



ABOVE Miró would walk at Ses Illetes, where he would collect his thoughts, and driftwood, stones and shells. BELOW Es Baluard, a modern art museum, displays its Miró collection.

and some new, excellent market-to-table restaurants, which have begun to draw foot traffic to the area at night. The market itself still bustles, vigorously, each morning. Bakery stalls sell ensimadas for a euro; others hawk spices, cheese, meat, poultry and, of course, fish.

OPEN since the days Señora Miró shopped here, Bar Joan Frau is near the back of the market, the type of place the artist's grandson told me that his grandfather liked: small, unassuming, with humble, well-prepared food. There is, typically, a long wait for the few tables that are set up inside the bar, and a clutch of men and women are always standing at the shiny silver counter. The bar is known for empanadas filled with meat or seafood, and for fried cuttlefish, stuffed eggplant and paella. We could picture Pilar, finished with the day's shopping and lingering over a perfect cortado, then taking a taxi back up to Cala Mayor.

It would have been a relatively quick taxi ride. The studios in Cala Mayor where Miró spent his golden years, were only 15 to 20 minutes away, situated in a place of solitude on what was then a verdant hillside overlooking the sea.

"I dream of a grand atelier," Miró famously explained in the French magazine *XXe Siècle* in 1938. With the help of his friend the Catalan architect — for many years, dean of the Harvard school of design — Josep Lluís Sert, that dream was realized in 1956.

Sert created for Miró a light-filled space with a remarkable system of cooling and light, propelled entirely by the building's shutters, which function like the gills of a fish, allowing the room to breathe through the walls and ceiling. Now Miró could turn to his most ambitious works — large-scale paintings, triptychs, sculpture, lithographs and etchings.

Three years after moving his work into the Sert studio on a property, called Son Abrines, that included his home, Miró purchased Son Boter, a traditional Majorcan country home on the hillside above. That, too, he used as a working space.

Open to the public since 1992, these two studios are now part of the Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró a Mallorca, which also includes a Modernist cube museum designed by Rafael Moneo, known most recently for the Prado extension in Madrid. In an open breezeway between the museum and the studios, Mr. Moneo in-



stalled an infinity pool, set dramatically against the sky, as a way of bringing in the element of water, since much of the view of the sea has been obscured since the 1950s, as buildings rose near the compound. Indeed, Miró and his wife had decided to create the foundation here as a fight against such construction. "I do not want them someday to build one of those horrendous skyscrapers which I see all around me," Miró said when donating his studios to the Palma city council.

In the museum are dozens of important works: enormous, captivating canvases splashed with color, or darkened with bold black paint, all hung in a cool cavern of sandstone. The Sert studio, on the other hand, has been left almost as it was in the artist's day, with dozens of paintings propped against walls, set up on easels or lying on the floor.

"I was 10 years old the very first time he invited me to his studio," Mr. Punyet, the grandson, had told me during my visit to his office. "Those memories really stick to your subconscious. Because they are very strong: the smell of turpentine, of gasoline, oil, acrylic, alcohol," he said, going on to describe "can-

vases everywhere, huge mural paintings on the back wall with chalk and needles and nails and pins and objets trouvés, everywhere like a big disaster, a big chaos, of things."

I stood, like young Mr. Punyet, surrounded by the scraps collected by Miró: beach flotsam, magazine cutouts, wood, crafts, photographs pinned to walls.

Today, there is only one completed painting in the space, an oil on sandpaper, studded with nails. "None of this is abstract," said Jaume Reus, communications director for the Fundació, who walked me through the studio, trying to explain when I looked dubious. "This," he said, pointing to a quick sketch of black on another canvas, "is the flight of a bird; and this" — a circle, a dot — "an animal's eye."

Outside Son Abrines, the hill slopes upward, and a landscaped stone walkway leads to Son Boter, a 17th-century manor that was once a boarding house run by the Baroness von Münchhausen. When Miró acquired the building in 1959, he began drawing on the walls, like a genius cave man, sketching out his enormous sculptures. The morning I visited, a freak storm began, rolling in from the mountains. I looked out from the front door. A wall of water had formed between me and the rest of the grounds, preventing anyone from entering, and me from leaving. I understood then the isolation Miró had found here.

The storm cleared up, and hungry for lunch, I remembered that Mr. Punyet told me that his grandfather often walked to the nearby village of Génova for "lunch in a humble place for farmers." I decided to do the same.

GÉNOVA is a quiet mountain town, not terribly different from how it was in Miró's time. A statue of "Our Lady of Peace" dominates one hill, a sandstone church anchors the center of the town, and the sea shimmers in the distance. The town is known for its restaurants that serve pa amb oli, the Majorcan peasant plate of toasted bread brushed with olive oil and crushed tomato, topped with cheese or thinly sliced jamón. The dish is eaten, mostly, as a light supper. That meant Sa Ximbomba, the restaurant recommended by Miró's grandson, was closed when I arrived for lunch. We moved on to Casa Gonzalo, where the menu of the day began with a hearty country-style lentil stew filled with potatoes. The waiter prodded the table to try caracoles, or snails, eaten by pushing a



SHAPES AND COLORS

The British company **i-escape.com** represents several apartments in downtown Majorca. We rented one from Annika Nyberg, a Swede who owns two large apartments in Santa Catalina. Our one bedroom cost 125 euros a night (\$175 at \$1.40 to the euro).

C' an Joan de S'Aigo (Carrer Sans 10; 34-971-710-759; www.canjoandesaiigo.webs-sites.com) was Miró's favorite spot for the classic Majorcan pastry, the ensimada. It is also the oldest ice cream shop in Palma, open since 1700.

Bar Joan Frau (Santa Catalina Market; 34-971-737-862) is inside the Santa Catalina Market, where Miró's wife, Pilar, shopped for their bread. Bar Joan Frau is known among Spanish

chefs for its stuffed eggplant and fried cuttlefish. The coffee is excellent (about 1.10 euros for an espresso).

Sa Roqueta (Carrer Sirena, 11; 34-971-249-410; restaurantesaroqueta.com) is one of the best seafood restaurants along the water and a favorite of the Miró family. Fresh whole fish like St. Peter's and scorpion fish and grilled octopus are favorites, but it will cost you: dinner for two is around 80 euros.

Es Baluard (Plaza Porta Santa Catalina, 9, Palma; 34-971-719-609; esbaluard.org). Admission 6 euros.

Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró a Mallorca (Calle de Saridakis, 29; 34-971-701-420; miro.palmademallorca.es) is about 15 to 20 minutes from downtown Palma. Admission 6 euros.

toothpick into the shell and dragging out the body. There was also fresh tortilla española, piping hot, with thinly sliced potatoes, and a table red wine labeled Gonzalo.

Orli and I walked up to the roof of the restaurant, taking in the view of the mountains beyond us before catching the bus to Ses Illetes, the beach Joan Punyet had told me Miró would walk on, collecting his thoughts, as well as driftwood, stones and shells.

Ses Illetes is still lovely. The water is crystal clear, and there are rocks to climb on, a jetty that stretches out into the sea. It is no longer, by any stretch of

the imagination, isolated. There are two glossy glass-front beach restaurants and a couple of hotels, a massage stand and a sarong shop; dozens of stacked lounge chairs stand ready for the wall-to-wall bodies to glisten in the summer sun.

But looking out at the sea, beyond all the modernity, I saw the endless Majorcan sky meeting the Mediterranean, blue upon blue. I thought of the expression that Miró had for the intensity of that horizon, which so inspired him and which could only be found here, on Majorca. He called it "eloquent silence."



down; beach scene at Port de Sóller; Bar Joan Frau, in the Santa Catalina market; a new cafe across the street from the market.