Lope de Vega

casamuselopedevega.org

Study. Photo: Pedro López

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"My little house, my peace, my garden and my study." Such was the way Lope de Vega described his house in a letter to a friend. A visit to this house is a testimony, a literary and emotional journey, an invitation to travel through art, literature and history to a bygone Madrid. Known as the Spanish Phoenix, Lope de Vega is one of the most widely acclaimed writers of the Spanish Golden Age. The autobiographical references in his work have permitted a fairly detailed reconstruction of the controversial life of this writer, who had little regard for the norms and morals of the day. However, this attitude proved to be no obstacle (indeed, quite the contrary) to enjoying overwhelming success with audiences both during and after his lifetime.

versity of Alcalá de Henares. In 1587, after an unhappy affaire de coeur, he wrote a series of disparaging poems about Elena Osorio, which earned him eight years of banishment to Valencia, Toledo and Alba de Tormes. He moved back to Madrid in 1610 and bought this house, where he lived until his death. In addition to being a writer, Lope had other occupations, such as a soldier, secretary for his

He studied at the Jesuit school and the Uni-

has been much discussion about Lope's colourful love life. He was married twice, to Isabel de Urbina (Belisa in his writings), and to Juana de Guardo. He also had affairs with Micaela Luján (Camila Lucinda), with whom he had five children (Marcela and Lope Félix among them), and Marta de Nevares (Amarilis and Marcia Leonarda). Lope cultivated nearly every genre of the day, including poetry and prose, but it is undoubtedly his plays that make up the bulk of his oeuvre. He claimed to have written 1,500 plays and approximately 500 are extant, although only 314 have been confirmed as his work. The theatrical pieces reveal Lope's most refreshing side. Some of the recurring motifs in his work are questions of honour (Peribáñez and the Commander of Ocaña), fantastical love tangles (The dog in the manger), and historical themes and Spanish legends (Fuenteovejuna). His poems and plays were nevertheless spectacularly successful among the general populace. He passed away at the age of 72 on 27 August 1635 and was buried in the Church of San Sebastián, on the present day Calle Atocha, very close to his home.

ter the death of his second wife, priest. There

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the building where the writer lived out the last 25 years of his life. In the late 19th century sev-

eral chroniclers and historians like Mesoneros Romanos documented the history of the house. The year 1929 marked the beginning of this story, created inside this building which had continued to be used as a private home for three hundred years. The last owner, Antonia García, widow of Cabrejo, set up the García Cabrejo Teaching Foundation to create the museum, and the Spanish Royal Academy accepted responsibility for the admin-

The Casa Museo Lope de Vega is located in

istration of the foundation and the restoration of the house. In 1935, coinciding with the third cen-

tennial of the writer's death, the house was

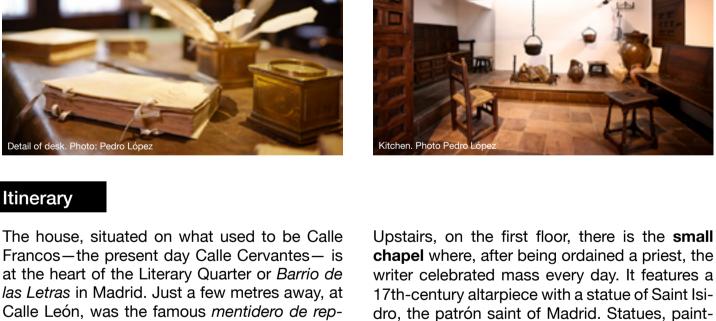
from 1627, the legacy of his daughter Antonia Clara from 1664 and historical documentation on the building were the references used to recreate

declared an artistic-historical monument and was

The inventory of assets and Lope de Vega's will

opened to the public as a house museum.

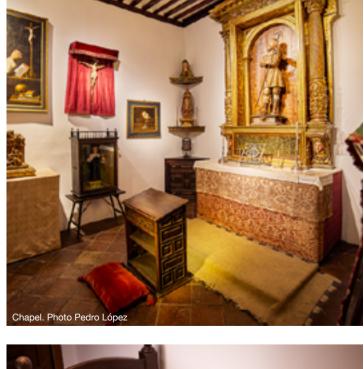
the various rooms in the museum with personal objects, furniture and works of art. Additional objects were provided through donations and acquisitions. In 1990 the Spanish Royal Academy and the Regional Government of Madrid signed an agreement to carry out restoration work and revitalise the Casa Museo Lope de Vega, and since December 2007 it has been administered by the Regional Government of Madrid.



resentantes, a type of gossip shop where playwrights, actors and poets would gather to discuss the latest theatrical successes and flops. On the lintel over the entrance an inscription reads: "D.O.M. PARVA PROPIA MAGNA/MAG-NA ALIENA PARVA" (translated by Calderón de la Barca, another Golden Age playwright and poet, as "One's own shelter is much, even when it is little/and much shelter is little, if not one's

in Madrid at the time. The **entry hall** provides access to the museum and to the garden that Lope called his güertecillo (little kitchen garden). Today it is an oasis of peace in the bustling city centre.

own"). This assertion became a popular saying



Feliciana (Lope's heiress) and Antonia Clara.

ings, reliquaries, lecterns and a variety of religious objects complete the setting in this room. The **study**, a private space, witnessed the birth of the best of Lope's literary work, and it is easy to imagine the writer in the company of his visitors, seated in an armchair and writing at a solid 17th-century Castilian table surrounded by bureaus, with braziers and wall-hangings to Ward off the harsh winter cold. He would also have been surrounded by books, and this room, the largest in the house, contains important bibliographic heritage from the 17th century, on permanent loan from the Spanish National Library. There are also paintings from the Convent of the Trinitarian Nuns and the Prado Museum. Next we come to the ladies' drawing room, a space characteristic of Spain's Golden Age but actually of eastern origin, where people would sit cross-legged in the Turkish style. From the 16th century onwards, this parlour tended to be

used exclusively by the women of the house for needlework, prayer, reading or leisurely conversation. Boxes, small chests, mirrors and a few paintings were objects typically found in these rooms. The **bedchamber** where the writer died is the smallest but also the most private room in the house. As an old man, Lope could follow mass

in the chapel nearby from the window opposite In the **dining room**, typically Spanish furniture, pottery from Talavera and still lifes of the Flemish school paint a picture of everyday domestic life. Adjacent to this room is the kitchen, located on the first floor, features a typical hearth arrangement from that period. The final room on the first floor is the bedchamber of the daughters

On the top or attic floor is a recreation of the **guest** room or bedchamber of Captain Contreras, one of the most adventurous and best-known figures who graced the house. Next to it are the servants' room and the chamber of the sons, Lope Félix and Carlos Félix.

OPENING HOURS Tuesday to Sunday: From 10 am to 6 pm (last tour starts

Chamber of the sons. Photo

Closed: on Mondays, 1 and 6 January, 1 May, 24, 25 and 31 December, and one local holiday.

Opening hours may change due to special activities taking place.

INFORMATIONS AND BOOKINGS

Access to the museum is via guided group tours (maximum 15 people accompanied by a guide). Tours should be booked in advance by telephone or email. Tours begin every 30 minutes and can be conducted in English and

French as well as Spanish (duration 35 minutes).

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TOURS

Santa Ana (52)

HOW TO GET THE MUSEUM

(no flash or tripods) for personal use only.

Photographs and video are allowed with mobile devices

Metro: Antón Martín: Line 1. Sol: Lines 1, 2 and 3

Renfe suburban rail: From Sol: Lines C-3 and C-4 BICIMAD Stations at c/ de Jesús (27) and Plaza



