

## HISTORY OF THE HOTEL

*The history of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria would not be complete without the chronicle of Hotel Santa Catalina*

This unique hotel, a jewel of the hotel industry, a species that is in danger of extinction, is a local reference point and a cause of admiration for our visitors. The years of this twenty-first century go by, and the *Santa Catalina*, as a perennial hotel brand, continues with its sights set on its targets: tourism, rest, business, culture, society... An endearing symbol of an open, cosmopolitan city, a melting pot of cultures. Between the City and the Port, in the heart of Ciudad Jardín, surrounded by hundred-year-old vegetation, and encircled by the breeze from our nearby sea, is our hotel... an accomplice in our sights and, especially, in our hearts and our feelings.

Here is its history, dating back three centuries... we have had delight in recounting it, and you will surely read it with pleasure. If you are staying at the Hotel, we wish you a pleasant stay and hope you enjoy everything around you, and if you are reading us in the distance, we encourage you to come and visit us; you will not regret staying in the most important and meaningful hotel in the Canary Islands nor visiting this city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, a forerunner of the New World and first Atlantic city founded by Spain.

### THE CANARY ISLANDS COMPANY LIMITED

14<sup>th</sup>, August 1888.- THE CANARY ISLANDS COMPANY LIMITED is officially incorporated. This London-based company is the promoter of the construction of the *GRAN HOTEL SANTA CATALINA*, with a capital of 25,000 pounds divided into shares of 10 pounds each. 300 shares were reserved for residents of the Canary Islands.

### Founding Partners

Wallace William Cragg, John Alexander Swanston, Joseph Miller, Henry Clarke, John Greenish, Charles John Marrian and William Matthew.

## **First Board**

Wallace W. Cragg, W. M. Blyth, T. G. Gillespie, Hugo Göetz and Peter Swanston.

## **Local Board**

The Board or General Council appointed, in Gran Canaria, a Local Board chaired by Count de la Vega Grande, Fernando del Castillo Westerling.

## **The area chosen**

The place chosen to build the Hotel was between the City and the Port Refugio de La Luz, in a place called “Vega de Santa Catalina”. This area, known as “the hotel district”, was an English fief: there were houses of the Pinnocks, Fchillers, Blandys, Milles, properties of the Elder Company, orchards and properties of the Woods..., although there were Canarian owners, too. The hermitage of Santa Catalina was found here.

## **Land acquisition for its construction**

**4<sup>th</sup>, September 1888.-** The land where the Hotel and the gardens were to be built were part of a group of nine demarcated buildings which belonged to Juan Bautista Carlo and Guercy. On this date, before the notary public Benítez Llarena, the transaction is carried out in the presence of the owner and Fernando del Castillo Westerling, the Count of La Vega Grande, who, representing the Company, had previously handed over the agreed value: 35,225 pesetas. The lands purchased comprised ground, buildings, accessories and ponds.

The Company commissioned the Scottish architect James M. MacLaren to design a luxury hotel. Norman Wright, an English architect living in Las Palmas, oversaw the construction, and Laureano Arroyo acted as inspector architect.

## **Start of construction**

The work began in the autumn of 1888 and was completed in record time: just over a year.

## **1<sup>st</sup> PERIOD OF THE HOTEL: 1890-1914**

### **Official inauguration of the Hotel**

During Christmas 1889, one of the wings of the new hotel was fitted out to accommodate English families visiting Gran Canaria that had no accommodation.

In February 1890, the *Gran Hotel Santa Catalina* opens offering spa and health resort facilities in addition to its hotel services. At the time it was considered the best hotel in Europe.

### **Features of the Hotel and rooms**

The establishment offers 75 bright and comfortable rooms (100/120 people), all with double walls and reinforced floors, fitted with electric bells. Much of the structure of the building was made of timber imported from England. At this time, a renowned local cabinetmaker, Luis Acosta, was responsible for the joinery. Hygiene was stringently observed and the service was excellent. Guests could use hot or cold water. The hotel had rooms for reading, writing, games, smoking, visits and relaxation, a party room, cellar, hairdresser, etc. It was possible to play tennis and also croquet. The beach was 100 metres in front of it, and the “Baños de Santa Catalina” 250 metres along the coast.

### **Founding of the first golf course in Spain**

**17<sup>th</sup>, December 1891.-** “Las Palmas Golf Club”, the first golf course in Spain and closely linked to the hotel, is founded in the area known as “Lomo del Polvo” (Altavista). The first president of the new club was Richard R. Blandy, of the Local Board of the Company, while Wallace W. Cragg, maximum head of the Board of the Company between 1903 and 1916, was the president of the Golf Club and also the designer of its emblematic shield. Meetings or commissions of the Golf Club and awards ceremonies used to be held at the Hotel. Hotel guests could use these facilities.

### **English hotel of Gáldar**

In 1896, the Company acquired an English hotel located in Gáldar, turning it into a branch of the *Santa Catalina*.

## **The Hotel is mortgaged**

**December 1912.-** The Hotel and eight more buildings are mortgaged for a worth 8,900 pounds (249,200 pesetas).

## **Closure of the Hotel**

**1914.-** The economic difficulties the Hotel experienced and the start of World War I led to the commercial closure of the hotel establishment.

## **PERIOD IN WHICH THE HOTEL IS COMMERCIALY CLOSED: 1914-1946**

**1914-1922.-** The Hotel and its buildings are still owned by the English Company; the hotel establishment, even when it is commercially closed, holds certain activities.

## **Mortgage payment**

**January, 1922.-** The Canarian businessmen Miguel Curbelo Espino and Juan Bordes Claverie take over the mortgage on that date: 8,000 pounds (224,000 pesetas), becoming owners of the hotel, gardens, buildings and ponds.

## ***Hotel Santa Catalina, national heritage***

**21<sup>st</sup>, April 1923.-** Las Palmas Town Council, under its president José Mesa y López, acquires the properties making up the group for 500,000 pesetas, to preserve the building as a tourist hotel and convert the land into a municipal park. ***Hotel Santa Catalina has been a national heritage site since then.***

## **DIFFICULT YEARS**

**1923-1946.-** Despite the intentions of the Town Council, the Hotel remains closed for a quarter of a century, even if, at times, certain events were held, both within its facilities and also outside. For a few years in this period, the Spanish Falange (national-syndicalist political party) had its headquarters in these facilities as well

as a kitchen for social assistance. The building deteriorates over time and, at a given moment, the kitchen catches fire. In 1946, the old timber building is demolished.

### **Tourism as a driving force**

The Captain General of the Canary Islands, García Escámez, maximum person in charge of the so-called Economic Command of the Canary Islands, believes it necessary to boost tourism in the region, and, in accordance with Las Palmas Town Council, it is decided to build a new hotel in the same place where the old *Santa Catalina* stood.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> PERIOD 1946-1994**

### **Birth of a new Hotel... respecting the idea of McLaren**

**1947.-** The company ENTRECANALES Y TÁVORA is responsible for the construction of the new hotel according to the design made by the renowned local architect Miguel Martín-Fernández de la Torre. The architect had been working on this project for two years, based on the ideas of his brother, Néstor, who, having died in 1938, had left his artistic design for the works the architect would carry out at a later date. Martín-Fernández respected the volume and footprint of MacLaren.

**May and September 1952.-** The Hotel, not yet inaugurated, hosts the US ambassador, his family, colleagues and members of the Standard Oil Company, and also the President of Liberia and his entourage.

**December 1952.-** The official opening is carried out. The Management of HUSA chartered a special plane that brought numerous guests from Madrid and Barcelona, as well as the board members of the company. The opening of *Hotel Santa Catalina*, in this its second period, gave the city a boost, both in tourism and socially. It was considered one of the best hotels in Spain at the time.

### **Extensions to the building structure**

Popular acceptance was such that the possibility of carrying out an extension was considered.

**August 1955.-** The side wings are extended into two more bodies, and another level is added to the central part, so that the volumetric building structure matches. The new image of the Hotel can be seen in 1956.

**1959.-** The second extension modifies the ballroom, the so-called “García Escámez”, rising three new levels above a larger floorspace.

**1961-1963.-** A third large expansion is completed: a new construction from the south side and parallel to the aforementioned ballroom.

These two additions are known as the new wings or tails of the Hotel. From here on, the Hotel offers 202 rooms.

### **Difficulties and crisis in the sector**

The golden years of the late 50s and 60s have been left behind. Years go by and some crises occur in the tourist sector, and those problems affect the Hotel. The building is deteriorating and requires special attention. HUSA, which had been managing the company since 1975, warns the Town Council about the situation.

### **Temporary closure for refurbishment of the Hotel**

The hotel establishment is closed from April 1981 up to the same month of 1983, in order to carry out the necessary work which is undertaken by the company HUARTE Y COMPAÑÍA.

### **New lease of the Hotel**

**26<sup>th</sup>, March 1982.-** The lease for the management of the hotel is allocated to **GESTIÓN HOTELERA INTERNACIONAL, S. A.** The Hotel enters a partnership with **HOTELES ASOCIADOS INDEPENDIENTES (HAI)** and **GOLDEN TULIP HOTELS.**

### **Gran Casino Las Palmas**

**15<sup>th</sup>, December 1987.-** On this date, the Casino is inaugurated, provisionally, in facilities of the Hotel.

**10<sup>th</sup>, January 1990.-** After a call for tender on 19<sup>th</sup>, July 1989, the commercial exploitation of the Casino and the Hotel is awarded to the company **GRAN CASINO DE LAS PALMAS, S. A.**

**March 1993.-** The Casino is closed on this date due to administrative matters.

**1<sup>st</sup>, July 1994.-** After a new call for tender, the company GRAN CASINO DE LAS PALMAS, S. A. wins again and definitely opens the Casino. HOTELERA NUEVA CANARIA, S. A., under the aforementioned company, takes over management of the hotel.

**14<sup>th</sup>, April 1999.-** The Casino of *Hotel Santa Catalina* receives Quality Certificate ISO-9002, this being the first time a Casino obtains it in Spain.

**2010.-** The Casino is moved to the port area.

**Visit of the King and the Queen of Spain in June 1994.-** King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofía visit the city to celebrate, in the Real Club Náutico of Gran Canaria, the name day of HM the King. As usual, they stay at the Hotel, and, aware of the large refurbishment which is to be carried out, the King says to Mr Juan Padrón Marrero, chairman of the Board of Directors of HOTELERA NUEVA CANARIA, S. A.

*... take good care of the refurbishment, because this is an outstanding building.*

*The Queen and I both love this Hotel*

### **Large refurbishment of the Hotel**

The new manager believes a significant investment is necessary to carry out a large refurbishment and construction of new areas. The architects of this great renovation were José Antonio Sosa Díaz-Saavedra and Francisco Javier Cabrera.

### **Completion of works and opening of the new areas**

**28<sup>th</sup>, May 1998.-** A big party is organised to celebrate what some call the beginning of the third period of the Hotel. The property has been rejuvenated and other rooms have been created: the old Palmeras Hall has disappeared, and a bigger and more functional new one has been put in its place; below it, there is a car park for one hundred vehicles. The Spa Center, with gym and indoor pool, is created, and the outdoor pool area is remodelled.

## **Excellence as a goal**

**18<sup>th</sup>, July 1967.-** The Ministry of Information and Tourism awards *Hotel Santa Catalina* with the “Plaque for Tourist Merit” in the silver category.

**29<sup>th</sup>, September 2000.-** The Hotel receives the Spanish certification of hotel quality (“Q”), becoming the first hotel in Gran Canaria to be awarded it.

**March 2006.-** The bartender of *Carabela*, Piotr Babin, with the cocktail *Celebration*, wins 1<sup>st</sup> prize at the 36<sup>th</sup> edition of “Grand Prix of Cocktail Bar Bacardi, Talem Award”, held at the *García Escámez* hall in the Hotel. Mario Hernández Bueno, expert and scholar in gastronomy, has said on some occasions that “the best cocktails in town” are served in the *Santa Catalina*.

**Best Hotel Restaurant 2011.-** Awarded by the magazine *Qué bueno Canarias* in the Regional Food and Catering Awards.

**Michelin Guide 2014.-** Recommended restaurant.

**Repsol Guide 2014.-** Restaurant recognised with 3 Suns.

**Best Historical Restaurant 2104 - Restaurant *La Terraza-Hotel Santa Catalina*.-** *Mahou-La Provincia-Gastronomy* Awards. Recognition of the quality and innovation of Canarian food and catering.

**Excellence Certificate 2015. TripAdvisor.-** These distinctions are backed up by millions of travellers who select the 25 best hotels in Spain.

## **Presentation of the book about the Hotel**

**8<sup>th</sup>, October 2002.-** The book *Hotel Santa Catalina* was presented in the “García Escámez” hall as part of the activities of the Forum and “Benito Pérez Galdós Foundation”. *The Essence. 1890-2001*, by Manuel Ramos Almenara.

## **Commemorating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Hotel**

**12<sup>th</sup>, November 2015.-** In the “Palmeras” hall, and before a crowd of over 400 people, various events are held to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of *Hotel Santa Catalina*:

A video of the history of the hotel is shown.

- The chairman of the Board of Directors of “Hotelera Nueva Canaria, S.A.U” Mr Manuel Padrón, the artist and painter Pepe Dámaso, and the City Mayor, Mr Augusto Hidalgo, all take part.
- The Hotel acquires the artwork of Pepe Dámaso *Birth and Death of the Palm Tree* to exhibit it over four spaces in the north side of the hall.
- The “Palmeras” hall will be called *Salón Palmeras Pepe Dámaso* from the moment of the installation of the paintings.
- Inauguration, in the “Terraza Geranios” of the graphic documentary exposition *History of Hotel Santa Catalina, 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*.
- Cocktail in the pool area.
- Scheduled visits.

## ITS GUESTS, CLIENTS AND VISITORS

As a Hotel that has lived in three different centuries, with so much history and of such significance, it stands to reason that there have been many guests and also non-resident clients and visitors. We could hardly count them all, nor even the most significant part, especially when considering the first period.

### **1<sup>st</sup> PERIOD: 1890-1914**

The *Gran Hotel Santa Catalina*, which can also be considered a health and spa hotel, opened in February 1890. The British colony of Gran Canaria was in luck. An English-owned hotel had been opened, specifically built for large European tourism and the needs of British people who passed through the Canary Islands. In this first period, it was sponsored by HM the King of Spain, Alfonso XIII and other members of the royal families of Europe.

### **Its guests**

In those late years of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century, guests of the *Gran Hotel Santa Catalina* were mostly British citizens:

- Families, or employees of British companies, who travelled to African colonies or returned from Africa and rested in Gran Canaria.
  - Pensioners who, thanks to advertising of the Hotel or certain tourism campaigns, decided to spend some time on the Island and know its charms and the delights of the City, enjoying a wonderful climate that was better than that in Madeira Islands.
  - Representatives of British companies based in Gran Canaria also arrived: coal companies, consignees, insurance companies, banks, small and large shops, tourism, exporters, etc.
  - People in frail health, along with so-called “invalids”, affected by lung diseases, took advantage of the good weather of the City and the minero-medicinal waters of the “Baños de Santa Catalina”, very close to the Hotel, and bathed in the sea at the nearby beach.
  - Scientists, writers, journalists, researchers, photographers, doctors, artists... regular visitors to Gran Canaria who now had a hotel establishment of proven excellence.
  - And, of course, that pleiad of important people, descendants of those who, in previous centuries, were integrated into the European Grand Tour and who now, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, with its new opportunities for development, did the Europe tourist circuit along with the middle classes, discovering the Canary Islands in all their glory.
  - The Hotel already offered its services before being officially inaugurated: some British people and families who were in Las Palmas over Christmas 1889 had difficulty getting accommodation. The British Consul reported this situation to Mr Hugo Göetz, the representative of the British company that owned the Hotel, which decided to prepare a series of rooms to accommodate these British citizens.
- We can say that the first big Christmas party was held in 1889. Mr Göetz, who can be considered the first director of the Hotel, hosted a great evening event bringing together local authorities and representatives of the company, to celebrate the completion of the work. The Hotel’s first guests were invited to this party.
- On 21<sup>st</sup>, February 1890, the Gran Canaria Surveillance Inspection noted that, for *Gran Hotel Santa Catalina*, 20 passengers had arrived from London, Marseille and Madeira, plus 9 travellers from Tenerife. These guests were all foreigners.

- In 1892, Mr Caddell, a prominent English General who was very well known in London, stays at the hotel.
- In 1903, the former princess of Caraman-Chimany, already divorced from the Belgian Prince Marie Joseph de Riquet, arrives at the Hotel. She was accompanied by the Hungarian violinist Rigó Jancsi, whom she married a year after this stay in Las Palmas.
- The sisters Ella and Florence Du Cane, a writer and painter, and the writer Margaret D'Este also stayed at the Hotel.

### **Non-resident guests at the Hotel**

Although the clientele of the new Hotel in the first few years was basically from the British colony, it is true that, gradually, Gran Canarian society became more interested in the hotel culture of the time.

- British residents loyally celebrated *Empire Day* or, thinking about what they left behind and could not forget sang *God Save the King*.
- Meetings for afternoon tea or special celebrations of family or friends were frequent.
- An homage to the brothers Juan and Fernando León y Castillo was held on 3<sup>rd</sup>, August 1890. Various speakers participated: Domingo J. Navarro, Carlos Navarro Ruiz, Agustín Millares Cubas, etc.
- In February 1893, a “sumptuous banquet” was offered to the marine crew of the “Santa Maria”, a replica of the flagship of Columbus which Spain built to participate in the Fourth Centenary of the Discovery and which stopped at the Port Refugio de La Luz.
- On 7<sup>th</sup>, October 1894, Las Palmas Town Council offered a lunch for the heads and officials of the Spanish fleet anchored in the port.
- In 1899, a banquet was held to mark the inauguration of the public lighting.
- On 20<sup>th</sup>, February 1905, the admiral, the commander and the officials of the Spanish fleet anchored in the harbour visited the Hotel to attend, as guests, the “Sports Party” which was organised by the societies “El Recreo” and “Santa Catalina”.

## Non-guest visitors

Important visitors came to the Hotel to see it because it was known in Europe as an outstanding building, indeed at the time of opening, it was considered one of the best in Europe.

On 2<sup>nd</sup>, January 1900, Winston Churchill's mother, Mrs Jenni Churchill, also known as Lady Randolph Churchill, after Eduardo VII awarded her this title, had lunch at the Hotel.

When the British colony had information about an upcoming visit of King Alfonso XIII of Spain, they set about organising a heartfelt, magnificent tribute at the *Gran Hotel Santa Catalina*. It was clear that the British residents needed to reflect their monarchist feelings, which were so deep-rooted in their hearts; moreover, the young king would marry, on his return to the Peninsula, an English princess.

So, the evening of 31<sup>st</sup>, March 1906, would be the time set aside for the party in honour of HM the Spanish monarch and a *Garden Party* with demonstration of Canarian wrestling, a tennis match, concert and tea and pastries.

Alfonso XIII was accompanied by his sister, the Infanta María Teresa and her husband Mr Fernando María of Baviera, along with Mr Baltasar Losada and Torres, a gentleman, the Count of San Román, ministers, senior military commanders, adjutants, butlers and ladies of company.

The Infanta Isabel of Borbón y Borbón, the eldest daughter of Isabel II and Francisco of Asís of Borbón, visited the hotel in 1910, when her ship stopped in Las Palmas upon return from a representative trip to Argentina.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> PERIOD: 1951...

The new *Hotel Santa Catalina* was officially opened in December 1952. Naturally, it has been easier to know the guests and customers of the Hotel during this period. Although extensive, the list will not be complete, which may possibly tire the polite reader.

Kings and queens, princes and princesses, infantas and people belonging to the nobility have been guests of this hotel. Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofía, first as

prince and princess, and then as King and Queen of Spain, were guests at the *Santa Catalina* more than a dozen times; the Prince of Asturias and the Infantas Cristina and Elena were also illustrious guests at the Hotel and, nowadays, the King and the Queen of Spain HRH Felipe VI and HRH Letizia.

### **Other royal families**

King Balduino and Queen Fabiola of Belgium

King Hassan II of Morocco

Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia

Princes Carlos Hugo de Borbón y Dos Sicilias, and Irene of the Netherlands

Prince Rainier of Monaco; Prince Charles, from Wales; Bernhard of the Netherlands; Abdullah bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia

Albert of Savoy and Genoa

The Dukes of Windsor

### **Prime Ministers**

**From Spain:** Adolfo Suárez, Felipe González, José María Aznar, José L. Rodríguez Zapatero and Mariano Rajoy.

**From other countries:** Liberia, Mexico, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, China, Indonesia, Senegal, Equatorial Guinea, Cape Verde, Mauritania, Congo.

The signature of the president of Liberia, Mr Tubman, ranks first in the Book of Honour of the Hotel in this second period, and the second signature corresponds to the Marquis of Somosierra, with this dedication: *With gratitude for the Canary Islands and to the hotel itself for the memory of my dear father who fought so hard for this to be a reality.* Indeed, General García Escámez was the main driver of the new *Santa Catalina*, just as he was for the *Mencey* in Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

**From Spanish regions:** Manuel Hermoso, Adán Martín, Paulino Rivero.

## **Ambassadors**

United States, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Ghana, India, Japan, Sweden, China, Senegal. Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Sudan, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Kenya, Korea.

## **Senior Civil Servants**

**From Spain:** Jerónimo Saavedra, Narcís Serra, Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría, Alberto Ruiz Gallardón, Jaime Mayor Oreja. Pedro Morenés, Luis de Guindos.

**From other countries:** Malcom MacIntyre, American Under Secretary of the Air Force; Hassan Habibi, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Asger Petersen, Director General of Competition of the European Commission.

## **Professors**

Joseph Schraibman, Carlos Martínez Shaw, Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Rafael Entrena Cuesta, Joaquín Ruíz Jiménez, Bonifacio Nicolás Díaz Chico.

## **Writers**

Agatha Christie, César González Ruano, Mario Vargas Llosa, José Saramago, Alberto Vázquez Figueroa, Natalia Figueroa.

## **Journalists**

Enrique Aguinaga, José Pizarro, Fernando de Velasco, José Antonio de Irurozqui, Fernando García Teresa, Aurent, Tico Medina, José Luis Balbín, Fernando Jáuregui, Antonio Fontán Pérez, Luis María Ansón, Mari Cruz Soriano, Jaime Peñafiel, Ernesto Sáenz de Buruaga.

## **Prominent figures of Spanish society**

Antonio García Trevijano, Enrique Bacigalupo, José María Cremades, Diego Camacho López-Escobar, José Barea, Ramón Tamames, Javier Solana, Emilio Botín, Mario Conde, Marcelino Oreja, Juan Roig, Ana María Lajusticia, José Luis Zoreda de la Rosa.

## **Prominent chefs**

Juan María Arzac, Ferrán Adriá, Lucila Molina de Merlos, Michel Troisgros, Carlos Gamonal, Miguel Ángel Moreno, Miguel Ángel Bermejo, Antonio Cavanillas Madsen, Josu Barrenetxea, Carlos Manuel Faustino Nunes, Rafael Rivera, Santiago Ortiz, Víctor Rodríguez, Santiago Ortiz Esteve, Mey Hofman, who presented her book *Fire and Passion in the Kitchen*, the oenologist José Luis de Santaolalla; Mario Molins, manager of Bilbao Máster Gastronómico and the famous hotelier of the Gran Vía from Madrid, Perico Chicote.

## **Other important figures**

Astronauts Miguel López Alegría and Pedro Duque, the Director of the Astrophysical Institute of Canary Islands Francisco Sánchez Martínez; the iron sculptor Martín Chirino; the great dancer and choreographer Joaquín Cortés; the model and TV presenter Paloma Lago; the star Normal Duval; Venezuelan fashion designer Carolina Herrera; the famous bullfighters El Cordobés and Luis Miguel Dominguín.

## **Conductors**

Pedro Halffter, Günther Herbig, Antoni Ros Marbá, Peter Ruzicka, Martin Sieghart, José Serebrier, Pavel Kogan, Jesús López Cobos, Inma Shara, Zdzislaw Tytlak, Rafael Frülbeck, Mstislav Rostropovich, Stéphane Denève, Ralf Weikert, Marcus Bosch, etc.

## **Opera singers**

Plácido Domingo, Monserrat Caballé, Teresa Berganza, Juan Diego Flórez, Alfredo García, Raquel Lojendio, Marina Pardo, Donald Litaker, Melanie Diener, José Carreras, Michaela María Mayer, Ainhoa Arteta, etc.

## **Pianists**

José Iturbi, Malcuzytsky, Mikhail Rudy, Lauma Skride, etc.

## **Violinists**

Sayaka Shoji, Tanja Becker-Bender, Benjamín Schmid, Friedemann Breuninger, Alina Pogostkina, Alexandre da Costa, etc.

## **Singers, guitarists and dancers**

### **From Spain**

Maruja Blanco, Lola Flores, Olivia Martínez Alonso, known as “La Greca”, Rocío Jurado, Carmen Sevilla, Rocío Dúrcal, Marisol, Julio Iglesias, Alejandro Sanz, Serrat, Sabina, Ana Belén and Víctor Manuel, Juan Luis Guerra, Bisbal, Bustamante, etc.

### **From other countries**

Celia Cruz, Marc Anthony, Jennifer López, Shakira, Sting, Pitbull, Cliff Richard, The Shadows, Maná, etc.

### **Prominent athletes**

Manolo Santana, Raúl González Blanco, Juan Carlos Valerón, Carlos Sainz, Pedro de la Rosa, David Meca, Del Bosque, Etoo, Butragueño, etc.

## **Cinematography**

In the field of cinematography, the list of guests would be endless. Film directors and leading actors of films which were shot in Las Palmas (some scenes were filmed at the *Santa Catalina*) stayed at the Hotel, as well as those artists who, for various reasons, have visited us, especially in relation to the Film Festival of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

### **Directors**

Paolo Moffa, John Houston, Sidney J. Furie, José Luis Garci, Miguel Gomes, Atom Egoyan, José Luis Guerín, Jerzy Skolimowski, Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Roger Corman, Jis Zhangke, Jacques Doillon, Vicente Aranda, etc.

### **Spanish artists**

María Cuadra, Alfredo Landa, Aurora Bautita, Elvira Quintillá, Amparo Larrañaga, Conchita Velasco, Sara Montiel, Vicente Parra, Ana Mariscal, Maribel Verdú, Gustavo Rojo, etc.

### **Foreign artists**

Ava Gardner, Linda Christian, Gina Lollobrigida, Raf Vallone, Edmun Purdon, Sophia Loren, Alain Delon, Eddie Constantine, Gregory Peck, Marcelo Mastroiani,

Pier Angeli, Jean Moreau, Leslie Caron, Silvana Pampanini, Richard Attenborough, O. W. Fisher, Faye Dunaway, María de Medeiros, Carmen Russo, Eva Bartok, Tippi Hedren, Walter Chiari, Catherine Deneuve, Geraldine Chaplin, Raquel Welch, Deborah Kerr, Alberto Sordi, Willen Dafoe, Jean-Pierre Léaud, Susan Sarandon, Ed Harris, Gerard Depardieu, Bruno Ganz, Rod Steiger, Jeff Daniels, Jacqueline Bisset, Hayden Christensen, etc.

### **Non-resident guests at the Hotel**

The *Santa Catalina* is also a place to celebrate anniversaries, family gatherings, ceremonies, banquets and social events; to attend various cultural events, conferences, auctions, seminars, large business meetings, and also to take time out with friends or family. To sum up, the new Hotel became a meeting point for all those who, for one reason or another, resided on the Island.

The Hotel frequently hosts meetings of the Lions Club, and every Wednesday of the year, members of the Rotary Club of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, as well as Rotarians visiting on this day, meet for lunch .

On 2<sup>nd</sup>, September 1964, the 21<sup>st</sup> National Congress of Pediatrics was held in Gran Canaria. Civil authorities offer a lunch for delegates, with Santiago Santana drawing the cover of the menu.

In 1985, numismatists from Las Palmas and friends gathered in the *Doramas* Hall to celebrate their patron saint, Saint Eligius, at their first Annual Meeting, with lunch and an auction of collectibles

In 1998, an outstanding year for the Hotel (according to some, its third period begins on this date), several events are held, perhaps more than in other years. We highlight the following:

Tribute to José Moriana Satisteban who chaired the Federation of Employers of Hotel Industry and Tourism of Las Palmas for 14 years.

The company Vemotor Canarias, S.L. organises a conference on economy, and invites the leading economists José Barea and Ramón Tamames as speakers.

The 5<sup>th</sup> National Congress of Hoteliers is held.

On the morning of 30<sup>th</sup>, November 2015, and within framework of the Forum of *La Provincia*, the chief of the regional executive, Fernando Clavijo, presented the Plan of Development and Cohesion of the Canary Islands (Pdcan), to be implemented over ten years. Island authorities, employers, trade unions, professionals and representatives of the media, led by the director Antonio Cacereño from *La Provincia* met in “Palmeras” hall.

### **Non-guest visitors**

The new building which arises at the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century is seen as unique in its architecture, and is a source of ongoing admiration by Canarian residents and travellers who visit us. In the 1960s, the *Santa Catalina* was one of the most photographed buildings in Europe, according to Kodac. Hotels with such features are becoming ever less common; fortunately, this jewel is kept alive and shining in our City. Groups of people or schoolchildren sometimes ask to visit the Hotel and learn about its internal structure and its history.

In 1952, the Hotel offers a toast to the civil and military authorities during the visit to the City of the Spanish Navy.

In 1962, actor Paul Newman and his wife, actress Joanne Woodward, visited the Hotel with Gloria Swanson and Zachary Scott, all of them enjoying a cruise on the Atlantic.

On 28<sup>th</sup>, September 1965, American cosmonauts Gordon Cooper and Charles Conrad, who arrived in Gran Canaria with their wives, visited the Hotel to give a press conference. Civil authorities offered them a lunch at the Hotel.

On 9<sup>th</sup>, February 1967, the Greek shipowner Aristotle Onassis, accompanied by Maria Callas, arrived at Puerto de La Luz in his famous yacht “Cristina”. In their tour of the island, they were accompanied by the person in charge of clearance of ships of the consignee C.F. Staib, Mr Correa, who took them to *Santa Catalina* for refreshments.

## AN ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL HOTEL

### OVERTURE

*Hotel Santa Catalina* is a national heritage site, a protected building and a provincial historic-artistic monument. The building has high historical and architectural value. The notable linguist and professor at the University of Las Palmas, Maximiano Trapero, in the preface of book *Hotel Santa Catalina, The Essence, 1890-2001*, says:

*In the city in which one lives there are always places, institutions and buildings that become particular reference landmarks of city life, and which, for what they are and what they have come to mean in collective life, are held in special affection. In the city of Las Palmas, these include, certainly, among others, the neighbourhood of Vegueta, the Museo Canario, the parks of San Telmo and Santa Catalina, Las Canteras beach and Teatro Perez Galdós. But also Hotel Santa Catalina. Inevitably, Hotel Santa Catalina will appear in the relationship which each person has with these places, felt as part of the urban heritage and mentioned with pride.*

### ARCHITECTURAL CONCERT

Here we refer to the Hotel which was born in 1952, marking the start of its second period; a building built by local architect Miguel Martín-Fernández de la Torre (1894-1980), who moving away from rationalist architecture (of which he was the most important representative in the Canary Islands), used a style that became known as “neo-Canarian” to breathe new life into his work for this second half of the twentieth century.

The architect, respecting the footprint of the old McLaren Hotel, built a facade and interiors, adding the ideas of his brother Néstor, a representative of Spanish modernist painting and an important figure in the European context in terms of symbolism. It is considered the best building of regional architecture of the autarchic period, particularly due to the exterior timber and stone finish and the hardwoods in the interior.

Miguel Martín-Fernández worked with rigour, in detail, meticulously on all elements of the Hotel: walls, floors, columns, ceilings, arches, terraces, doors, lights, tables, chairs, rooms... He was the complete maker, and his work was magnificent and, right from the beginning, well loved.

## **ALLEGRO, WE ACCESS THE HOTEL**

Guests or visitors to *Hotel Santa Catalina*, as soon as they enter the reception hall, immediately experience a pleasant visual sensation thanks to the different aesthetic principles: around them, they take in a perfect decorative harmony which combines space, light and colour and a perfect balance of all the elements found in such a beautiful and welcoming entrance.

When you go into the different rooms, whether the majestic *García Escámez* hall or the most elegant and spacious dining room in the Canary Islands, which is named as painter Jesús Arencibia, you will be amazed at what your eyes see. If you continue to investigate, you will come across surprise after surprise and, if you are a sensitive person, be able to admire and take delight in the decorative art of *La Rotondita*: its artistic metallic door, its unique columns, its curved walls, its bright double roof, and Arencibia's fabulous painting *Dawn of Witches*.

## **SYMPHONY... THE HOTEL SHOWS WORKS OF CANARIAN AUTHORS**

Distributed around the noblest rooms of the Hotel, our surprised happy visitors will appreciate a series of works of Canarian artists, making them feel like they are at an intimate museum:

### **Jesús Arencibia** (Tamaraceite, Gran Canaria, 1911-1993)

Jesús was a great muralist, and his works ooze indigenism and reflect, mainly, human figures. Upon completion of the Hotel interior, the architect Martín-Fernández proposes to Arencibia that they should decorate the main halls with his paintings. The prominent artist from Tamaraceite agrees, reflecting his work in *La Rotondita*, *Bar Carabela* (at the opening of the Hotel, it was the library); the dining room with hunting and fishing motifs, and the ballroom with natural elements of the earth.

### **Plácido Fleitas** (Telde, Gran Canaria, 1915-1972)

Plácido is a key figure of modern art produced in the Canary Islands, and also a mentor of indigenism. His works in the Hotel were bronze sculptures with marble pedestal dedicated to General García Escámez, a girl with fruit, and man with a seashell, all when entering the ballroom.

### **Santiago Santana** (Aruca, Gran Canaria, 1909-1996)

Also an indigenist, a great painter and draftsman. He collaborated with the architect Martín-Fernández, and was the author of the menu-brochure of the official opening of the hotel in December 1952. His works exhibited at the Hotel, in the Business sector, were three murals on felt (0.50 x 1.20) related to female farm labourers.

**Manuel Martín González** (Guía de Isora, Tenerife, 1905-1988)

A prominent landscape painter whose works are highly valued. The Hotel shows, in the *Roque Nublo* hall, an oil painting on canvas that presents a great landscape of the peak of Gran Canaria with Roque Nublo as the protagonist.

**Eduardo Gregorio** (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1903-1974)

One of the initiators of indigenism in Gran Canaria and an international ceramist. The Hotel shows a sculpture, a nude young woman, one metre high, in the *Roque Nublo*.

**Nicolás Massieu y Matos** (La Angostura, Gran Canaria, 1876-Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1954)

Nicolás was called “the painter of Gran Canaria”, and accurately reflected its fields. He was also a master of the portrait. His work at the Hotel, however, shows a still life, fruit and a jug of wine, in an oil painting of 0.73 x 1.33 that he completed in 1951.

**Martín Chirino** (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1925)

A significant and internationally renowned sculptor from Gran Canaria; he is known as “the iron sculptor”. The Hotel has dedicated a small intimate dining room to him exhibiting four designs of his works.

## VARIATIONS... SUPPORT FOR CULTURE

*Hotel Santa Catalina* has always had in mind the importance and significance of Culture, ever since its inception. It should be remembered that, in 1892, it was one of the first hotels in Spain to put into circulation picture postcards relating to the Hotel, edited by the hotel company and printed in Zurich (Switzerland), or collaborated in activities that were organised in the City, such as the “Festival of Flowers” of that year, 1892, with a hundred pesetas. It has, on its own initiative, promoted the holding of cultural events of diverse nature, and decided, without any hesitation, to prepare a book to recount the history of the Hotel. Moreover, it has approved the issuance of a commemorative medal, and devoted space to exhibit historical documents: in a display case, opposite Reception and in the Business Center, there is a permanent exhibition showing to a summary of the history of the most important and meaningful Hotel of Canary Islands. It has also facilitated, through explicit collaboration, the development of events in its facilities, such as the Roundtable on *Forecasts on Development of the Aviation System of the Canary Islands* (20<sup>th</sup>, June 2013) as part of the celebration of the *Centenary of Aviation in the Canary Islands* and the installation of a bust of the writer Galdós, an event sponsored by the *Benito Pérez Galdós Foundation*, in La Caleta square (Doramas Park), by the sculptor, painter and doctor in Fine Arts Teo Bureau who, for many years, was a cultural advisor of Casino Las Palmas.

The conservation and maintenance of a historic building that also fulfills social and touristic functions is essential; for this reason, the hotel’s managers are always looking to improve in this aspect, such as through the refurbishment and creation of new areas, or the restoration in 1998, of the entire work of Jesús Arencibia, by restorers Julio Moisés and Pilar Leal.

Organised visits to the Hotel to know its history; seminars, exhibitions of diverse nature, such as the antiques exhibition held in Arencibia hall, in which the Hotel acquired various decorative garden works (font, figures, lions and birds); presentations of operas, art works, books, the occasional anthem of a football team, wine tastings, gastronomic weeks, literary and dinner dance events, carnival or Canarian themes, the April Fair, literary competitions through the Foundation... A huge range of events in the broadest sense of Culture in which the Hotel, apart from offering its primary function, accommodation, also strives to disseminate wisdom

and knowledge, keeping alive its desire for projection, its future, and demonstrating, in short, the most unequalled hotel hospitality.

## CHORALE OF ACTIVITIES

It would be tedious, and undoubtedly boring, to list each of the cultural events that have been held at the Hotel. To satisfy any curiosity, suffice to say that they were all important, marked and significant.

Particularly well remembered are the lunches promoted by the *Royal Economic Society of Friends of the Country of Gran Canaria*, where economic, social, humanistic, etc., issues were dealt with, led by the guest speaker. Every Wednesday, Rotarians in Las Palmas, apart from dealing with institutional matters at their lunches, would give the floor to a guest to talk about social, historical, scientific, etc., issues; and of course we should also mention the activities of the Lions Club.

- In 1952, the Hotel inauguration dinner menu was published on a brochure or double artistic card of the artist Santiago Santana.
- On 4<sup>th</sup>, December 1958, the 4<sup>th</sup> Fashion Show was held, including afternoon tea.
- On 21<sup>st</sup>, May 1965, the Hotel offered a lunch to the panel of judges and the finalists in the election of Miss Spain that was held in this City that year.
- In 1974, the World Bridge Olympiad was held.
- In 1977, the *National Philatelic Conference* and the *National Philatelic Exhibition* (EXFILNA'77), conferences that had great local and national impact, were held in the Hotel. Those were days in which the *Santa Catalina* continuously received visitors, and both locals as well as outsiders and exhibitors praised the Exhibition and its organisation. The Hotel was generous in offering its full, outstanding collaboration.
- In 1978, the famous soprano Eva Turner who, fifty years earlier, had performed at the Teatro Pérez Galdós playing *Aida*, visited Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. In this visit, she was given, in the Hotel, the silver medal of Merit of the *Royal Economic Society of Friends of the Country of Gran Canaria*.

- In 1989, very prominent and renowned Gastronomic Conferences are held: “Canary Islands on the Food Route”, with the participation of Juan María Arzac (San Sebastián), Lucila Molina (Mexico), Michael Troisgros (France), Carlos Gamonal (Tenerife) and the chef of the Hotel, José Vila.
- 25<sup>th</sup>, September 1996, the Benito Pérez Galdós Foundation is born promoted by a group of people anxious for cultural development in its broadest sense in our City. The Foundation was led by the lawyer Jose J. Díaz de Aguilar, with the President of the Board Juan Padrón Marrero who, through the Hotel, sponsors the programme of activities taking place in the facilities of the *Santa Catalina*, the headquarters of the Foundation. A series of people prominent in their professional activities came to the Hotel to impart their knowledge: Antonio Rumeu de Armas, Carlos de Prada, Diego Camacho López-Escobar, Rafael Fernández Valverde, Enrique Bacigalupo Zapater, Yolanda Arencibia, Carlos Martínez Shaw, Joseph Schraibman, Rafael Entrena Cuesta, Joaquín Ruiz-Jiménez Cortés, Bonifacio Nicolás Díaz Chilo, Miguel López Alegría, and a long etcetera.
- In 1997, and organised by the Foundation, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canarian Conference *Crossroads Between Continents* is held. The conferences conclude with a Round Table chaired by historian and Canary Islands Prize, Francisco Morales Padrón.
- Year 1998 was very important for the Hotel: the renovation and refurbishment work finished, inaugurating the new spaces, all of which was celebrated with a big party on the evening of 28<sup>th</sup>, May. Some of the activities held this year were:
  - | Teaching of a course specialised in Cooking and Wine, a master class for professionals: *Canarian cuisine updated* and *From the vine to the glass*. The director of “Gastronomic Bilbao Master Class” (BMG), Mario Molins, presented the Master Class and the teachers: Josu Barrenetxea (chef of the restaurant Gorrotxa, Bilbao) and José Luis Santaolalla, oenologist.
  - | Press Conference on the film *Mararía* (1998, director Antonio José Betancor), based on the novel of the same name published in 1973 by Rafael Arozarena, Canary Islands Prize for Literature.

Round Table on “Perspectives of Canarian Culture today”, in which the following people took part: Pepe Dámaso, Maximiano Trapero, Falcón Sanabria, Salvador Fábregas, José M. Pérez García and Lothar Siemens.

On Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup>, May 1998, organised by the Benito Pérez Galdós Foundation, year 1898 is recalled with a Conference-Symposium, in which Pedro Lain Entralgo intervenes by video-conference on the topic *Intellectuals face the problem of Spain*, and Joaquín Ruiz-Jiménez Cortéz, in the Hotel, about *Cuba and the problem of Spain*. It would be the first public event in which videoconference was used, linking Madrid-Canary Islands. Our City inaugurates, with this experience, a period in which technology will play a leading role. Telefónica and the Canarian company Telefónica Servicon collaborated in the technical part.

As part of the big party held to celebrate the completion of the works, the following exhibition was inaugurated: *A Centennial History, 1890-1998*; the *Medal of Hotel Santa Catalina* was presented, along with a drawing of Perla González Marinella and the most important dates of the secular tour of the Hotel, and the book *Juan Padron, Troubadour of Dreams*, by Manuel de Lucas.

On 15<sup>th</sup>, October 1998, a literary evening is held in which the Alba/Canarian Press Prize for Fiction is awarded to Cuban writer Alexis Díaz-Pimienta for his work *Prisoners of Water*.

30<sup>th</sup>, March 2000, *Company 2000* project, the aim of which was to give the Hotel an area dedicated to business by creating a Business Center, is presented to the media.

On 21<sup>st</sup>, November 2001, the book *A Legal Approach to the Gibraltar Dispute*, by the prestigious lawyer, writer and cartoonist Felipe Baeza Betancor, was presented.

In 2002, the book *Hotel Santa Catalina* is presented in the framework of *Benito Perez Galdós Foundation. The Essence. 1890-2001*, by Manuel Ramos Almenara, scholar of the historic hotels in Gran Canaria.

7<sup>th</sup>, April 2011, the journalist Sáenz de Buruaga, from COPE, broadcasts his programme “Así son la mañanas” from the Hotel.

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On Tuesday evening of 1<sup>st</sup>, December 2015, the Hotel promoted, as it has done for years, what we might call a culture of feeling ... In the run-up to Christmas and New Year, the Hotel covers its facade with gold and white lights, and its entrance hall with trees and beautiful Christmas cards. Just before the magical switch-on, the chorus *Ultrika Music Education, SLU* delighted the large crowd with beautiful Christmas songs in the main entrance stairway. At the end, the chairman of the Board of Directors of *Hotelera Nueva Canaria, S. A. U.*, Manuel Padrón, addressed the audience with a few words, wishing happiness for everyone at this time and the best for 2016, and at this moment the Hotel gave out all the light hidden in the thousands of tiny bulbs that adorned its front and side facades... Joy filled the space and applause rang out with sincerity, in gratitude for those moments of happiness and endearment, and, in a way, congratulating the Hotel.