



auto guía | freemasonry in la rotava
3rd edition

La Orotava offers a rich and yet unknown heritage tied up with the world of freemasonry. Among its streets lie hidden countless symbols of this society, both mysterious and persecuted. We invite you to discover the lights and shadows of the Freemasons in La Orotava.

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AutoGUÍA Las Alfombras de La Orotava

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A secret society

According to the *Diccionario Enciclopédico Masón* (Masonic Encyclopædic Dictionary), Freemasonry is a philanthropic, philosophical, progressive and universal association, which tries to instil in their adepts love to the truth, the study of universal moral, science and arts, religious tolerance, family duties. Freemasonry also rejects hatreds of race, opinions, beliefs or interests.

Scottish Freemasonry Statues, the rite to which the lodge from La Orotava was attached, establish as a fundamental aim the perfection of men. To achieve that goal, it is essential the freemason to practise the *true moral; that involves the knowledge and exercise the duties and rights of men. The Mason has to be fair, humane, honest, beneficial towards everybody, and particularly, a good father, a good son, a good brother, a good husband and a good citizen.*

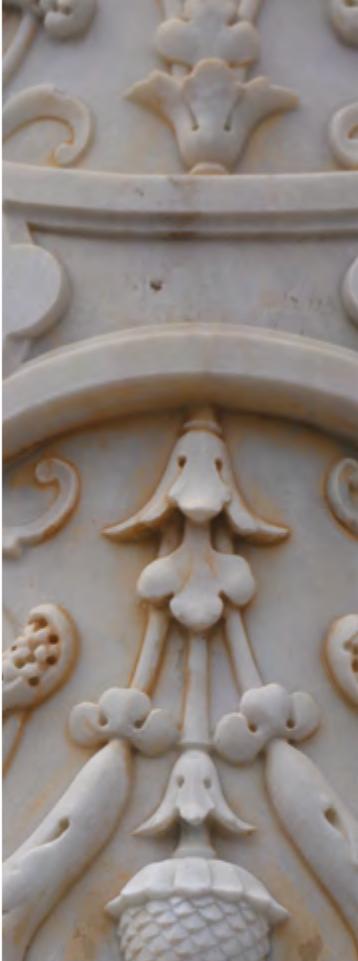
Nevertheless, all the above has to be done with the utmost privacy. *The Freemason, regarding as Profane those who are not his Brothers, must not reveal not make Profanes understand none of his works or the secrets and mysteries of our Institution.* This secrecy is precisely one of the elements that have contributed to shape the bad reputation of Freemasonry. Because of this, it has been banned and persecuted throughout its whole history.



In the late 19th century, when the Masonic lodge of La Orotava was set up, there was a worldwide boom in masonry. In the Canary Islands alone, eleven lodges were established. A lodge is where freemasons meet to work, and every lodge takes a particular title in order to be differentiated from the other ones. The lodge of La Orotava chose the name Taoro.

The first lodges that found their way to Spain disembarked around 1728 with the British. Soon they became a menace to the Absolutist Regime and to the Catholic Church, because Masonry aims to go beyond the traditional society by proclaiming a new one, based in sociability and both politic and religious tolerance. This gave rise to the banning of Masonry in the vast majority of European countries in the 18th century. The Catholic Church first condemned it in 1738 and forbade all Catholics to be masons or to attend its meetings under penalty of excommunication.

Freemasonry did not actually get into Spain until the invasion of the Napoleonic troops and Joseph I Bonaparte ascended the throne. However, after the downfall of the French emperor, the incipient Masonic movement was held back with the return of King Ferdinand VII and could not get over until the Revolution of 1868. Thereafter, Freemasons managed to organise themselves, thanks above all to the establishment of the National Grand Orient of Spain and the United Grand Orient of Lusitania.



In spite of the early appearance of the lodge Los Comendadores del Teide in Santa Cruz de Tenerife at the beginning of the century, Freemasonry would not definitively arrive in the Canary Islands until the seventies of the 19th century. It was crucial the establishment of the lodge Teide 53 in the island's capital, which clearly bore an influence on the creation of the rest of lodges in the Canaries.

There is a Grand Orient or Grand Lodge in every country. The Taoro lodge, like all other lodges in Tenerife, was under the United Grand Orient of Lusitania in Portugal, and it ranked 90th.

Thus, at the beginning of 1874 the lodge Taoro 90 prayed for a Charter or Warrant of Constitution to the Grand Orient, the first step to constitute a new lodge. It was also necessary that not less than seven regular Masons resident under the same Orient applied. In this case, they were nine: Andrés Hernández, Diego Ponte, Lucio Díaz, Hermann Wildpret, Juan Delgado, Agustín Espinosa, Fernando Pineda, Pedro Ponte and Luis Rodríguez. All of them members of the lodge from Santa Cruz.

Regarding the hierarchy of the lodges, they are set up in three principal officers and other three classes of officers. The first three, also called the Three Lights or the Three Pillars, are the Worshipful Master, the First or Senior Warden and the Second or Junior Warden. The first-class officers are Orator, Secretary and Treasurer. The second-class officers are Archivist



or Librarian, Keeper of the Seal, Expert and Master of Ceremonies. Finally, a large group of third-class officers: Architect, Almoner or Hospitaller, etc.

The Worshipful Master is the presiding officer of the lodge and must be at least Master Mason. He convenes ordinary and extraordinary meetings and supervises all work with his head covered. The Worshipful Master is inviolable and sacrosanct in his authority, and the rest of Brothers elect him annually.

Finally, for all lodges their temple is the most sacred place; therefore, it must always be kept away from the sight of profanes. The temple must be rectangular, its sides representing the four cardinal points of the world. The Hall shall have but one door to enter, and windows must never be open.

The Masonic temple of Taoro 90 lodge must have been somehow like this: the ceiling would be a blue dome spangled with stars, representing the sky. The throne, canopied with blue or red, would be facing East, elevated upon seven steps. The Masonic altar would be before the throne, having on it a compass, a gavel or mallet and a sword of honour. The entrance door would be opposite to the throne, flanked by two brass pillars, both out and inside the temple. Together with two candelabra, stand the statues of Minerva, the representative of Wisdom; Hercules, the symbol of Strength, and Venus, for the Beauty. Ultimately, all officers seated on a chequered floor. ■

Tour Freemasonry in La Orotava

- 1 Stop
- R Restaurants
- H Hotel
- i Tourist Information
- + Church

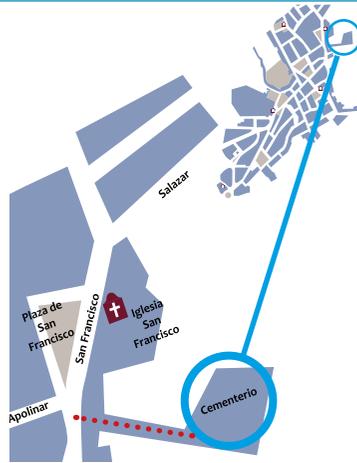


- 1 Cemetery
- 2 House of Miguel B. Espinosa
- 3 Jardines del Marquesado de la Quinta Roja
- 4 Pantheon of Diego Ponte del Castillo
- 5 House of the Marqueses de la Quinta Roja
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- 9 House were Diego Ponte del Castillo was born
- 10 House of Miguel Villalba Hervás
- 11 House of Pastor José Borges Acosta
- 12 Confraternity of the Calvary

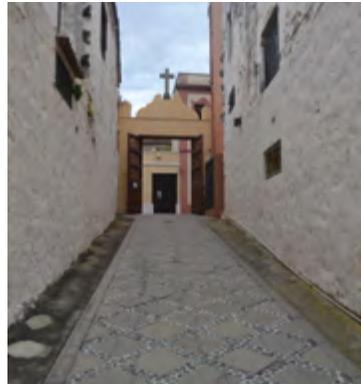
Cemetery

San Francisco Street, 6

La Orotava's graveyard is the most important public construction from the first half of the 19th century, for traditional burial places such as churches and chapels were not sufficient to cope with the growing population. It was inaugurated on July 19, 1823 and designed by the local sculptor Fernando Estévez.



This cemetery played an important role in the struggle between Church and Freemasonry. Not for nothing, the island's ecclesiastical authorities considered it desecrated after two distinguished Freemasons were here buried: José Nicolás Hernández and Diego Ponte del Castillo. As a result, for 24 years no Church representative could enter to officiate any kind of liturgical ceremony: *ushering the clergy up to the doorway to the alleyway leading to the cemetery, where they could not enter for it had been desecrated.*



Diego Ponte del Castillo is buried in the Ponte Family Pantheon, right in front the cemetery chapel, though it was supposed to be a temporary burial place until the family vault was finished out of the cemetery. Regarding the young watch and clockmaker José Nicolás Hernández, he was buried in an isolated grave, enclosed with a wooden fence and no religious signs on it. Nowadays, the exact location is unknown.

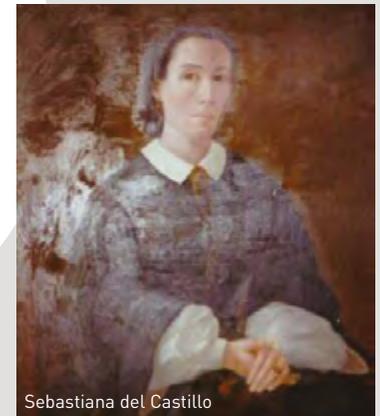


The family letter

Diego Ponte's mother requested permission to engrave in the family pantheon an inscription in memory of his son. The councilman responsible refused, and the mayor's resolution was taking so long, that the marchioness sent her steward with a letter with the foresaid inscription, so everyone could read it.

I too know that you could only bind to that very noble and honourable, and that, to rightly carry out charity, the purpose of all your actions, and to its foundations you tied in brotherhood.

I bless you one thousand and one times, son of mine.



Sebastiana del Castillo



House of Miguel B. Espinosa

 **Hermano Apolinar Street, 11**
Mudejar style building straddling two streets. It dates from the 18th century, and its façade gives onto Hermano Apolinar Street, formerly La Hoya Street.



In this house lived the Cuban doctor Miguel B. Espinosa de los Monteros. He was a prominent freemason in La Orotava and a great promoter of local journalism. Until his death in 1898, he created and edited himself half of the press published in La Orotava. Likewise, he was one of the few doctors who practised medicine in La Orotava, together with other cultural activities, such as poetry and education. In that sense, he taught Geography, Latin and



Spanish in the local school Taoro, and he was an active member of the Republican Party.

In La Orotava, he knew about Freemasonry and became a member of the local lodge in 1876 under the name of Servet. Rapidly after joining Freemasonry, he reached the position of Worshipful Master and in 1877 he won a contest organized by the lodge Lealtad 78 from Barcelona.



For many years, Miguel Espinosa defended his Masonic ideals in the pages of his newspapers, upholding real arguments with Tenerife's most conservative newspapers, that clearly had a Catholic and anti-Masonic bias. In his writings, he repeatedly criticized the clergy, reproaching them for their behaviour contrary to their fundamental precepts.



In his words: *Freemasonry does not aim to in the detriment of reason, but to the elevation of reason for it to guide the intelligence through the safe courses of Truth.*

Jardines del Marquesado de la Quinta Roja

Entrance from León Street, 11

These gardens (*jardines*), listed as *Bien de Interés Cultural* (Heritage of Cultural Interest), are a perfect example of symbolic garden, unique in the Canary Islands and Spain. Located in the back of the former residence of the Marqueses (Marquises) de la Quinta Roja, these terraced gardens count with walkways, water fountains and lush greenery. At the top, a marble building towers above the whole garden.



Executed in the late 19th century in order to provide a resting place to Diego Ponte del Castillo, who had been denied a proper burial in the local cemetery for being a freemason. His

mother, Sebastiana del Castillo y Manrique de Lara, decided to turn her orchards into a garden, and to erect a family pantheon at the top. Thus perpetuating the memory of his son and the insult suffered.



Temple-Mountain

For some authors, these gardens are a temple-mountain and were planned as a *compendium of cosmic and human realization, getting the most of the hillside. (...)* This ascent is expressed through the seven terraces and dozens of symbolic elements found in them. Following this idea, each terrace has a particular purpose, and the path up represents the path to enlightenment. This symbolism is not random at all; everything follows up a system. The system starts from a point (symbolized by the flower in the water fountain on the first terrace) and spreads to more complex forms up until you reach the cosmic mountain: the mausoleum or Temple-Mountain.

Informe para la solicitud de declaración de Bien de Interés Cultural. Report to request the listing as a *Bien de Interés Cultural*. Manuel Hernández and José Juan Perera.



Gardens of the Marquesado de la Quinta Roja

Map

1 Entrance to the temple:

In the first terrace there is a water fountain with a lotus flower, where life comes from and spreads in concentric circles. If we keep climbing, we'll find what has been considered the entrance to the temple: the circular benches full of geometric motifs and two pillars.



Benches used to be before the pillars, as the porch before the temple. *For freemasons the porch is the outermost from their personality and must not enter the temple.* The pillars represent Boaz and Jachim, a traditional symbol in masonry of the entrance to the temple.

2 Concentric circles:

Throughout the whole garden, we find several geometric motifs in the walkways and the benches. The walkways structure the garden and at some points show decorations with coloured stones creating a yin-yang symbol.



3 The Pelican and the Turtle:

Moving up a little, we find a cavern or cave made of uncut-stone where there used to be a swan or a pelican statue on a turtle. For some authors, this swan, Hansa in Sanskrit, would be the one that laid the cosmic egg from the Holy Grail legend. The turtle would symbolise evolution. Below them, there is a lily carved on the rock, the symbol for purity.



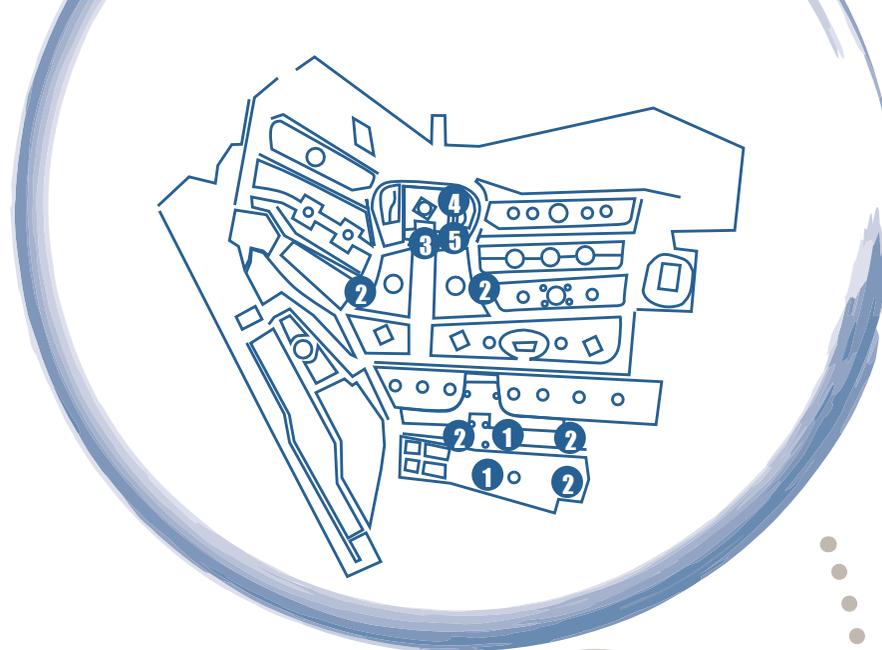
4 Flowers of David:

Coquet himself designed the railings fencing the seventh and last terrace where the cenotaph stands. Even in the smallest details of this fence, some researchers have seen subtle yet present Masonic iconography. In this respect, the six-petal flowers that top the railings stand out and have been considered as a schematic representation of the Star of David.



5 Crossroads:

In the sixth terrace, there is a crossroads interpreted as a symbolic cross. Other authors believe it is one of the most visible Masonic symbols of the whole garden. Thus, Professor Manuel de Paz points out that *the steps and the mausoleum itself should be considered an allegory of the 30° degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry.* Coquet, thought of *opposite stairs to be the seven steps before entering the temple itself.*

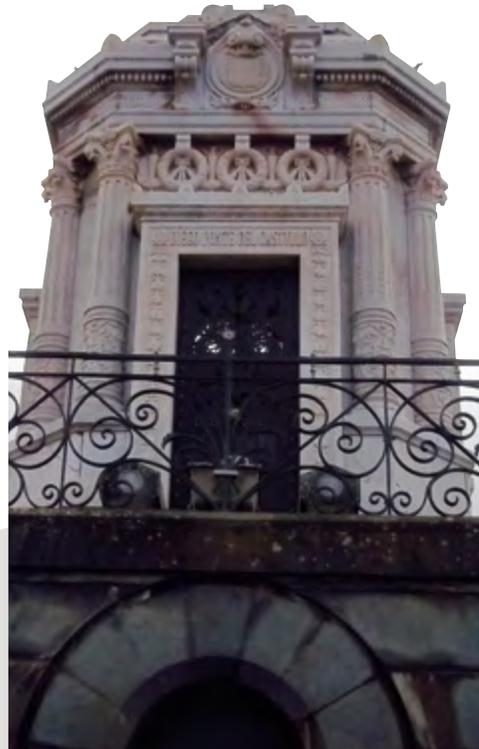


Pantheon of Diego Ponte del Castillo

In the Jardín de la Quinta Roja

Cenotaph of eclectic style in the shape of an orthogonal prism, designed by the distinguished French architect Adolphe Coquet. The foreman Nicolás Álvarez was in charge of building the structure on which the marble panels were installed. Both men were Freemasons.

The funerary monument was erected upon a quadrangular flat, with the door of the crypt in its base and the white-marbled cenotaph on its summit. The monument is articulated through symmetric flight steps that start from both sides, draw a diagonal line to end at the bottom of a cavern made of malpaís.



Coquet sketched a few designs (see image) to decorate the interior of the temple. They were full of Masonic symbols, and the marchioness dismissed them all. Instead, she entrusted the painter Manuel González Méndez, from La Palma, with three oil paintings, missing nowadays, where Freemasonry was represented in a more subtle way. Afterwards, in the late 19th century, the Englishman Isaac Latimer pointed Masonic emblems inside, such as squares and compasses. Those symbols were removed subsequently.



- 1 Emblem of the lodge Taoro 90
- 2 Sun and Moon (the beginning and the end)
- 3 The Ponte coat of arms
- 4 Pelican (righteous deeds)
- 5 The 30th degree
- 6 Doubled headed eagle (33rd degree)
- 7 Minerva (Goddess of wisdom)
- 8 Boaz Pillar
- 9 Trowel
- 10 Mallet (Worshipful Master's sign of authority)
- 11 Scales (Justice)
- 12 G (God)
- 13 Obelisk and star (Science)
- 14 Areopagus or Mars Hill (30th degree)
- 15 Token or greeting
- 16 Square and Compass (rectitude and equity)
- 17 Knights Templar cross
- 18 Temple

Pantheon of Diego Ponte del Castillo

HIDDEN MASONIC SYMBOLS

In spite of the fact that Sebastiana del Castillo only gave permission to place Masonic symbols inside the pantheon, to some authors the architect, friend of the deceased Diego Ponte, wanted to honour him and placed subtle symbols alluding Freemasonry.

1 Empty Niches:

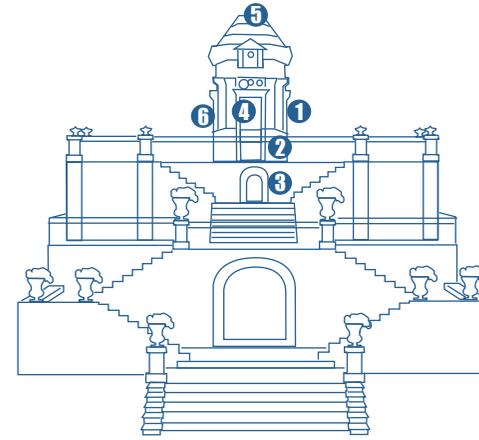
Freemasonry defines itself as adogmatic and gives its members freedom of belief. To some, these three empty niches represent that principle. However, everything points out the actual reason was that the marchioness and Coquet could not reach an agreement on what to place in the niches, so they remain empty. Only in the rear of the building we find an inscription in Latin that explains why it was put up. *His mother, Mrs. Sebastiana del Castillo, consecrates this monument, seeking solace due to the nostalgia for such a beloved person. Also looking for reparation for the insult that religious intolerance tried to inflict on a kind-hearted, talented and noble Christian, now dead.*

2 The Moon and the Sun:

Guarding the door to the mausoleum, two low walls show the way in. On each wall appear engraved the Sun and the Moon, elements of universal and Christian cosmology that symbolise the beginning and the end.

3 The Crypt:

A tomb that was never used, it is at the foot of the building with a T-shaped ground plan. Inside, every wall was arranged to receive the remains of the three members of the Ponte family. Some have pointed out that the shape of the crypt is not a coincidence, for Coquet might have chosen this ground plan as a reference to Order of the Temple.



5 Celtic Cross:

Crowning the mausoleum there is a pyramid-like structure ornamented with scales. Originally it was crowned with a small Romanesque temple on which rose an Irish cross, attribute from the Celtic Revival of the 19th century. The Celtic cross was a symbol for the basic premise that intellect, servant of the spirit, endures above the rest.

4 The Tree of Life and the Omega:

Atop the entry gate is decorated with flower motifs that remind of a representation of the Tree of Life, symbol of earthly existence. The door also exhibits a fleur-de-lis and the marquis crown, both distinctive elements the deceased being a nobleman. At the bottom, the Greek letter Omega stands out. It represents both perfection and the end of life.

6 Classical Columns:

Like when entering a Masonic temple, two classical columns built onto the mausoleum guard its façade. These columns have beautifully carved festoons, full of flowers and fruits, with the notable presence of a pine cone and open seed pods. The seeds are a symbol of fertility, life, and immortality. On top of the door, the name Diego Ponte del Castillo is engraved and on it there are three funerary wreaths of flowers and coat of arms of the family.



House of the Marqueses de la Quinta Roja

San Agustín Street, 9

Mudejar style building, dating from 17th century.



This house belonged to the entailed state of the I marqués de la Quinta Roja, founded in 1613. Afterwards, Diego Ponte's parents relocated here their summer home from La Quinta Alley. Over the years, after Diego Ponte and his parents had passed away, it ended in the hands of the son of the family's doctor, Jorge

Pérez González. He turned it into a hotel, Hotel Victoria. In the late 1950s, the house hosted the society Liceo Taoro, until in 1976 it became a rare museum of automaton puppets and other objects. In 1980, the City Council bought the building and turned it into the Municipal Elders Resource Centre.

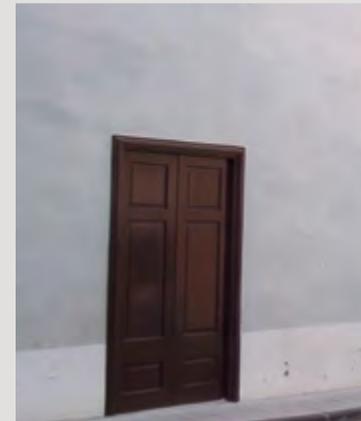
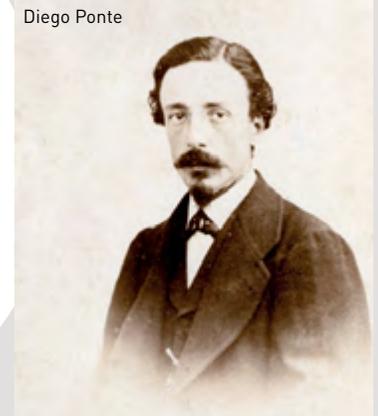


My lord does not receive

The Hotel Victoria hosted amongst others, Nobel-Prize winning writers Camilo José Cela and Miguel Ángel Asturias, or the Cuban poet Dulce María Loynaz awarded with the Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra Literature Prize. Loynaz recorded in one of her writings the irreconcilable confrontation between Diego Ponte and local members of the Church. *More than once good old don Acisclo [Pastor] knocked on his door just in case a minute of contrition might save a soul from a sinful life. But he knocked in vain. He always got the same message: "my lord does not receive". Thus, the marquis departed without receiving God, he did not want to, and the people openly crossed themselves. When it came the time of the funeral, don Acisclo, crucifix in hand, planted himself in the graveyard's doorway before the funeral procession and repeated the deceased's own words: my Lord does not receive.*



Diego Ponte



Herrerros Printing Office and the Masonic press

 **Carrera del Escultor**
Estévez Street, 13

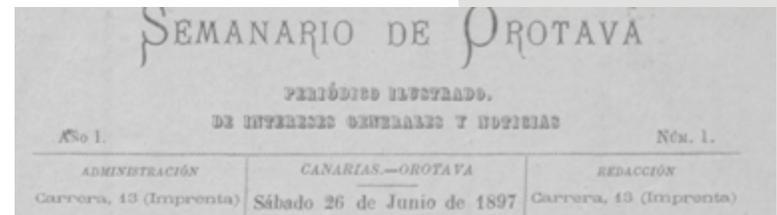
This eclectic-style construction was built in 1930 on an older building. It is a perfect example of commercial architecture, and its façade was planned to contain an establishment on the ground floor. Here was settled the printing office and stationery shop *Imprenta y papelería Herreros*, founded in 1876.



Valle de Orotava, and *Semanario de Orotava*. Other Freemasons from La Orotava excelled too, like Abraham Morales, who edited *El Diario de Orotava*; or Juan Salar, who wrote for all those newspapers.

The Herreros family came to La Orotava from Seville, and in time they grew to be the most important printing office in town, setting up new printing offices not only in the ground floor, but also in nearby facilities.

The political upheaval in Spanish politics in the 19th century, especially in the second half, provoked the publication of newspapers all over the country. Liberals, republicans and Freemasons published or edited many of the newspapers. This was the case of the newspapers established in La Orotava. Members of the lodges from the north of the island edited most of them. Amongst them, Miguel B. Espinosa, who edited and founded *La Voz de Taoro*, *El Faro de Orotava*, *El Cosmopolita*, *El*



La Voz suspended

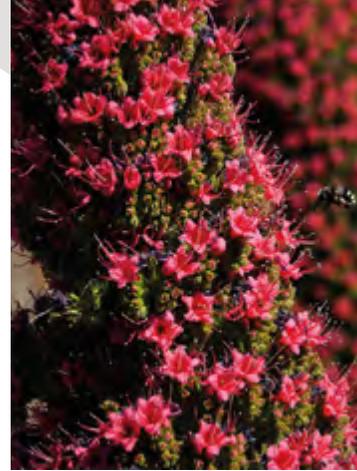
These newspapers upheld always Masonic ideals, for what they were heavily criticised by the most conservative newspapers. Through their pages, Freemasons explained what, for example,

religion meant to them; nothing but the way everyone worships the unknown being. So serious grew to be those discussions between *La Voz de Taoro* and the religious press, that, after a warning from the Civil Governor preventing from discussing religious matters, they were withdrawn their authorisation to publish.

House of Hermann Wildpret Soder

Tomás Pérez Street, 20

This Swiss-born rapidly fitted into the local society; he even became one of the foremost figures in social, political, economic and cultural life of the time.



Echium Wildpretii

His great work as head of La Orotava's Botanical Garden and his commitment to plant species cataloguing led him to identify hundreds of endemic species. In his honour, some have been named after him, like one of the most famous and distinctive species in our archipelago: *tajinaste rojo* or red bugloss (*echium wildpretii*).



The lodge's adoptive child

He cofounded the Masonic lodge Taoro 90, where he was known as William Tell. He was the Second Warden, the Treasurer, the Almoner and the Hospitaller and was tied to this lodge for all the time it was active: more than 12 years. Of these positions, the most important was Second Warden, because in the hierarchy of a Masonic lodge it is known as one of the three lights or three pillars of the lodge. To be Second Warden he would have been Master at

least, and he was in charge, amongst other things, of taking care of the temple. As Almoner and Hospitaller, he had to visit, comfort and help all ill brothers. That office required of a sweet-natured talented mason, busy and all the qualities that best suit his office, such as doctor, lawyer, etc.

Through him, his eldest son, Germán Wildpret Duque, was initiated into Freemasonry. In the lodge, he was known as *Wintrelried*.

One night before the temple's entrance there appeared a child aging only three months. The lodge decided to adopt him and ensure he got an education worthy of their beliefs. The child would be instilled all Masonic ideals in order to prove that Freemasonry wasn't just theories. Juan Salar adopted him, and he was named *Juan Bautista de Escocia* (John Baptist from Scotland) visibly referring to the Scottish Rite. Sadly, the baby died a few months later.



Photo: FEDAC

Church of La Concepción

Casañas Square

The Catholic Church always condemned Freemasonry. While in the 18th and 19th centuries popes fiercely fought it; throughout the 20th century and up until nowadays, the different codes of Canon law still condemn Freemasonry, explicitly or implicitly.



In La Orotava, the Church of La Concepción was the epicentre of the battle against Freemasonry. In the late years of the 19th century, this confrontation was especially acute. Nonetheless, that was not an obstacle for most of the freemasons from La Orotava being Christians and professing their faith.



Eye of providence

In the two central columns, the closest to the altar, there are three embossed panels. Each has been given some kind of relation to Masonic symbols. The first one illustrates Jacob's Ladder, on which, according to the Bible, the angels from heaven were ascending and descending. Atop outstands a triangle with an eye in it (Eye of Providence). The same we find on another panel under the pulpit though this is an inverted triangle. The last panel is a bit more humble; it depicts a



banana tree in the middle of the Sun and the Moon. Thus arranged, they link to Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending of everything. As is the case with many other symbols though, they are common to both Christianity and Freemasonry. Hence, the difficulty to dissociate them.

House where Diego Ponte del Castillo was born

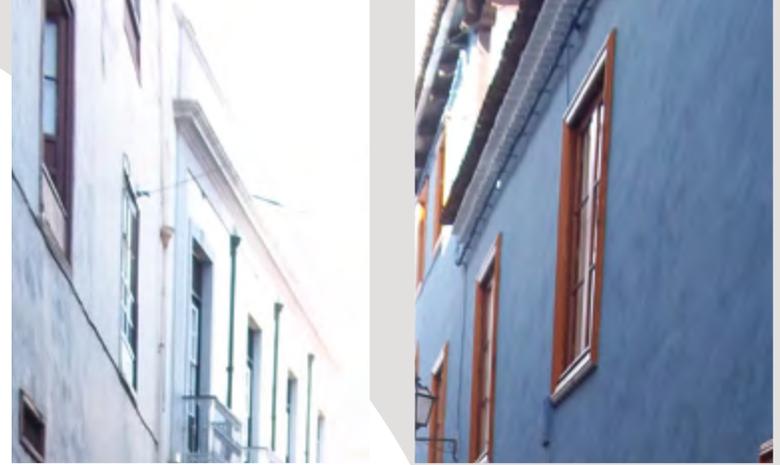
La Quinta Alley, 3

This stately house was built in the 19th century between the streets Balcón and Quinta, though its present shape dates back to 1912. Here Diego Ponte del Castillo, the eighth Marqués de la Quinta Roja was born on April 15, 1840.



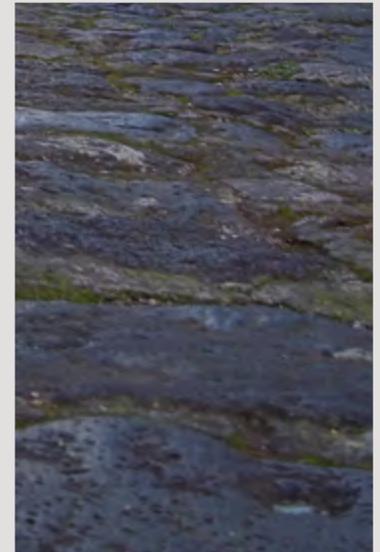
Until they permanently moved to their home on San Agustín Street, this was the summer house of the marquises. Here they lived looking for a shelter from the hot summery weather in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, their habitual residence. In one of these rooms, the future marquis was born.

Diego Ponte was a member of the lodge from Santa Cruz de Tenerife Teide 53, which became the centre from where Freemasonry spread to the rest of the island. Taking advantage of that fact, he established a lodge in La Orotava that was legally constituted in 1874. He was a distinguished politician too, being even a member of the Provincial Council in the reign of Amadeo I.



Grand elected Knight Kadosch

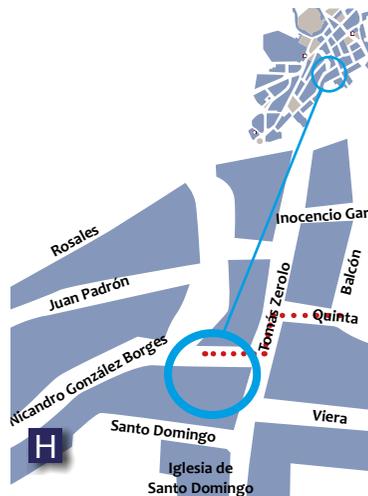
As long as he belonged to the lodge Taoro 90 he was the Worshipful Master, even entering the Council of Knights Kadosh, a higher-rank Masonic body with the rest of local lodges under its jurisdiction. This Council comprised the degrees from 19 to 30°, and Diego Ponte held the title of 30° Degree Grand Elected Knight Kadosh or Knight of the Black and White Eagle.



House of Miguel Villalba Hervás

 **Nicandro González**
Borges Street, 7

In this traditional-style house in the former Verde Street lived the most important freemason from La Orotava of the late 19th century: Miguel Villalba Hervás.



Born in La Orotava, Villalba Hervás was undoubtedly the most prominent freemason of the late 19th century. Lawyer, journalist and historian, he was a great politician and orator. He even became Civil Governor in Tenerife during the First Spanish Republic and a member of the Spanish Cortes under the regime of the Bourbon Restoration. He died in Madrid at the age of 61.

Miguel Villalba Hervás was one of the founders of the lodge Teide 53, where he was Orator, Worshipful Master and Architect. Known by the name of Tácito in the lodge, he founded the Council or Areopagus of Knights Kadosh, where he was the Master of Eloquence.



Absurd dogma, pure science

His Masonic affiliation led him to exercise an exacerbated anticlericalism and secularism. Sometimes he even disrespected some members of the clergy and religious institutions. Villalba Hervás was the real leader of the Masonic attack against the Catholic Church. He was very critic about *those absurd dogmas through which the reason is murdered, and the purest of sciences are corrupted. The Reason is the ultimate legislator of Humanity in civilized nations; the shining beacon that leads us to belief, denial, or doubt... The man who does not consider before believing is either a stupid or an apathetic.*



House of Pastor José Borges Acosta

San Sebastián Square – Franchy Alfaro Square

San Sebastián Square is right in front of the building that once was the San Sebastián Hermitage and the ancient Holy Trinity Hospital. Right next to it is located the Franchy Alfaro Square, where pastor José Borges and freemason José Nicolás Hernández lived side by side.



José Borges Acosta



Master Aarón Luis de Otazo planned the Franchy Alfaro Square upon an ancient plain where soldiers from La Orotava Battalion used to carry out their exercises. This square's origin dates back to the 19th century, when La Orotava enjoyed a very significant urban renewal. The enlightened promoted the design of many roads and streets, the reorganization of urban spaces and the construction of new public buildings. A good example of this process was the lowering of the adjacent street of Calvario, the alignment of the Nicandro González Borges Street and the creation of this new square.



Neighbours notwithstanding

In two contiguous houses, missing nowadays, there lived the two main characters of the confrontation between the Church and local Freemasonry: Pastor José Borges Acosta and freemason José Nicolás Hernández.

José Borges was the head of the Church of La Concepción for more than 50 years. He went down in history as the priest who refused to give a proper Christian burial to the Marqués de la Quinta Roja and to his own neighbour, José Nicolás Hernández, whom he accused of being a freemason too. Consequently, the body of Hernández ended up in a corner of the cemetery.

