

The Old Oil Mill by Cesar Martinell

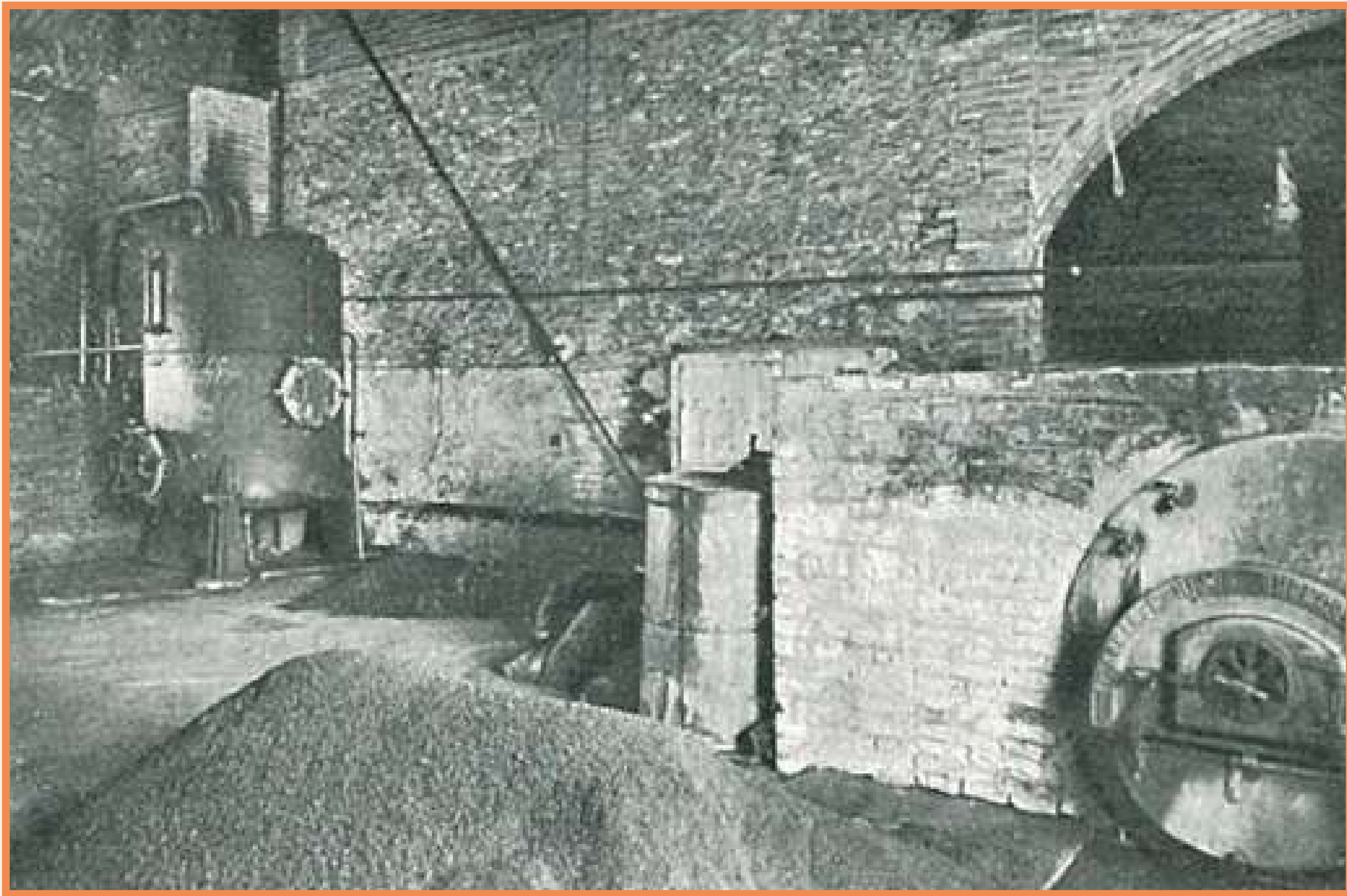
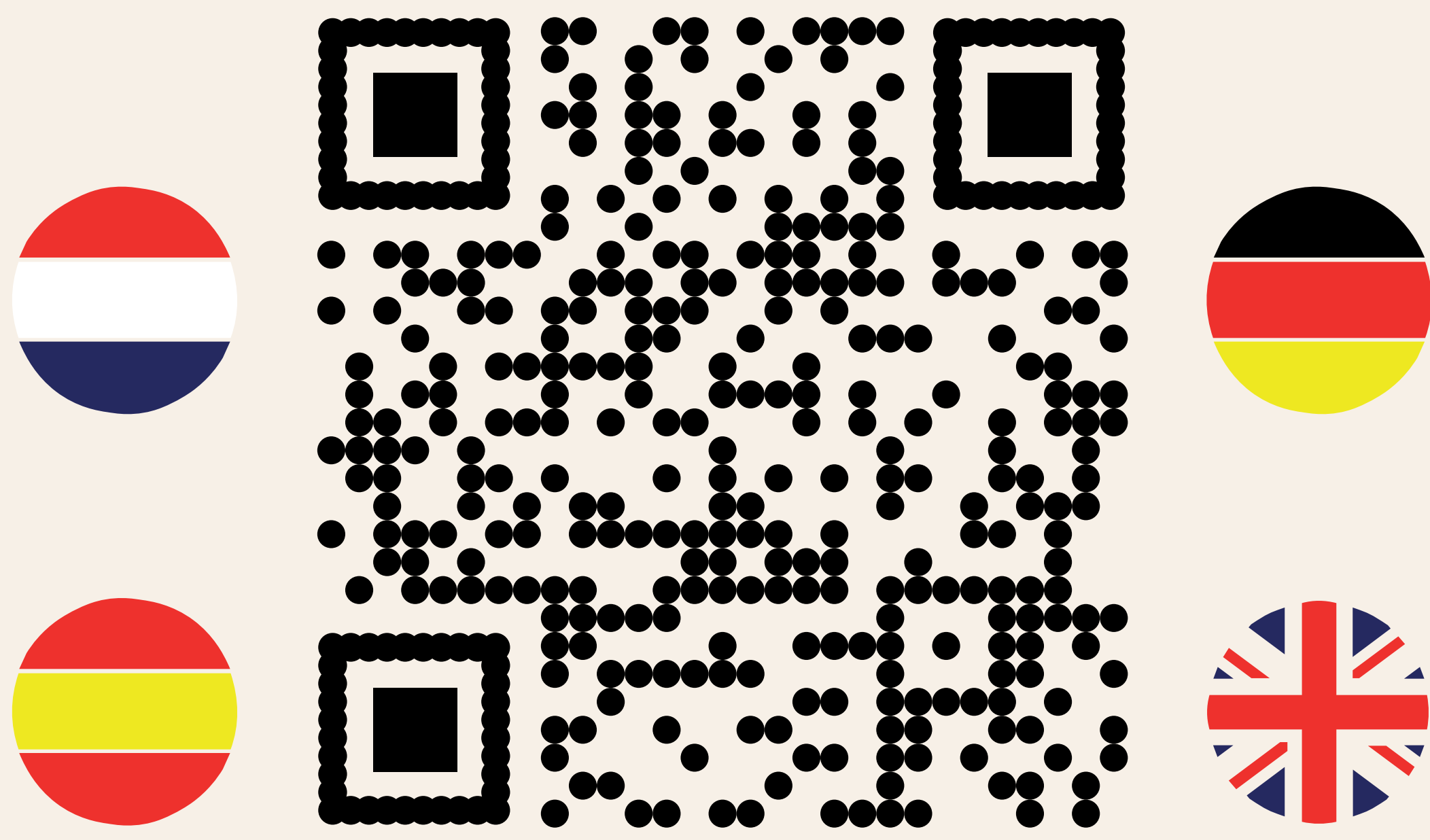
Modernism and History

This little gem of Catalan industrial modernism was conceived by the Ulldesona Agricultural Union for oil production in 1923. It is a two-storey building with iron beams and gabled roof, originally formed by plates. Of zinc mounted on wooden horses, except one of metal, which was replaced. On the outside, the finishes at the top in exposed brickwork stand out, as well as the colorful and characteristic windows that stand out as a decorative element, also finished in exposed brickwork, while the rest of the wall is plastered up to a meter.

From the ground, where separated by a double line of bricks the masonry wall continues to the ground. This modernist building was commissioned from Cèsar Martinell, a renowned modernist architect of the time, a disciple of Gaudí and Domènec Montaner, who will influence his way of understanding architecture. He is also the father of many of the cathedrals of wine, such as Gadesa or Pinell de Brai. Although the Agricultural Union was created in 1916, it was not until 1923 that the mill was built with a modern work structure driven by electricity, which placed it at that time in one of the most modern in the territory and some went dare to say all of Catalonia.

Its approach is designed for industrial oil production, from the entry of the batches of olives that went up a conveyor belt to the first floor (it could process 76,000 kg of olives in 24 hours) to the marketing of the finished product, so they built it on the side of the railway. Original elements have been preserved in this place, which although they were located differently in 1923, when the mill was enlarged in 1927, they changed their location. A couple of grinding wheels and a couple of more presses were also added to increase production. In this extension, a building was built attached to the façade for the processing of other products derived from the waste materials of many of the olives, such as stone. This building covered the façade that in the original project had to frame the front door by a porch that was never built. One of the details that stands out in the hall of many is a heart of Jesus in blue, on the white tile that covers the whole room, with a symbolism common at the time of construction in Catalonia.

All the oil that is produced in the lot room will end up in sinks located in a room adjacent to the presses, where by natural decantation the oil was separated from the dirty water, which sent each resulting element to a different type of deposit. Thus, once filtered, the resulting oil was stored in semi-underground mills with a capacity of 270,000 l) until marketing. The peak of this mill was from 1923 until the Civil War, when it stopped almost all activity, as evidenced by the records of the entry of olives during the years of the war. After the Civil War, it regained its activity until it was replaced by more modern machinery at the end of the 20th century, where it continued to store liquid gold in mills until 2000. The mill is currently protected as a BCIL (Cultural Asset of 'Local Interest) and houses the Municipal Tourist Office of Ulldesona, while it has become a modern multipurpose space where all kinds of socio-cultural, artistic and training activities.



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