the castle

The installations at Alaró Castle offer visitors the romantic opportunity to spend the night inside the walls of an ancient mountain-top castle for the modest price of €12-€15 per person. To go on this adventure, visitors only need to bring a sleeping bag and a towel.

A complete renovation was carried out to install a heating system throughout the guesthouse, as well as a snack bar and a restaurant.

Foods can be ordered ahead of time at the restaurant, and the bar can also make visitors some food. The guesthouse can host up to 30 people. Here, there are no great luxuries nor an extensive menu. Water is scarce, and all supplies are brought up by donkeys who, along with the innkeeper, are the only permanent residents at the castle.

**Reserve ahead of time:
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that was now no longer theirs. Fortunately, the oratory, the guest house, and the area enclosed by the ancient walls were excluded from this sale, and to this day, they still belong to the municipality.

When returning to the town of Alaró, visitors can opt to retrace their steps or take the turn indicated by a wooden signpost that leads to *el Pouet* and eventually the *cases d'Es Verger*, which have been partially converted into a restaurant. Here visitors can savor the restaurant's famous lamb shoulder.

For those who plan to make the trip in a vehicle, the easiest option is to leave it in the parking lot of the *Es Verger* restaurant and take the *el Pouet* trail.

The Castle in ancient times



The Cave of St. Anthony



The conquest of James I

A popular tale tells of James I climbing up to and taking the castle: After conquering the rest of the island of Majorca, Alaró Castle remained in the hands of the Muslims. James I the Conqueror and his troops charged the fortification by way of the path up to the castle, as there is no other point from which to mount an attack. Ever vigilant, the men in the watchtowers saw him approaching. Believing that they could overpower the monarch, they came down from their towers to apprehend him.

But they were unsuccessful; they did not make the king retreat even one step. The assailants themselves were quickly under attack and had to retreat, for in combat, there was no man who could defeat King James and his horse.

On the steepest part of the approach, where the stairs begin, the king's horse sprang up and advanced towards the enemy with such a force that it left hoof marks on the rocks that are still visible today.



The animal continued onward and upward, like a bird, and King James swung his sword, first to the right, then to the left, until his adversaries' heads flew through the air and their bodies fell to the floor. The Saracens' blood covered everything and even to this day it has not been able to be cleaned from the rocks and the grass that grows in the area.

The conqueror continued his ascent with the Christians behind him, and the enemies that had not fallen climbed the stairs to lock themselves in the castle. But, at the last moment, the king managed to prevent them from closing the door, and he and his troops rushed in.

The besieged residents of the rocky castle could only escape the Christians by throwing themselves from the heights.

To avoid hurting themselves, they put *gerres* (earthenware jars) over their heads because, as a shepherd from the valley told them, it would protect them from harm. It is not hard to imagine what was left of the *gerres* or of those who threw themselves off; the largest piece that anyone could find was no bigger than an ear.



Walking around Alaró:

● *Walk from Ses Artigues to Orient*

DIFFICULTY: EASY-MEDIUM

DISTANCE: 4,4 KM.

TIME: 3 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES

This hike begins in Alaró town, in the Los Damunt neighborhood on *carrer de Son Duran* following the *torrent de S'Estret* and continuing next to *S'Escaleta* towards the hill with the Cals Reis watch tower and *Puig de Can Llendirina*, and finally ending up in Orient.

Along this itinerary, visitors will be able to see part of the ancient Arabic water system that supplied the town of Alaró with water.

The walk starts in the Los Damunt neighborhood, and goes through *plaça de Cabrit i Bassa* which contains an element that hints at the old water system that runs through the entire town: a cistern with a manual iron pump that is no longer used.

Continuing upwards on *carrer de Son Duran* with the torrent on the right hand side and the

Can Corona houses behind, the itinerary passes in front of the *cases de Sa Font des Jardí* which are right next to the riverbed. This was the first of a system of 10 water powered flour mills that

known as the *font dels Molins* (Spring of the Mills).

The building that protects the Sa Font mill is rectangular, and on top of being a grain mill, it



Cases de Sa Font des Jardí

were incorporated into the qanat of the *font de ses Artigues* (Town Spring). The mills got their names from their owners: *Sa Font, Ca na Fara, Son Borràs, Son Bieló, Son Vidal, Son Tugores, Son Berní, Son Ibert, Es Molinàs,* and *Bànyols*. In the 17th century, this spring was also

also doubled as a defensive tower.

A little further up on this walk lays a surprisingly large reservoir. It was built in 2008, and has the capacity to hold 5500 m³ of water. Built by the *Comunitat de Regants de la font de Ses Artigues* (Ses Artigues Spring Irrigation Com-



Mills

The mills were modest buildings with simple machinery that allowed for them to be easily fixed and maintained. The water in the main canal was diverted through a secondary canal that brought it to a basin, below which was positioned the mill. The force of the falling water was enough to set the machinery in motion. After being run through the mill, the water was used to irrigate crops in the immediate vicinity or was stored in pools, as it could not be brought back up to the main water system. Traces of the ancient waterways are still visible over the houses. And along the pathway, there are traces of the canal that went to a new mill, but currently, the water is transported in pipes. The water was for everyone; thus it had to be distributed equally, and consumption was strictly regulated and structured. At some points in history, this became a divisive issue, so in 1293, the position of *siquier* was created to manage the use of water.

munity), the reservoir is filled by the spring of the same name.

Near this reservoir is the Ses Artigues estate from which the qanat derives its name. The water from the spring was diverted through a system of uncovered canals to Alaró town; today, however, it is

piped. The canals passed through the whole town center until finishing their circuit in the Son Fortesa estate.

Following the itinerary and leaving the *cases de Ses Artigues* on the left, visitors can see that almost all of the cobblestoned path has been destroyed and replaced

with a concrete one. It continues upwards through a terraced area but never strays from the riverbed.

The terraced area in *s'Estret*

The terracing in this area was built as a result of the parceling of com-



The water from the Ses Artigues Spring was directed through a canal to Alaró



munal lands between 1673 and 1674, after a fire devastated the s'Estret township. The terraces are crude but very suited to the region. For the most part, they serve to cultivate olive groves, with some small almond orchards in the lower part.

There are newer buildings on both sides of the path as well as huts that served as places to take shelter while farming activities were going on and also for storing tools. The path carries on through half-abandoned olive groves—some of which have been completely recovered recently—and bastions of ancient holm oaks amongst encroaching invasive pines. The technical expertise in-

volved with the stonework is impressive. Even the riverbed has tiered stone elements that were intended to reduce erosion and the power that an onslaught of water could produce, and therefore enable it to be better captured.

The trail is unmistakable and continues up the valley, finally reaching *s'Estret*, a natural narrow part of the valley that gives its name to the torrent that follows visitors along part of the hike. Once past *s'Estret*, the path makes some tight steep turns.

Visitors should stay on the trail until passing the Ca na Magdalena estate.



S'Estret torrent

Leaving the barrier on the left hand side, from the beginning of the private path towards the houses and following the original trail a little more than 100 meters, a pathway opens up to the left. Cairns, some red marks made with paint, and even the name “Orient” written on the concrete, mark the way.

The path that has been taken up to this point must be abandoned, and walkers must instead turn onto the *s'Escaleta* trail—the old footpath between Orient and Alaró.

Once on this path, it is





Sa Plana is a pass that opens up towards Orient. This open area is a point where many trails come together. At the far end of the pass, visitors are treated to a view of the Orient valley

difficult to lose it thanks to the quantity of markers that have been put up. Here, visitors will reach the *Pas de s'Escaleta*, a point where transit is particularly difficult; thus, a stone wall was built and steps were added that act as a ladder.

Once this bottleneck is passed, walkers will soon reach a small flat area with a humid oak grove which was used extensively throughout the centuries by charcoal makers. The large number of *barraques*—simple huts where workers took shelter—are evidence of this practice, as are the scattering of remains left behind by the charcoal makers and the round areas they built to prepare the charcoal.

As the trail progresses, the flatter it gets, until reaching *Sa Plana*, a pass that is open to the *Vall d'Orient* (Orient Valley). This open area is a point where many trails converge, some leading to the town of Orient and others returning to Alaró. At the end of the pass a view of the Orient Valley opens up. Orient itself is a small town with little more than 40 residents. It is undeniably

charming, and thus it attracts a large number of visitors throughout the year.

The trail continues and links up with a roadway that is wide enough for carts to travel on. It was undoubtedly designed for the transportation of charcoal. The itinerary leads downwards and

eventually takes visitors into Orient—part of the municipality of Bunyola. The path, over some stretches made with stone, passes by a spring called *la Fonteta* and then runs into *carretera d'Orient* at kilometer 11.2.



Charcoal makers

The thousand-year-old technique for making charcoal involved stacking wood in the form of a silo in a circular opening. This would be covered with clay and branches before being set alight. This arrangement was known as a *carboner* or *rotlo de sitja*. The wood generally came from holm oak trees and had to burn slowly. Charcoal makers had to be constantly vigilant in order to get a quality product. During burning sessions, which could last days, charcoal makers took shelter in the rudimentary *barraques* (huts), where they could catch some rest while still keeping an eye on the silos.



4 *Alaró's natural heritage*

The heritage of a place is not measured solely by the architectural and cultural elements present—which in Alaró are noteworthy and undoubtedly make the municipality very attractive—but also by the preservation of its environmental endowments. Treat them with respect, as the locals will look down on anyone who does anything to damage the area's environmental legacy.



The Son Fortesa holm oak grove

This is a magnificent holm oak (*Quercus ilex*) forest in which the trees can be up to 300 or even 400 years old. Some reach 30 meters in height and 5 meters in circumference. This small grove, which is just over 10,000 m² and has been protected since 2001, lays with-



in the Son Fortesa farmland and runs up to the roadway that links Alaró and Lloseta. This forested area is still used today to graze the native breed of black pig.

Some benches located between the roadway and the wall that marks the forest's border allow passersby to enjoy the beauty of this landscape.

The Son Guitard pine tree

The Son Guitard pine tree is an exemplary Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*). Extraordinary due to its size and age, this tree is known and loved by the people of Alaró. It measures 23 meters high and 4.5 meters in circumference, and it is estimated to be between 250 and 300 years old. The tree gets its name from the Son Guitard estate where it is located. Since 1992, it has been a catalogued and protected specimen.

The Sa Bastida Spring eucalyptus

This is a healthy and spectacular foreign tree that is rather uncommon in the Balearic Islands: a



The Sa Bastida Spring eucalyptus

eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*). It is about 18 meters tall, and its trunk measures 2 meters in diameter. It is located along the old vegetable garden next to the Sa Bastida Spring and is estimated to be around 100 years old.



The Son Guitard pine tree

The Sa Bastida hackberry

This hackberry (*Celtis australis*) that rises above the *plaça de Sa Bastida* in the Los Damunt neighborhood has a value that goes beyond its being a mere exemplary tree. It is a fixture that makes up part of Alaró's living history: great men and leaders from Alaró would meet here to make decisions that would affect the future of the municipality. The tree is estimated to be 200 years old; it measures 8 meters tall and has a circumference of 2.6 meters.

The S'Escorxador banana trees

This group of considerably sized banana trees (*Platanus orientalis*) can be found on the public grounds of the old slaugh-



The Sa Bastida hackberry



The Casa d'Amunt elm tree

terhouse (*s'Escorxador*), which has been converted into a youth center. Some of the trees are over 25 meters tall and have circumferences of up to 3.7 meters.

The Casa d'Amunt elm tree

A unique specimen (*Ulmus minor*) that measures 80 centimeters in diameter and 18 meters in height, this tree is located along with a few others in the small elm grove at the

Casa d'Amunt in the *Clot d'Almadrà* village. This is one of the few examples of an elm grove that has not been affected by Dutch elm disease (*Graphium ulmi*), a plague that is destroying elm trees across Europe.

Poplars, elm trees, and banana trees at *Son Fortesa*

This is a notable group of trees that are very rare in the municipality of

Alaró: poplars (*Populus nigra*), elm trees (*Ulmus minor*), and banana trees (*Platanus orientalis*). They can be found on the part of the walk to Orient that passes through the *Son Fortesa* property.

The elm trees were seriously affected by Dutch elm disease (*Graphium ulmi*), but they are currently recovering. As elm trees are very rare not only in the municipality but in the whole island of Majorca, it is crucial that they be cared for and allowed to properly recover.



The S'Escorxador banana trees



Banana trees at Son Fortesa



5 Alaró, memories etched in stone



Properties

The following farmhouses are particularly beautiful because of their façades, which adhere to the purest of Majorcan traditions: elevated or elongated wall faces with uncovered stone ashlars, various types of windows and balconies, and arched doorways.

El Clot d'Almadrà **U/17**

Almadrà is a valley located in a karstic depres-

sion. It is the main pathway that leads to the *refugi dels Tossals Verds* (a publically cared for mountain shelter) in the Escorca municipality. *El Clot d'Almadrà* has three farmhouses that make up a small village: *Son Ordines*, *Can Xalet*, and the *Casa d'Amunt*. The *Casa d'Amunt* is a place name that appears in the *Llibre del Repartiment* (Land Distribution Registry; 1232), which references one of the oldest properties in Alaró. The main façade faces east and is clearly

divided into three levels, like the majority of Majorcan houses from the era: a ground floor, a main floor, and an attic. The windows are distributed evenly, and the main doorway is a rounded arch with voussoirs made out of sandstone. On one of the sides there is a sundial with no inscription. Other noteworthy elements are the olive press and the kiln in the back courtyard.

The Clot d'Almadrà bridge

The map created by Cardinal Antoni Despuig (1784) has an important path marked on it which, shortly before reaching the Almadrà valley, crosses a torrent with the same name via a cobblestone ford. Here, just before getting to the houses at *Son Ordines*, *Casa d'Amunt*, and *Can Xalet*, a bridge rises up. It is exactly where it is marked on the ancient map, and it is held up by wide pillars, suggesting that the torrent had, and still could have, intense peak flowrates. Of the three rounded arches, two of them are similar in size (2.7 meters high by 3.65 meters wide), while the third is somewhat smaller (2.5 meters by 2.6 meters). The arches have stone bases and sandstone vaults, the rest of the structure is made out of stone and mortar. Between the two identical openings, at the base of the pillar, a semi-circular breakwater was built to split the current between the two archways.

Can Xalet is another one of the buildings in this small village; it dates back to the 12th-13th-centuries. It is a three-story manor with irregularly distributed doors and windows. The main doorways are located on the right side of the main façade: one leads to the living space and is a rounded arch with a voussoirs and a keystone made of stone, the other leads to a chapel and has bases, jambs, and capitals with moldings made

of stone, too. The chapel is decorated with Baroque paintings. Almost all of the details on the façade have been created with stone. The roof is made with Arabic roof tiles, and it has a bell gable with an oval arch. The agricultural annex is located in front of the main building and appears to be totally abandoned. In front of the hayloft is a cistern that used to provide water to the house.

Completing the triangle is the 12th-century *Son Ordines d'Almadrà*. Its outer doorway, located asymmetrically on the side of the façade is topped with a rounded arch with a stone lintel and a decorative wrought iron feature. The outer doorway leads to an entrance hall protected by an archway that is connected to the courtyard.

The houses are situated around this square cobblestone courtyard where the stately houses share the chapel (13th-century), the olive press

facilities, and the agricultural annex.

To the right of the main doorway there are five windows with stone frames that are barred off with wrought iron, and on the main floor, there are another four windows with balconies. The veranda on the top floor has five horizontal windows with relief frames. Above the entrance hall that connects the outer doorway and the courtyard, there is a terrace with an iron railing.

The rectangular room that houses olive press is located towards the back of the courtyard and the date "1769" appears on the doorway. The press is modern; it is made of metal and uses hydraulics. Next to this there is a room where the oil is stored. In the center of the courtyard there is a cistern.

Solleric **S/16**

Solleric is one of the largest mountain properties, and the same can be



The main façade of Solleric



Hunting Song Thrushes

One of the traditional methods of hunting in Majorca, and in particular in the Tramuntana mountain range, involves the use of nets to capture Song Thrushes. This hundreds-of-years-old method is popular in Alaró, and to do it requires stringing a net between two long poles to capture the birds. The poles, which are controlled by hand, connect the net on both sides and can be up to seven meters long.

The Song Thrush is a 24cm tall migratory bird that can be found on the island in autumn and winter. During the day, the birds make short flights between the trees near where they sleep and eat. Hunters take advantage of these daily movement patterns to capture the birds. They hold the poles in the spaces between trees where the birds

have been spotted (called *colls* in Catalan; it is from here that Catalan name for this hunting method, *filats en coll*, is derived). Once the bird gets tangled in the net, the hunter brings the two poles together, closing the net and thus trapping the bird.

The hunting grounds, also called *colls*, have specific names derived from the names of hunters or characteristics of the place: *es Foradet, sa Roca, es Tubo, es Pins, en Marc, na Maria*, etc.

There are three times of day that are good for hunting: at dawn, during the morning until midday, and in the evening from four o'clock until sunset.

Renting out these hunting areas is one of the main sources of income for mountain properties. Some people pay up to €3,000 for one coll!

Song Thrushes are also used in a dish typical to Alaró: thrushes with cabbage; it can only be enjoyed in private homes though, as the birds cannot be sold in restaurants.

said for the houses associated with it. The property was known in the times of Muslim rule under the name *Alqueria Xular*. It was also referenced in the 13th and 14th-centuries when it was given to the Guitard family after the Catalan conquest.

Solleric was a large mountain estate not just

because of the area it covered, but also due to the number of people that worked there; it provided permanent employment to between 50 and 60 people, but those numbers grew by 200-300 when the olive harvest came around. By the end of the 19th-century, the estate covered 1000 *quarterades* (equivalent

to 710 hectares) and produced 120,000 tons of high quality olive oil, some of the most produced by any Majorcan estate. Archduke Ludwig Salvator told of two olive presses that existed on the property, each with two large beam-sized levers. His comments speak to the importance of the olive oil industry.

In the 1950s, the estate pioneered equestrian breeding (specifically mules) via artificial insemination.

In 1966, Sollerich changed hands and became the property of the Gilet family (current).

Springs abound on the estate (*Font de sa Figuera, Fuente Blanca, Font des Verro, Fontasa d'Oliclar, Font de sa Gruta*, etc.) as do traditional Song Thrush hunting grounds, where the birds would be (and still are) captured using nets.

The outer doorway is made up of a basket arch with jambs and molding. One of the stairways on the right-hand side of the entrance goes down to the chapel (one of the three porticos that can be found on the property).

The buildings are situated around a cobblestoned courtyard that divides the old three-story residence of the lords of the estate, the guest/workers quarters, the building for pressing olives, the chapel (with an inscription from 1713), and the recently renovated farming annex.

The front face and the windows and doors of the façade of the main residence are built out of stone. The double- and single-sloped rooves are made with

Arabic roofing tiles.

The building that houses the olive press can be seen by going from the courtyard through a linteled archway. The press was used up until the 1980s, and some of the original pieces have been kept even though the process was mechanized in the 21st century. The building is divided into two rooms, in the first is the machinery where the milling and the pressing occurs, the second is where the old deposits are located and where the olives were selected and decanted.

The property has an 18th-century chapel where the main doorway bears the family coat of arms. The chapel itself has only one nave with a semicircular apse that houses a Baroque wooden altar. The oratory is decorated with Baroque frescos, and there is an organ above the choir.

The entrance to the wine cellar is located next to the outer doorway. The doorway to the cellar has a rounded arch, and inside there

are wineskins and amphorae. The floor is the original stonework.

Behind the buildings, there is a stable (1929) and a kiln.

Among the water-related installations are a cistern, a square pool, and a water reservoir located behind the house.

In front of the main façade are a lawn and a fountain. An exterior staircase, with the railing and steps made out of stone, leads to the outer façade. On the railing there is a coat of arms under which reads “*Any 1901*” (Year 1901).

A large amount of stone was taken from *Sollerich* to help build some of the houses in the historic center of Alaró town as well as the main altar in the *Església de Sant Bartomeu* (Sant Bartomeu Church).

Es Verger Q/18

On the way up to Alaró Castle is the Es Verger estate, an old farmstead with Arabic origins. It



Alcadena

was an immense piece of land that is currently divided into four different properties. The estate's three houses are located in one area as attached blocks. The first is the old farming annex which has been turned into a restaurant.

The walls are white-washed and lined in grey.

Here, some of the most noteworthy elements are the old flour mill (from which some pieces have been preserved), part of an olive press, and a kiln. The olive press still has the old hopper, the stone receptacles covered by half barrel vaults, and in the adjoining room there are stone and ceramic receptacles for storing the oil. The oil that was produced in *Es Verger* was highly valued in the area for its quality.

Water related elements include a cistern, a pool, and a reservoir behind the houses (*camí des Pouet*).

Alcadena U/18

The Alcadena estate is located on the southern side of *Puig de s'Alcadena* (s'Alcadena Peak), from which it gets its name.

The houses located on the property are, as with the majority of estates in Alaró, situated around a cobblestoned courtyard. The buildings include the house of the lords, the building for olive pressing, a set of farming annexes, stables, and a house for seasonal workers which has been reformed into a warehouse.

Visitors enter the

The lovers of *Son Penyaflor*

They say that in the 14th-century the love between Blanca, the daughter of an estate owner, and young Jordi, the new governor of Alaró castle was so extraordinary that the estate was given the name *Son Penyaflor* in their honor.

Three times the father of the young girl, Arnau de Vilargut Serralta, publicly forbade the marriage of the two because the young groom-to-be Jordi Unís Moncada was a supporter of Pedro el Ceremonioso, who seized the Kingdom of Majorca from James III. But destiny would thrice snub Don Arnau's denials.

When first refusing to give his daughters hand he proclaimed, "loyal blood shall never be mixed with that of a traitor, the mountain sides will fall from the Castle before I allow such a union!"

That same night, a strong storm dislodged part of the Alaró Peak cliff face.

This enraged Arnau even further, so he declared, "from these terrible rocks bought down by the powers of hell, flowers will grow before I consent to such a wicked thing!"

Sure enough, when spring came around, violets burst forth from the fallen cliffs.

But even after this, Arnau still refused to give in. "I said that true loyal blood shall never be mixed with the tainted blood of a traitor so long as I live!"

And sure enough, the father of young Blanca died in June, and in November, the bishop married the two lovers in the Cathedral of Palma.

courtyard through an architrave doorway with stone and wooden ash-lars. The façade of the main house is divided into three levels, and doorways and windows are distributed evenly across it.

The main doorway is a rounded sandstone arch with jambs and a lintel carved out of stone; the rest of the doorway is made out of antique wood. All of the windows on the front of the building are framed with pieces of stone.

To the left of the main façade is a portico with wooden beams that is supported by ornamented columns. Under the

portico there is a small stone sculpture of the Virgin Mary (against the wall of the main house) and some stone wash basins. A linteled doorway leads to the olive press room, where some of the main pieces of the original machine have been conserved: the hopper, the drum, the wooden beam press, the cauldron for heating water, and a large rectangular stone receptacle where the oil was decanted.

Son Penyaflor Q/19

The first text that documented the existence of these houses is from 1345, and it makes refer-

ence to the estate as the property of Ramón de Penyaflor, even though the surname is known to have existed since shortly after the *Reconquesta* (“reconquering”). In 1967, the property was bought by the current owners.

Son Penyaflor can be reached by the path that leads up to Alaró Castle. The trail to the houses leads to the outer doorway with a stone lintel, above which appears a plaque with the inscription “*Mare de Déu del Refugi, pregau per noltros*” (Mother of God, Virgin of the Refuge, pray for us).

The house of the lords, the guest/workers’ quarters, the chapel, a portico with a kiln, a set of farming annexes, and the sheep pen are all located around the cobblestoned courtyard. The whole set of buildings (especially the annexes, which are now used for agro-tourism) underwent largescale renovations in 1966.

Once through the outer doorway, a rounded arched entrance hall leads to the main courtyard. To the left is the

The *camí de Bànyols* (The Bànyols walkway)

This is the cart path that joined the road to Raiguer with the Bànyols estate. It was described as early as the 17th century, and was made public in 1861. Throughout the years it has been known by various names: *camí de Binissalem a Alaró per Terragrossa*, *camí de los Moliners*, and *camí de Bànyols*. Currently, it is still the shortest path between the municipalities of Binissalem and Alaró.

There is an important piece of cultural heritage along the path: a 100-meter stretch of pristinely constructed stone walkway. It lies on the border of the two municipalities. Regarding the farmland and other buildings that make up *Bànyols*, the old olive press can be found almost entirely intact along with the feeding troughs in the courtyard, a kiln alongside the house, a hayloft, a pigeon loft, a stable, a large water tank, and a cistern.

entrance to the oratory which still houses an altar dating from 1712.

The main house faces southeast and is divided into a ground floor, a main floor, and an attic. The walls are made out of stone and mortar, and the windows and doorways on the main façade are asymmetrically distributed. Of note is the rounded arch doorway with stone voussoirs.

In front of the house, there is an old warehouse that has been turned into a lounge area. It has an archi-

traved doorway with stone jambs and a stone lintel about which lies a sundial.

Today, as in days past, an indigenous race of Majorcan sheep is still bred and raised on the property.

Only the stone grinding wheel from the olive press has been preserved. The houses also have a covered reservoir and two springs.

Son Curt **Q/19**

This property is also located on the way up to



Inside the houses at Son Penyaflor



The Son Curt library

Alaró Castle, and still has some 17th-century pieces. In 1776, the estate changed hands and Joan Sampol y Ribas de Cabrera became the owner. His decedents still own the property.

The houses, set up as

one block are divided into three distinct buildings. The central smaller one has a certain irregularity to its façade as the main part seems slightly recessed from the rest of it. The houses have three floors, the ground floor

(house for the workers), the main floor (for the lords of the estate), and the attic.

There is a linteled doorway that has jambs topped with molding which leads into the main building. Set into one side of the doorway is a stone bench, and on the other side there is a *poyo*, a stone support for helping one mount a horse. Both stone ashlar and sandstone were used in building the main façade.

Among the elements habitually found in local estates, *Son Curt* still boasts an olive press with most of its pieces. In addition to the cistern, the houses get water from a pool which fills up with water from a canal that is connected to the *font de Son Curt* (Son Curt Spring).

Banyols Q/23

Banyols was once a farmstead, and it has its roots in the medieval Muslim period when it was called *Baniuls*. It made up part of Guillem Puigdorfilà's cavalry. A local mosque was built, and part of it survived up to the 14th-century. Even in modern times, Arabic ceramics dating back to the 13th-century can still be found near the houses. The property was included in the *Llibre del Repartiment* (Land Distribution Registry). As with many other properties in the area, this one has a series of buildings situated around an interior courtyard, including, the main house, the workers' quarters, and

The production of oil

The majority of estates counted their olive presses among their most valuable and basic installations. They were used to extract precious oil, a liquid that was as good as money when it came to trading, which was important between mountain farms.

Collecting olives always took place by hand and was done when the olives were mature and ready to fall off the tree by themselves. It was a laborious task that required the efforts of a large number of manual laborers for many months of the year as the harvesters passed through the olive groves in various waves.

Once in the pressing room, the olives were milled: they were spread out on the stone milling slab where they were ground down into a paste. The grinding wheels, or *trulls*, were turned by mules and eventually—in the second half of the 20th-century—by electric motors.

Then, the paste was placed between *esportins* (circular pressing mats made out of esparto grass) which were then placed one on top of another in order to retain the pulp and strain the oil and water.

Using a long beam or a press, pressure was applied to extract the liquid content of the olive mash from the *esportins*. Sometimes, they were even passed through hot water to encourage the oil to separate from the paste.

Finally, the oil was left to rest and decant, thus separating the watery medium from the olive oil.



Banyol

the agricultural annexes. The outer façade has two stories: a ground floor and an attic. The doorways and windows are distributed symmetrically.

The outer doorway is a rounded arch with stone voussoirs. The jambs are made out of three pieces of stone, and on top of the doorway: the Banyol's coat of arms.

Son Fortesa **Q/21**

In 1818, Pedro Maza de Limaza, Marquis of la Romana, sold *Son Fortesa* to Antoni Rosselló Pizà. The last renovations were carried out recently by the well-known architect Rafael Moneo, who turned the building into the corporate headquarters of the footwear company Camper.

The property is organized around a cobblestoned courtyard, where the main buildings, now rehabilitated and renovated to house the corporate headquarters of the well-known company Camper. The agricultural annexes have been repurposed into administrative offices, meeting spaces, a

convention hall, a design workshop, etc. During the renovation the shape of the original structure was, for the most part, kept as it was. More modern materials, such as glass and iron, were used to starkly



Son Fortesa

differentiate new elements from the original ones. The main doorway is a voussoired rounded arch with jambs all made out of sandstone, and it is topped with the Zafortesa family's coat of arms (dated 1818).

The outer façade of the building has several classically styled, well-built windows with stone molding on the cornices and thresholds.

To the left of the main doorway is the entrance to the chapel: a classic portico supported by cornices and pilasters with moldings. Inside, the chapel's roof displays exposed beams and hollow clay tiles painted with plant and figurative motifs. On the side walls there are images of religious figures.

Some of the former bedrooms in the main building, which was the old house of the lords, have painted vault ceilings, or rooves with beams and colored ceramic tiles.

In the middle of the central courtyard, there is a fountain with an octagonal base on a circular slab and a Gothic cistern.

Some pieces, such as the stone receptacles, still remain from the olive press. Above the doorway that leads to the olive press room is the date "1638."

S'Olivaret **S/18**

The houses at *s'Olivaret* were first referenced in 1312, when Pere de Cen-

telles, the procurator for the viscount of Bearn, gave part of the farmland that made up *Solleric* to Pere Guitard, and the newly created property was given the name that it bears to this day. In the 16th-century it was acquired by Mateu Montaner, and it has remained in his family since then. In 2000, the property underwent a significant renovation in which the old buildings were transformed into a rural hotel.

The building is divided into three parts. The central body is the main one, and it has three stories: a ground floor, a main floor, and a top floor. The windows and doors are laid out symmetrically.

Inside, on the ground floor, some parts of the old olive press have been kept since 1762, and now they serve as decorations in what is today the hotel bar.

Son Bergues or Son Berga

S/19

Son Bergues is a 17th-century estate that was redeveloped in a regionalist postwar style in 1950. The project was carried out by the architect Carles Garau Tornabells.

In the 18th-century, *la casa Berga* was passed on to the family of *Can Vallès d'Almadrà*, and eventually the Marquises of *Solleric*.

The property's houses are grouped around a central courtyard along with agricultural annexes and the animal pens.

The main doorway is encircled by stone, and above it a sundial stands out. A Renaissance style

window that displays the Berga family's coat of arms is set into the same wall. Around the courtyard are the houses of the lords, the guest/worker house, a granary, and a building for storing carob.

Almost all doors and windows facing the courtyard are linteled and framed in sandstone with molding. During the renovation an enclosed balcony with rounded open-



Sa Teulera

ings and which is supported by corbels was built.

The doorway that leads to the main house still has its Renaissance design: thin columns with a classical order on plinths supporting a lintel that displays the coat of arms in the center which distinguishes the nobility of the Berga family, all made out of sandstone. On top of this there is a small apse with a figure of St. Anthony.

There are two ways to access the bedrooms from the courtyard: an exterior stairway attached to the wall and a segmented sandstone archway with a groin vault bridge.

Of note on the back façade are the buttresses and a *poyo* (stone support for mounting horses)

that goes from one side of the doorway to the other. There is a system for collecting water that takes advantage of the sloped terrain. It includes a well, a pool, water tanks, and canals, all designed to store water and irrigate crops.

The agricultural annexes were built in the same style as the rest of the buildings, but they have been adapted to be used for agro-tourism.

Archduke Ludwig Salvator described *Son Berga*: "This property exhibits a small Renaissance window and a rounded arch doorway topped with a sundial dating from 1756. It is worth mentioning the small courtyard with the crest of the Bergues family and the small chapel. In front of the entrance, next to the flower garden, a large hackberry proudly rises."

Sa Teulera Vella **N/21**

The houses of this 13th-century estate can be accessed from the main rounded arch doorway with sandstone voussoirs, stone jambs, and lintel. The small cobblestoned courtyard also serves a foyer to the main house, the workers' quarters, the old doorway to the olive pressing room (which still has some well conserved pieces), and the room with the oil receptacles.

Sitting over the main house is the original sundial. Other buildings, like the chapel, the stables, and the flour mill (which still has the majority of its parts) are attached to the main structure.

The distinguished façade has three stories (ground floor, main floor, and an attic), and the doors and windows have a regular layout. The doorway is a rounded arch with stone voussoirs and jambs. To the right of the doorway is a round-framed window and above that a window with the shape of a rounded arch, perhaps added much later than the rest of the others. The rest of the windows and doors are framed with embossed strips and ledges with molding.

The chapel is located towards the back of the lords' house and is accessed from a porch with three pointed-horseshoe-shaped arches with cylindrical columns and capitals with plant and Corinthian motifs.

Among the water-related features on the property are a water tank, a pool, and a cistern. The water tank has an opening on the side of the of its half barrel vault, and the tank itself is connected to the pool by a stone canal that drains into the pool from over a rounded arch. A cistern with an octagonal shape was installed in the courtyard and inscribed with the date 1778.

Pont Trencat (the Broken Bridge) Q/24

This bridge was built over the Solletric torrent to allow for the path to Raiguer to connect with the old roadway from Consell to Alaró. Josep Mascaró Passarius made



Pont Trencat

reference to the *Pont Trencat* in the 16th century. It also appears drawn on a map from the end of the 17th century. During the next 100 years many repairs had to be made to the bridge due to the rising water of the torrent—this is probably where the name comes from. It was recently restored, and the space next to it was turned into a recreation area. The bridge is made up of only one rounded arch which is built out of sandstone, stone ashlars, and mortar. It is the point that separates the municipalities of Alaró and Consell.

The Ses Artigues water system P/18

Use of the Ses Artigues Spring goes back to the Muslim era, though the majority of installations designed for water storage (tanks and cisterns) come from the 19th century; it was referenced in the 1232 *Capbreu* (legal document assigning property rights) of Gastón de Bearn.

The system begins at the Ses Artigues Spring in front of the Ses Artigues estate, a little more than one kilometer to the north of the town center.

Historically, the spring provided water to Alaró along with a set of flour mills and reservoirs via cisterns and a pumping system.

A large number of ancient installations related to this water system still remain in the town. The large water tanks are located on the following streets (*carrers*): *Son Rafalet*, *Ca na Fara*, *Pujol*, *Síquia*, *Son Sitges*, and *es Pontarró*. There are also tanks in the *Clas-tra de Son Tugores*. The cisterns in *plaça Cabrit i Bassa* (1866) and on *carrer des Porrassar* are notable for their architectural value. Original wheel pumps can be found on the following streets: *Can Pintat*, *Porrassar*, and *Can Manyoles*.

Throughout the town there is another set of points where water could be collected, but they no longer have working pumps; they are located in *Son Borràs*, *plaça*

Cabrit i Bassa in the Los Damunt neighborhood, in the *plaça de la Vila*, and on the following streets: *Porrassar*, *Sant Vicenç Ferrer*, *Can Pintat*, *Son Antelm*, *Solleric*, and *Can Manyoles*.

The fountain in the *plaça de la Vila* is located on the cistern which provides it with water, and on it the year 1742 appears in sgraffito. The fountain is located under the portico of the town hall, which dates to the mid-20th century when the fountain was moved here.

The water system also includes three public wash-houses: two small ones in the Los Damunt neighborhood (*Son Rafalet* and *Ca na Fara*) and one larger one on *carrer Pontarró*.

It is worth noting that great focus was placed on the mills. After the feudal conquest, ten water mills were described, but today, only eight have survived, and they are in various states of disrepair.

Because water was so precious, these mills used covered water canals to fill a reservoir which would then provide adequate water flow. From there the water flowed down from a height onto the mill machinery.

Following the waterway from the spring, the mills are situated as follows:

Molí de Sa Font, which was installed in a square tower and can be seen from the Ses Artigues pathway. The milling machinery has been preserved inside, and the milling stones are on display outside. After

running through the mill, a small canal carried the water to nearby crops. Water no longer flows through here, as the original circuit has been diverted.



The Molí de Sa Font (Sa Font Mill)

Molí de Ca Na Fara is located at *carrer de na Fara*, number 33. The mill has almost disappeared as it has been overrun by the house's vegetable garden. Only remains from this ancient structure are present: one wall of the tower, a basin covered by concrete, the ruins of a waterway (which has a modern water pipe laid in it), and a covered canal from the mill that is very poor condition.

Molí de Son Borràs, which is located at *carrer de Son Borràs*, numbers 9-11, dates back to the medieval Muslim era, like the other mills. Part of the water system connecting the reservoir to the mill has been preserved. The waterway continued from above this reservoir to the Son Bieló reservoir and

came from the Ca Na Fara mill.

Son Bieló can be found at *carrer de Son Sitges*, number 11. In the *Son Bieló* houses, ruins of the waterway, which are currently covered by a metal

grate, can be seen. They are still used for drainage. Only part of the mill has survived, the rest has collapsed.

Molí de Son Vidal is at *carrer Síquia*, numbers 21-23. Remains of the mill and part of the waterway are located in the main room in the house. Part of the covered water way leading from the reservoir has been preserved, as have the milling stones, the water wheel, and the water deposit.

Son Tugores is located at *carrer clastra de Son Tugores* (no number). From *Son Vidal*, the waterway runs into the large Son Tugores reservoir (35 by 5 meters). Part of the waterway that continues on to *Son Berní* is visible on the façade of



the houses. The old mill that was once housed here has been kept up by the Alaró town hall.

Molí de Son Berní on *pasatge de Son Berní* (no number) is a mill with two rectangular buildings, right next to each other. Not much is left of them except the ruins of the main canal and another smaller canal (65cm wide and 45cm deep) which can be accessed by climbing ten steps. You can also see the part of the waterway that led to the reservoir.

Molí de Son Ibert is located on *carrer de Son Ibert* (no number). The estate originally had two mills and one water way; but, only pieces are left of the first mills, and the reservoir has been turned into a swimming

pool. The second larger mill is integrated into the Son Ibert houses, and only the outer walls remain. Some elements

Es Molinàs is the last mill, and it is located at *carrer Manyoles*, number 177. Visible are the 1.25-meter wide and 3-meter high waterway, the covered canal which has now been fitted with modern pipework, and the milling stones. The estate has been recently reformed although the garden that was irrigated by the waterway still remains.



The pump on *carrer de Can Manyoles*

from the two mills still remain, like the milling stones. The 100-meter long and 1.5-meter wide waterway comes from *Son Berní*, links the first and second Son Ibert mills, and then continues towards *es Molinàs*.

The mills have undergone many changes throughout the years. Many of them have been abandoned or re-

converted: one was transformed into a paper factory that was used from the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century.





6 *Alaró and its festivals*

The celebrations that take place in the Los Damunt and Los Davall neighborhoods are deeply rooted in the town's history. And throughout the years, new activities have been incorporated into the celebrations and fused with traditional ones.



January St. Anthony (*Sant Antoni*) January 17

The celebrations surrounding St. Anthony, patron saint of animals, are carried out in large part on the eve of the of the feast, that is, the night of January 16. The inhabitants of Alaró grill local sausages (*llonganisses* and *botifarrons*) over the countless fire pits that are lit in the middle of the town's streets. While there, you

must make your way through to any of the grills that are set up and share one of the grilled delicacies along with a glass of local wine.

On this same night, Alaró's *Colla de Dimonis* (group of Devils) makes their first appearance of the new year.

Los Dimonis d'Alaró **(the Devils of Alaró)**

Fire is a universal symbol that leads to uneasiness and wonder, and it is intrinsically linked to the world of the devil.

The *Dimonis* performance in Alaró began in

1998 when they had their first *correfoc* (literally "fire-run"). During this event a large group of individuals dress up as devils and light firecrackers in the streets. They march and dance to the rhythm of drums, and they chase spectators under the light made by their sparkling firecrackers.

A large part of the performance is centered around Na Marranxa, a monster that comes from the depths of hell spitting fire! She is represented by a fantastical magic bat who in name



Fire on the eve of the Feast of St. Anthony (Sant Antoni)

alone strikes fear in children and takes form to participate in the beastly spectacle.

There is a group of young children dedicated to replicating all of the details organized by the adults, including a Na Marranxeta, a smaller version of the monstrous bat.

These dances with the devil take place three times during the year in Alaró: on the eve of the Feast of St. Anthony (16 January), the Feast of St. Roch (16 August), and during the autumn festival at the beginning of October.

The group of *Dimonis* from Alaró participate in performances all over Majorca, in fairs, festivals, and other events whenever they are invited.

The festivities surrounding St. Anthony are announced days beforehand by the *pícarolada*, the youngest *Dimonis*, who weave through the town's streets ringing cowbells. They are accompanied by St. Antho-

ny, characterized as a hermit, and the whole group is chased by a devil.

In the afternoon on the day of the Feast of St. Anthony, the town celebrates *Ses Beneïdes*, an ancient celebration in which pet owners—instead of the shepherds of days gone by—bring their animals to the Sant Bartomeu Church so that the priest may be sprinkle them with holy water in order to protect them from harm during the following year.

March April

Easter

As is customary in the majority of Spain, in Majorca religious events are widely celebrated.

The Holy Week represents the most intense time of celebration in the Catholic Church, and it serves to remember the Passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Over these days, various processions take place, and many different religious fraternities and sororities participate, each carrying a figure of Jesus or the Virgin Mary accompanied by a scene from the Passion.

Throughout the Holy Week, and until Easter, the celebration commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There are five fraternities in Alaró: Virgen del Silencio (dressed in black with twine belts), Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza (dressed in green), Sagrado Corazón



Holy Week Procession

de Jesús (dressed in red), Virgen de Lourdes (dressed in sky blue), and Verge del Refugi (dressed in black with white hoods). Between them, they carry four *passos processional*s (elaborate religious floats depicting an episode of the Passion of Christ).

The processions are held on the nights of Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

On Easter Sunday, early in the morning, at

the intersection known as *Sa Creu* (the cross), the *passo processional* that represents Jesus meeting his mother (called *la processó del Encuentro*) takes place.

The pieces that are paraded through the streets are original 18th-century carvings.

Pancaritat:

the Feast of the Angel

On the Sunday after Easter, the Feast of the Angels is celebrated by hundreds of people who participate in a religious pilgrimage to Alaró castle.

May

The May Feast of the Virgin Mary

On the last Saturday of May, to celebrate the Month of Maria, the



Pancaritat at the Castle

Cossiers (traditional Majorcan dancers) dance through the streets of the Los Damunt neighborhood. This group of seven dancers, accompanied by a Devil figure, make their way through the streets while putting on four traditional dances that have stood the test of time. These performances are a mix between dance and theater in which the Dame figure sings as a scene plays out around her. They always end with a final act in which the Devil is defeated.

The dance of the *Cossiers*

The dance of the *Cossiers* is one of the oldest dances still practiced in Majorca. It has been documented back to at least the 16th-century. The Archduke Ludwig Salvator (19th-century) described the *Cossiers* in detail in his book *Die Balearem*, which he wrote while he was traveling around the Balearic Islands. There has been much speculation as to the origin of the term “Cossier,” and one of the most plausible conjectures suggests that it comes from *cós*: the area in a town where local races are run. This theory is given credit as the ribbons that hang from their waistbands could be considered prizes from previous races set up along the *cós* exclusively for the dancers.



The Cossiers dance in the Los Damunt neighborhood

The origin of the Cossiers' dance is very old. It has been related to archaic dances of adoration and worship ceremonies of farming deities. Obviously, they have been changed throughout the centuries, most notably in the dress, rhythm, and organization of the dance. The Cossiers evolved and coexisted with the appearance of different religions, thus becoming camouflaged to ensure their survival. In Alaró the dance was recovered in 1992 after decades of being forgotten.

Six dancers (the so-called

Cossiers) and the Dame (who oversees the movements) participate in the performance. Another figure, the Devil, complements the Cossiers. He is represented by a person dressed in a burlap suit covered with red and yellow strips of fabric and wearing horns and a mask. He distracts spectators by leaping and twirling about and occasionally crashing his huge club down onto the ground. Of course, he is careful not to hurt the young and old spectators watching the performance.

While all Cossiers' outfits are similar (with strips of fabric, similar bolo-style ties, kilts, can-

vas shoes—called *alpar-gatas*, and a sash running across the chest), they do differ slightly between municipalities. In Alaró, the dancers organize themselves in pairs according to color: red, pink, and sky blue. The hats they wear are Baroque in style, and at one point, similar vestments were common for all dancers. It is a kind of crown or miter made out of rigid cardboard with



The Feast of St. Peter (Sant Pere)

colored fabric to match the color of the rest of the dress, and it is adorned with small sequins and bells, flowers, and five large woolen tassels.

The Dame wears a very lady-like blouse and organdy skirt with white lace and colored strips of fabric. She also has a straw hat.

Years ago, the Cossiers had many dances, but only a few have been recovered recently: *La Processó* (the Procession), *L'Oferta* (the Offering), *Sa Cadena* (the Chain), and *La Gentil Senyora* (the Gentlewoman). They are accompanied by only two songs.

In Alaró, the Cossiers only perform twice per year: during the *Festa de la Mare de Déu de Maig* (May's Feast of the Virgin Mary) and the August 16 *festa de Sant Roc* (the Feast of St. Roch),

who is the patron saint of Alaró.

The only way to enjoy the dances put on by the Cossiers of Alaró is to see them up close. Then, you can see the dancers' most significant and intricate elements and movements.

June

St. Peter (Sant Pere) June 29

The patron saint of the Los Damunt neighborhood is St. Peter, and during the days leading up to June 29, various activities and festivities are carried out in celebration.

These celebrations also serve to mark the beginning of summer. They are almost exclusively participated in by local residents of Alaró. Thanks to this and the setting in which they take place, they are reminiscent of festivals that took place long ago in Majorcan villages.

August

St. Roch (Sant Roc) August 16

The festival for the patron saint of Alaró is celebrated during the week preceding August 16, the day that commemorates the 17th-century eradication of the plague by St. Roch as he answered the prayers of the faithful.

This is an intense week of fun and cultural activities, including: the dances of the Cossiers,



The gigants during the Feast of St. Roch (Sant Roc)

the *Corregudes de Joies* (the races of the jewels), *las Carrosses*, the religious procession, the appearance of the Cabrit and Bassa *Gegants* (literally “Giants,” these large clothed papier-mâché figures represent the famous martyrs from Alaró, Cabrit and Bassa), performances by the *Dimonis*, open-air art exhibitions, and various concerts and open-air dances.

The Cossiers and Carreres de Joies (the races of the jewels)

During the feast of the patron saint, St. Roch, on August 16, at midday, the traditional *Carreres de Joies* are held. They are a series of races with prizes for the winners—

joies or jewels hung from green rods.

The races are run to the tune of traditional music which employs the *flabiol* (a 25cm long woodwind flute), the *tamborí* (a small percus-

plaça de la Vila, and the track winds through various points in the town center. They even have a little dance in front of the Mayor’s residence.

Part of the tradition involves organizing races exclusively for the members of the Cossiers.



Floats in a parade

sion instrument), and *xeremies* (bagpipes).

The competition begins with a race among the Cossiers, this also marks the end of their morning dances. This race starts at 10 o’clock in the morning in the

ranging from classically-styled to purely fantastical, and decorated with fun, socially critical, or satirical elements. After the parade, prizes are awarded to the top participants.

Floats

Since 1973, on the day preceding the Feast of St. Roch (August 15), a typical summer carnival parade takes place. Alaró residents dress up and parade down the street in floats



Crafts on sale at the autumn fair

The procession

During the afternoon on the day of the Feast of St. Roch a religious procession centered around the image of St. Roch (which is known locally by the diminutive “*Sant Roquet*” due to its size) takes place. It goes accompanied by the Cossiers through the streets in the town center.

The *Gegants* of Alaró and the *Dimonis*

Since the year 2000, two new figures have been included into the town’s festivities and celebrations: the *gegants* (literally “Giants,” huge papier-mâché and clothed figures) of Cabrit and Bassa.

They measure more than four meters tall and represent the folk heroes who valiently defended Alaró Castle. The *gegants* parade about accompanied by music from traditional instruments: the *flabiol* (a

25cm long woodwind flute), the *tamborí* (a small percussion instrument), and *xeremies* (bagpipes). The larger than life figures meet up in the main plaza with other *gegants* from various towns. There ends up being more than 30 for both young and old to enjoy.

The festivities surrounding the patron saint end with a *correfoc* (literally “fire-run”) in the *plaça de la Vila*. During this event, people dressed up as *Dimonis* (devils) chase spectators with fire crackers and dance about to the rhythm of drums.

September

The Nativity of the Virgin Mary

On the first Sunday in September the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary is celebrated with a hike up to Alaró Castle and a communal meal in front of the oratory.

Fairs and Markets

Weekly markets

Every Saturday morning, the *plaça de la Vila* turns into a marketplace where visitors can find all sorts of foods and artisanal products from Alaró, as well as the latest in fashion, and even flowers and plants.

The autumn fair

At the beginning of October, the autumn craft fair puts on display a varied sample of the wide range of local handiwork. In the most recent instances, both recreational and commercial activities (for example, cooking shows and tastings of local wines) have been incorporated into fair to live it up.

4



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Alaró



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Alaró



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SOLLERIC

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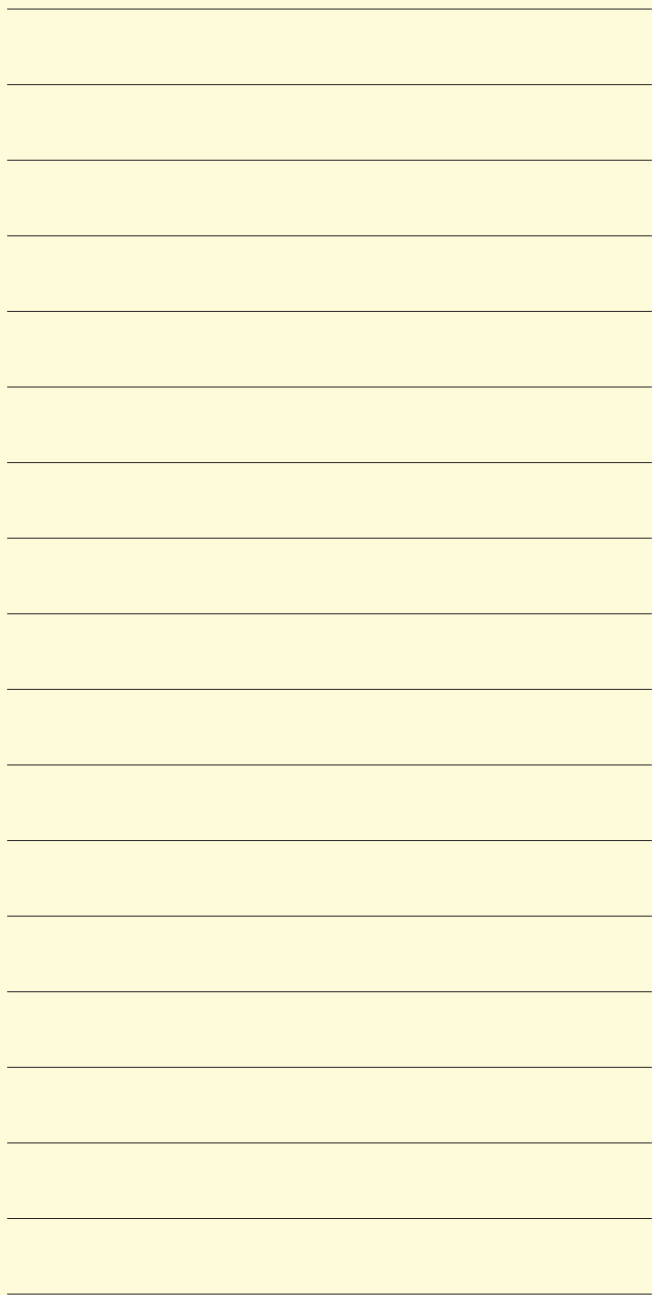
SON BERRIÉS

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SON GRAU

R. Llorenç





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