

Gaudí's Barcelona

The famed architect's work is the city's most recognizable signature

While some cities are fortunate enough to have developed a unique architectural identity, few can give so much of the credit to a single man. When it comes to Barcelona, however, there's no question that it's truly the city of Antoni Gaudí. Prior to his death in 1926, Gaudí designed many of the city's greatest architectural landmarks, including Park Güell, Palau Güell, Casa Milà, Casa Vicens, Casa Batlló, the crypt in Colònia Güell, and his work on the Nativity façade and crypt of La Sagrada Família basilica.

While technically still unfinished, the basilica, begun in 1882, is a prime example of what makes Gaudí's work so entrancing. Its balance of the natural and artificial, and the manner in which it uses whimsical and playful lines and shapes despite the inherent gravity of the stone, is striking. But it's this very playfulness and willingness to use the abnormal, unpredictable or even absurd that attracts us most.

Casa Batlló must be considered one of the most eye-catching architectural designs in the city. Wherever one's eye wanders, there is wonder to behold. Bright colors and shapes, inspired by marine life, cover the structure's façade, which in itself is a twisted, playful design of curved balconies and rounded subtle archways, with both traditionally rectangular and purposefully imperfect oval-shaped windows. —*Keith Gordon*

