

P R E S S D O S S I E R

The Invisible Garden

An exceptional heritage discovery — Gaudí Centenary Year 2026

Barcelona, April 2026

A garden hidden for a century

At the heart of the Gaudí Centenary Year 2026, marking a hundred years since the death of the Catalan genius, an extraordinary discovery opens for the first time to the world: the Invisible Garden of Gaudí, conceived by Antoni Gaudí himself on the grounds of Parc Sanitari Sant Joan de Déu, in Sant Boi de Llobregat, just a few kilometres from Barcelona.

Conceived at the beginning of the 20th century as a therapeutic space integrated into the hospital's architecture, this garden remained in anonymity for over a century. It appears in no tourist circuit and no general-public guide. Its recent official inauguration makes it one of the most singular heritage revelations of the year.

"Gaudí was a merciful man. Mercy is not an abstract word: it is a face to recognise, to contemplate and to serve. And so was Gaudí: a brilliant architect who placed his gifts at the service of God and of people, who always strove to do a job well done, putting love before technique. And that is what he did at the Invisible Garden of Sant Boi: he provided the means for the patients to occupy their time creating beautiful and useful works, uniting, as he always did, the human and the divine."

— José Manuel Almuzara · COAC-Barcelona Architect · Gaudí Scholar · almuzara.org

Why now? The Gaudí Centenary Year 2026

On 10 June 2026, Pope Leo XIV will inaugurate the crowning of the tower of Jesus Christ at the Sagrada Família — an event awaited for decades. This date marks the culmination of a full year of commemorations around the centenary of Gaudí's death (7 June 1926).

In this context of worldwide cultural excitement, the Invisible Garden offers a deep and authentic alternative to the overcrowding of the major sites: an intimate, cultured and restorative experience.

The Gaudí Centenary Year 2026 in figures

Centenary of Antoni Gaudí's death: 7 June 1926 – 7 June 2026
Inauguration of the tower of Jesus Christ at the Sagrada Família: 10 June 2026
Barcelona expects more than 20 million visitors in 2026
More than 100 cultural events programmed in the framework of the centenary

The exclusive experience

Barcelona Art of Travel has signed a special agreement with Parc Sanitari Sant Joan de Déu to offer private guided visits to the Invisible Garden, within the framework of regenerative and responsible cultural tourism.

Format	Visits in small groups of 12 to 20 people
Duration	Approximately 1h30
Language	Catalan, Spanish, French, English, Italian, Korean, Chinese, Japanese
Booking	Maximum 1 week in advance (limited availability)
Guide	Official Guide of Catalonia, Gaudí specialist
Audience	Premium cultural groups, universities, architecture professionals
Commitment	30% of revenue allocated to Parc Sanitari Sant Joan de Déu

Three experience formats

- Cultural visit: guided tour of the garden, with architectural, religious and philosophical context of Gaudí's work
- Academic visit: for architecture or art history groups, with documentation and access to primary sources
- Premium MICE experience: private visit followed by a tasting or creative workshop, tailored for incentive travel and executive seminars

Why this story matters to international audiences

Catalonia is the Mediterranean's leading cultural destination. The cultured and discerning public — local and international — seeks experiences that connect with the territory, heritage and creative thought. The Invisible Garden is exactly that: an experience that breaks with mass tourism and bets on depth.

Gaudí is our most globally recognised living heritage. The centenary of his death is a unique opportunity to explain his work from a new, intimate and never-before-seen angle.

"To our knowledge, there is no other space conceived by Gaudí that has remained so long inaccessible to the general public. This is a world first."

— Montse Anda, Director — Barcelona Art of Travel

Barcelona Art of Travel

A Biosphere-certified boutique cultural tourism agency, specialising in Premium experiences for international MICE clients, universities and cultural groups. Founded and led by Montse Anda, Official Guide of Catalonia and Aragon (licence no. 3233), member of the Catalonia Convention Bureau and the Premium Catalan Tourist Board.

The agency has spent more than six years working to make the Invisible Garden accessible, building the necessary institutional alliances with Parc Sanitari Sant Joan de Déu. The exclusive agreement signed in 2026 is the fruit of this long journey.

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Available for interviews, press visits by invitation, and high-resolution image files upon request.

"This garden, forgotten for more than 100 years by historiography and rendered invisible by the high, ancient walls of the former psychiatric hospital of Sant Boi de Llobregat, concealed a mystery that has finally been unveiled: the rockery garden of this medical centre was a space of architectural experimentation anticipating Gaudí's last great works; all of this with the participation of the hospital's patients, who collaborated in its construction through the ergotherapy workshops of this psychiatric institution. Formalised as a traditional Chinese garden, the space was conceived as an allusion to Paradise in the Christian religious tradition."

— David Agulló Galilea, architect and author of the doctoral thesis 'Gaudí and the gardens of the former asylum of Sant Boi de Llobregat'

Note on the scientific rigour of the research

David Agulló's doctoral thesis received a Cum Laude distinction at ETSAB-UPC, under the supervision of Robert Brufau, one of the two architects responsible for the structural calculations of the Sagrada Família. Brufau does not evaluate from the perspective of art history, but from structural calculation: he compared the hyperboloids of the Grotto-cascade with those of the Sagrada Família's naves and endorsed the thesis with the highest possible academic grade.

The debate over authorship remains open among specialists, as is proper in historical research. But what is beyond question is the garden's value: born of mercy and therapeutic work, and carrying a legacy that deserves to be known and experienced. Whoever its author, this space is a unique testament to Gaudí's method, spirit and era.