

Labyrinth Park of Horta

The oldest park in Barcelona, the „Parc del Laberint d’Horta“ was founded in 1791 by the Italian architect Domenico Bagutti as a project to landscape the property of Antoni Desvalls, a Catalan nobleman, landowner, scientist and art enthusiast. The first building phase ended in 1808 with a neo-classical garden and ended after several stages of transformation with a romantic garden in 1853. At the end of the 19th century, the Desvalls estate became the centre of social and cultural events including open-air theatre performances. In 1967 the park was handed over to the city council of Barcelona, as the Desvalls family was not able to maintain the 9 hectares of garden area anymore. Four years later it was opened to the public.

Since it is located in the Horta district outside of the tourists trails, its original charm has remained intact. Built with simplicity in mind, the former part of the garden follows the ideas of neo-classicism comprising Italian pavilions, the labyrinth of cypress trees, sculptures and reliefs representing characters from the Greco-Roman mythology. Later the romantic garden with flower beds, plenty of green plants and tall trees, little squares and a waterfall were added, giving the place the look of an overgrown ruin.

Due to its special atmosphere it is popular with locals who want to take pictures, paint or sit in quiet contemplation. The particularity of the park was not unrecognized by German film director Tom Tykwer, who used it to shoot a scene of the movie “Perfume: The story of a murderer“, which story is set in the mid-18th century.

The park is currently a garden-museum with a limited capacity of 750 people at the same time, in order to preserve the delicate environment and structures of the area.

keywords: labyrinth park, neo-classicism, romantic garden, popular place Barcelona