



Alcoy: Nature, Industry and a Jewel of Art Nouveau

ROUTE SP 2

Presentation of the route

Some geographical spaces can define not only the characteristics inherent to a place but also the trades which are practiced therein, and in short, they constitute the seeds of the present of a place, of its people and of their occupations. A paradigmatic example is the city of Alcoy, where industry and its peculiar orography, together with its natural environment, have been decisive both in its history and in its industrial, economic and social evolution which led it to become a jewel of Art Nouveau.

Due to the particular orography on which Alcoy is situated, it comes as a surprise to check that it was the location where the first Valencian industrialisation took place and one of the first industrial poles in the Iberian Peninsula, even disputing industrial supremacy with the city of Barcelona itself, the industrial engine being the driving force behind the transformation of the social fabric and the urban architecture, which today allows us to enjoy a valuable heritage both in industrial premises and in Art Nouveau buildings that take us to times which witnessed serious social conflicts during those convulsed years of the industrial revolution.

The urban route we proposed is 3.7 kilometres long and designed following an 8-shape. If your time is limited, we recommend you go from point 2, directly to point 12. Point 22 has a pronounced steep and it is not recommended for wheelchairs. There is an alternative route at this point.




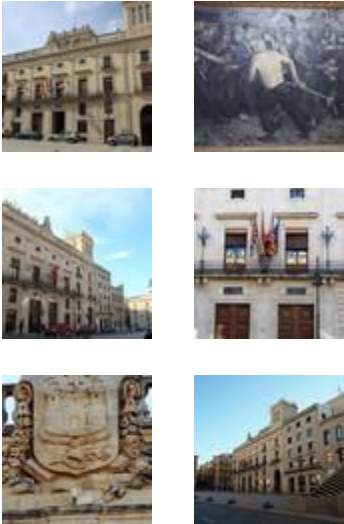
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Monument	Pza. de España. Llotja de Santa Jordi (Santiago Calatrava)
	<p>The Plaza de España, the starting point of this route, is not only a place where we can find some of the most outstanding monuments in the city but also a relevant location for all the local festivities. The Neoclassical style dominates the square, as the Art Nouveau style arrived later in 1904. The square is a gathering point where the visitor can enjoy the Art Nouveau Fair in September or the Moors and Christian Festivities which boast the textile power of the city with their outstanding costumes. Santiago Calatrava designed an underground cultural venue (la Llotja), on the site of a former air-raid shelter from the times of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). It was inaugurated in 1995 and it is usually open at 11:00 a.m. Its neo-futurist style is inspired in Art Nouveau, especially in the use of natural elements (i.e. a whale skeleton), although the architect refuses the Art Nouveau use of colour in favour of minimalist pure whites.</p>

Monument	Town Hall
	<p>The Town Hall was built between 1846 and 1863 in the neoclassical style. It contains paintings and sculptures by local artists, the most popular of which is entitled "l'Arrastrà de Pelletes" (the dragging of Pelletes); and depicts the events occurred during the 1873 Oil Revolution, which was the first anarcho-syndicalist revolt in the world and the first general strike in the Valencian Region. Agustín Albors, aka. Pelletes, was the mayor at that time. He died during the siege of the Town Hall, when workers took the Town Hall over. The picture is hung over the main stairs as a warning that public administrations must work for their town.</p>

Monument	Plaça de Dins
	<p>The Plaza de Dins ("Inner Square") was built halfway through the 19th century in the space occupied by the cloister of the former fourteenth-century Saint Augustine Convent. A gothic arch of the church that used to stand next to the convent is still preserved at the access from Saint Thomas Street. The architect in charge of the neoclassical refurbishment and extension of the square was the Alcoy-born Josep Moltó i Valor, who also designed the Banca Vicens building in 1881. The neoclassical style</p>



was the dominant architectonic style during the Industrial Revolution period.

Castle



Placeta de les Xiques

On our way to Placeta de les Xiques, we can see examples of the rapid urban development of Alcoy during industrial times. Those cheap constructions were erected to accommodate the growing population attracted by the work opportunities offered by the factories. Many buildings have been demolished due to the poor quality of construction materials. The square forms part of the medieval complex that was restored in the 1980s. It still keeps a stretch of wall and was formerly known as the square of the prostitutes.

Museum



City Expo-Museum (Former St. George Textile Dyes Factory)

Installed in an old textile factory stands the Expo-museum of the city "Explora". The centre takes visitors on a visual journey through the city, from its origins right through to modern times, highlighting the most relevant aspects of its history, Art Nouveau, industrial heritage, natural surroundings, festivities and traditions.

River



River Riquer Walk: ancient factories and nature

Once we leave the City Museum and move towards the Provincial Firemen Museum, we will take a short walk following the Riquer River, along els Tints Street. Around this area, we can still see the site of some old factories. This was an industrial area in the 19th century. The Riquer or Barxell River flows between the Natural Park of Sierra de Mariola, in the north, and the Natural Park of Font Roja, in the south. As it leaves the city, it joins the Molinar River and from that point it is called the Serpis River. During the walk, you can appreciate the vestiges of the city walls, the Na Valora Tower (13th century), a profile of part of Alcoy's old town and the San Jorge Bridge. This bridge is one of the most representative examples



of Valencian Art Deco in the Valencian Community, as well as one of the most colossal Art Deco bridges in Spain.

Museum

Alicante Province Consortium Firefighters' Museum (former textile factory)

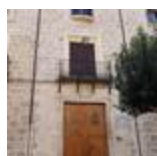


The Alicante Province Consortium Firefighters' Museum was originally erected in the mid-19th century to house a textile industry. Its structure is entirely built in pine wood. The building forms part of the industrial complex developed along the basin of the rivers Barxell and Riquer. This was the first firefighters' museum to open in the Valencian Region.

- <https://www.muboma.com/en/>

Museum

Museum of Moors and Christians Festivities: El Casal de St. Jordi



El Casal is the museum of Moors and Christians Festivities, the pride of the city because they are the most spectacular and traditional in Spain. These festivities have a historic origin and commemorate a battle against Muslim hosts that took place in 1276. Following the textile tradition of the city, the costumes portray the best designs and tissues which are never worn twice, so each year the display is completely renovated. The creativity in the clothes, make-ups, choreographies and design competes with the best adaptations of the Lord of the Rings or War of Thrones. A refreshing recommendation for the warm days of April is to taste the 'mentireta' (white lie), the most typical drink in the city, made with coffee liqueur and iced lemon. The coffee and herbal liqueurs were the strong traditional drinks that textile workers took to stand the freezing temperatures of the hard winter days when the working hours at the factories started before the sun was even raised.

- A video of the parades: https://youtu.be/am_NS_a2RaY
- A sample of music: <https://youtu.be/2idrDCMA07U>

Museum

The Coal Square (Pza. del Carbó)



Coal square —formerly the old town main square— is also the location of the old town hall which now houses the archaeological museum. The name of this square makes reference to the coal that was the main source of energy for the textile factories. The textile industry in Alcoi and its surroundings can hardly be understood without this fuel. At the end of the

19th century, the small regions of l'Alcoià and El Comtat had a prosperous industrial activity that was constrained by their abrupt orography, and the poor communications that made the arrival of coal more expensive. This isolation disappeared with the construction of the railway line between Alcoi and Gandía by the English company Alcoy and Gandía Railway and Harbour Company Ltd, whose main objective was to import the coal from England needed to supply Alcoi's textile factories through the port of Gandía. The train was popularly called "El Chicharra [Cicada]" because of the noise it produced. The old track line of this railway has been transformed into a greenway.

Castle

Torre de Na Valora: a viewpoint for the surrounding nature

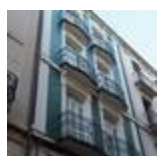


The Na Valora tower is a gothic gate-house of the ancient medieval battlements that surrounded the city. The tower had been concealed by the surrounding buildings erected during the urban development due partly to the industrial revolution, until it was discovered in 1987. The striking views over the Barxell stream and Alcoy valley also deserve a stop. Alcoy-born people have always lived in tune with nature; hence why its Art Nouveau blends so gracefully with the landscape as if buildings were an extension of forests







This is a traditional song about the Mariola mountain (it talks about its fountains and plants): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0lyJyL9aUCU>





Monument





Timoteo Briet's apartment homes (1915-1920)















Briet's houses were designed by the architect Timoteo Briet Montaud in 1915 as a block of apartments for bourgeois families. This is the first example of Art-Nouveau in the route. We can appreciate in the design the typical elements of this architect's style, inspired by Vienna Secessionism: the green tiles, the mosaics, the geometrical designs or the abstract and linear scheme (Try to spot similar details in other buildings by the same architect).

Monument	Old Fire Station (1914)
     	<p>Old Fire Station – Private Valencian-Art-Nouveau building erected in 1915 by Vicente Pascual Pastor for the insurance company La Unión Alcoyana, a company which was in charge of fire extinction from 1887 to 1955. This insurance company, one of the first insurance companies in Spain, was founded with the aim of offering “insurance against fortuitous fires in rural and urban buildings, as well as in factories and stores”. In its design, the most representative features of this architect can be observed, especially the floral patterns, the curves, and his inspiration on natural elements. Try to spot these elements in other buildings. You can easily distinguish Briet's green Secessionist style from Pastor's natural inspirations.</p>

Monument	C/Sant Nicolau, 4 (1910), designed by Vicente Pascual
   	<p>Raduán's house - A 1910 Art Nouveau style building erected by the Alcoy-born architect Vicente Pascual Pastor for Enrique Raduán Casamitjana, an important local businessman who owned one of the silk, manila, and paper factories located by the river Serpis. The building boasts a floral Art Nouveau style which has a direct influence from French and Belgian art nouveau. The arch divided into three parts on the first floor, along with the balcony in forged iron with floral decorations at the bottom, stand out on the façade.</p>

Monument	C/ Sant Nicolau, 9, Vicente Pascual (1901 or 1905)
   	<p>This five-storey building with a basement designed by the Alcoy-born architect Vicente Pascual Pastor was first owned by Victoria Pericás. In addition to a remarkable design quality, this house whose date of completion remains unclear —most probably around 1901 or 1905— is characterised by its hierarchical construction, careful symmetry and rich decoration. Made of stone masonry, it allows us to identify some pre-Modernist elements, with a beautiful façade that shows an eclectic Modernist style featuring cast-iron balcony parapets, ornamental niches with a large portal and prominent halls, and outstandingly, a gallery on the fifth floor. Some pre-modernist ornamental elements are featured on the ornated façade.</p>

Monument	The House of the Turkey (1908), designed by Vicente Pacual
     	<p>The House of the Turkey —which reflects Alcoy's economic prosperity in the early 20th century— was built between 1908 and 1909 by Vicente Pascual Pastor with the collaboration of Fernando Cabrera Cantó, a close friend, who was the greatest exponent of nineteenth-century Alcoy painting and sculpture. Cabrera moved to the building and installed his studio at the back. The most outstanding features on its façade are the wrought-iron balconies and the mosaic finish, the cast iron knobs, as well as the turkey that crowns the lintels of its doors; the reason why it is known as the House of the Turkey.</p>


Monument	Círculo Industrial (1904), designed by Timoteo Briet
     	<p>Industry Circle - This building, characteristic of the Sezession movement, was erected between 1909 and 1911 by the architect Timoteo Briet Montaud and houses the Industrial Circle, an entity with a long history, which has been witness to all sorts of social, political and economic struggles that the city has faced during the past one hundred and forty years. The wrought iron of balcony railings and geometric decorations are presided by 4 Hellenistic female figures on the top which represent the muses of sculpture, music, architecture and painting. The bees are the emblem of the institution and they represent the work of entrepreneurs as a symbol of "industriousness and union in human actions." Worthy of a special mention among its rooms are the library, the Rotonda room and, on its basement, a cave designed by the Alcoy-born architect Vicente Pascual Pastor in 1896. It is still today an exclusive private men's club whose associates are important businessmen, owners and managers of textile factories or other relevant businesses. It is very interesting to visit the inside of the building. The entrance fee is 2.5 Euros.</p>

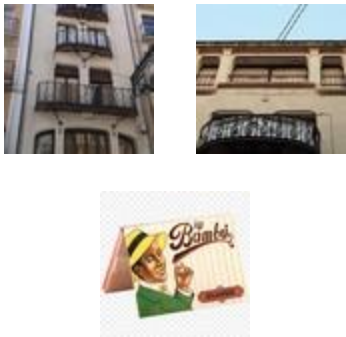
Monument	The 'Bolla' House (1890): Ancient headquarters of the Royal Cloth Factory
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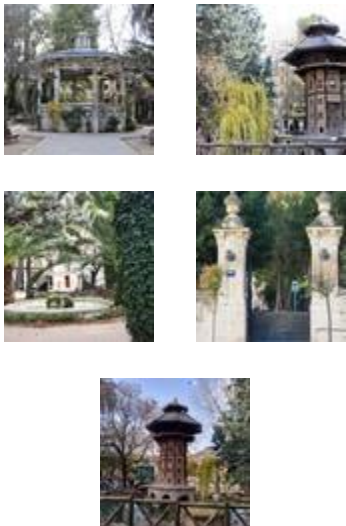
		<p>The House of the Bolla (the Tax House) is on number 21. This is the site of the Alcoy Textile Guild and of the Royal Cloth Factory (that was a privilege which was granted by King Charles IV when Alcoy became the provider of uniforms for the royal military force). The origins of the guild are really old and date back to the 15th century. Today is still a symbol of the city textile power. The building was refurbished by the architect D. Vicente Pascual Pastor in 1890. Its name comes from the custom tax, called 'bolla', that textile products had to pay to be exported and which assured its quality. The cloth and tissues produced at the city competed with those of London and Barcelona and some historic research has even suggested that the industrial revolution started here earlier than in England or Catalonia. Alcoy was also witness to the first workers' strikes. The industry influence has also been extended to the language. For example, when something is very good, you can say "És de 'fil de vint'" (It is like a 'thread of twenty'). A 20-calibre thread was of the highest quality.</p>

Monument	C/ Sant Nicolau, 29 (1905-1908), designed by Vicente Pascual

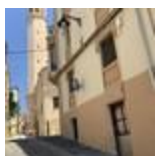
Monument	C/ Sant Nicolau, 32 (1901), designed by Timoteo Briet
<p>Vitoria's House, on San Nicolás 32 - A residential building in the Art Nouveau Valencian style built in 1901 by the architect Timoteo Briet Montaud. It has a ground floor for commercial use and four floors, the last of which is a penthouse, with a façade that stands out for its pink colour and floral ornaments.</p>	

	
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Monument	C/ Sant Nicolau, 37 Casa de Rita Santonja, designed by Timoteo Briet
	<p>Rita Santonja's House, on San Nicolás 37 - A building with five floors and a ground floor for commercial use, which its owner commissioned to the architect Timoteo Briet Montaud in 1908. The Santonja family owned one of the most famous paper factories, where the brand of Alcoy's cigarette paper — Bambú— was created in 1907.</p>

Park	La Glorieta (19th c.): A Pre-Art-Nouveau Park
	<p>The Glorieta is one of the oldest public parks in Alcoy. It was built over the site of the former orchard of the monastery of San Francisco which was founded in 1569. The park had been built in 1836, but it was renovated in 1899 by the architect Vicente Pascual Pastor and then with his vision, it acquired an eclectic atmosphere: romantic and pre-Art-Nouveau style. A typical snapshot can be taken next to the pond beside the columbarium. Nearby, some fountains sculpted in the shape of natural springs play with the visitor and maintain the illusion of being inside a magical forest. It is an excellent place for a calm stroll or a visit when fairs and events are carried out: the Christmas Market (6th-8th December) or the Art-Nouveau Fair in September.</p>

Intersection	Gurugú Steep Street
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Gurugú Street is famous for its slope and was built to improve the access from the city centre to the old textile factory district. Its name is inspired by mount Gurugú which belongs to the Rif range in North Morocco. This mountain shapes the landscape of Melilla and during the Moroccan War (1920-26) was an important site where some battles took place. The Vizcaya military regiment from Alcoy participated in the war and the mount difficult access and orography undoubtedly inspired the name of this steep slope. We encourage you to descend the street by the left non-slip stairs. On the right, you can see a plot of undeveloped land which was used for drying the fabrics and cloth produced by nearby factories. For wheel-chair users or people with accessibility issues, there is an alternative way down, following C/ S. José (San José Street). Then, go straight on until C/ Goya or C/Joan Canto and go up the street until point 23.

Museum

Monte de Piedad (1909), designed by Vicente Pascual



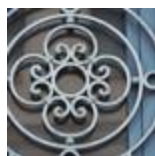
The Art-Nouveau Valencian-style Monte de Piedad savings bank of Alcoy is an exempt building located at Rigoberto Albors Street. It was erected in 1909 by the Alcoy-born architect Vicente Pascual Pastor. The creation of this entity is closely linked to Alcoy's great industrial boom in the late 19th and early 20th century. In 1874, after spending his youth in Alcoy at the head of a cloth factory, Diego Fernando Montañés y Álvarez bequeathed 75,000.00 pesetas to its creation so that Alcoy workers could loan money at a low interest. The city and Alcoy's bourgeoisie add up the same amount and the savings bank started to operate in 1875. It was a pawnbroker institution, run as a charity, which helped especially factory workers whose lives were precarious. For example, it is said that workers used to pawn their Sunday good clothes on Mondays and get them back on Fridays (Pay's Day) so they could wear them during the weekend. This building currently serves as the main headquarters of the Valencian Institute of Modern Art.

Monument

Valencia's Polytechnic University (Ferrándiz and Carbonell Former Factories)



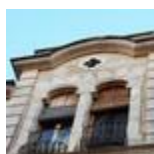
The Alcoy Campus of Valencia Polytechnic University has its origins in the Alcoy Royal Cloth Factory. This organization implemented a determined policy of renovation and industrialization and defended the idea that it was necessary to train technicians who would be able to competently manage the sections of a modern, mechanized textile factory. The idea materialized in the session held on October 29th, 1828, when the Real Fábrica decided to create and maintain, at its own expense, a technical study programme. The Ferrándiz and Carbonell buildings are emblematic



in this area. The Alcoy-born architect Vicente Pascual Pastor was responsible for these two constructions in a Valencian Art Nouveau style. They were rehabilitated as a university site in 2006.

Monument

C/ Joan Cantó, 10 (1907), designed by Vicente Pascual



Art Nouveau home built in 1907 by the local architect D. Vicente Pascual Pastor, who was the municipal architect in 1891 and served as the mayor of Alcoy between 1909 and 1913. Its main façade has a mixture of smooth ashlar around the balconies and windows, with bush-hammered walls, i.e. carved stone. It has some elegant but simple iron railings on the balconies of the main facade with floral decorations, curves and small hoses and, although the grilles in the openings on the ground floor are soberer, they reflect Art Nouveau trying to reproduce elements of nature.

Monument







C/ Joan Cantó, 8 (1906), designed by Vicente Pascual





This building was erected by the architect Vicente Pascual Pastor in 1906 to become the residence of the president of "Monte de Piedad", the main headquarters of the Valencian Institute of Modern Art situated opposite to this building. On its façade, it features the three types of stone-work, typical of the Art Nouveau style: smooth; bush-hammered or pitted; and devastated rustic. Each one of the three floors is different. The second floor and the attic have trefoil windows which give it a medieval character. The first floor has segmented trefoil windows, while the ones on the second floor are decorated with stilted trefoil arches.

Monument

Escaló's House (1906): Municipal Conservatory of Music

		<p>Casa d'Escaló, or Enrique García's mansion, is a beautiful Art Nouveau building erected by the architect Vicente Pascual Pastor between 1906 and 1908. It was built to become the home of the Alcoy-born entrepreneur Enrique García Peidro —known by the nickname of Escaló. This Art Nouveau building shows distinctive details of Art Nouveau. It is one of the most beautiful buildings in this route. It was rehabilitated in the 1980s to house the "Joan Cantó" Municipal Conservatory of Music and Dance, in honour of the local musician and composer Joan Cantó Francés.</p>
		
		

Monument	Av. Pais Valencià, 30 (1911), designed by Jorge Vilaplana Carbonell
	<p>This building erected by the architect Jorge Vilaplana Carbonell in 1911 took Casa Laporta as its reference and, despite being Art-Nouveau, it integrates a mixture of styles. For example, the façade introduces elements of Moorish influence in the tiles and lattices that crown the building. This architect also made several pantheons of great architectural value in Alcoy cemetery.</p>
	
	
	
	

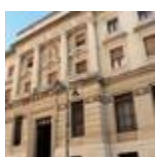
Monument	Laporta's house (1905), designed by Timoteo Briet
	<p>Casa Laporta, the first typically Art Nouveau building erected in Alcoy, was commissioned by the paper entrepreneur José Laporta Valor to the architect Timoteo Briet Montaud and was built between 1904 and 1905. Casa Laporta features a non-refined Art Nouveau style characterised by its strength, elegance and simplicity. What stands out most on its façade is the cantilevered viewpoint made of laminated steel and its bevelled green tiles (typical elements of this architect). The "majorcan" folding blinds also give it an elegant air. Despite being late in Alcoy, Art Nouveau</p>
	



entered strongly from 1904 to 1914 and was used in around thirty buildings during this period.

Monument

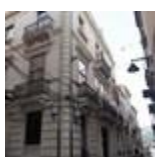
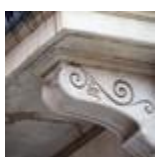
Former Bank of Spain: Cultural Center



The neoclassical-style Bank of Spain building —erected in 1927— housed the headquarters of the Bank of Spain until 1982. It was subsequently donated to the City Council for its use as a Cultural Centre. The need to have currency available for the weekly payment of industry workers' wages required the opening of a Bank of Spain branch—one of the few examples in cities that were not the capital of the province. It is a solemn and monumental building detached from the avant-garde style of its time with some Art Nouveau features.

Monument

The Chamber of Commerce and the University of Alicante site (Former Vicens Bank)



The Old Vicens Bank building, erected in 1881, was the headquarters of a local bank which acquired great relevance in Alcoy's development. Nowadays it houses the headquarters of the local Chamber of Commerce and is one of the UA (University of Alicante) provincial venues. For many years, it was the most important financial institution in this town, with a larger volume of loans than the Caja de Ahorros or the Bank of Spain in Alcoy. The entity had subsidiaries in several Alicante province municipalities. The bank filed for bankruptcy after the civil war because of the loans it had signed with the defeated Republican side. Mercury Caduceus, a symbol of commerce used in institutions devoted to economic sciences, is above the door. This is the end of our guide which will hopefully help you get to better know our heritage in the city of Alcoy.

