



Euskalduna Jauregia:

Bilbao's new flagship

Bost urte besterik ez ditu Euskalduna Jauregiak eta Guggenheim Museoarekin batera, Bizkaiko hiriburu eta herrialdeak bizi duen eraberritzearen eredu eta sinbolo bihurtu da.

The Euskalduna Conference Centre and Concert Hall is celebrating its fifth year in operation and two years as Spain's leading congress venue. This privileged position was first awarded in 2002 and maintained over the course of last year, coinciding with the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) prize for "World's Best Congress Centre 2003." This is the most prestigious award that can be bestowed on a conference center today.

This building is very unique and without a doubt one of Bilbao's flagships of the 21st century. Designed by Spanish architects Federico Soriano and Dolores Palacios, the building is like a ship being crafted continuously, emerging from the docks of what was once the Euskalduna shipyard.

This concept pays tribute to Bilbao's metalworking and shipbuilding tradition and to the shipyards that



Emakunde awards ceremony last February with the presence of Lehendakari Ibarretxe.

were located in the Bilbao estuary for so long. In fact, the Euskalduna Jauregia is anchored on the shore of the Nervion River where the former Euskalduna Shipbuilding and Repair Company used to stand. The only vestiges of the once active enterprise are the dry docks, the "Casa de Bombas" pump-house, and the so-called Carola shipbuilding crane – named after a women who used to walk across the bridge beside the shipyard every day on her way to work – now in Bilbao's maritime museum.

The Conference Centre and Concert Hall has had a short but stunning history since it first opened in February 1999. In 2003 it was awarded first prize by the Spanish Federation of Professional Congress Organizers. The ICCA and Professional Congress Organizers awards are the two most prestigious distinctions on the national and international levels. In both cases particular consideration was given to the quality of the facilities and the services provided by the center. These awards have helped propel Bilbao to the forefront as an ideal site for hosting conferences and meetings.

Bustling with activity

Between 1999 and 2003 the Euskalduna Jauregia was the venue for a grand total of 2,483 events.

All together, the Euskalduna's occupation rate from 1999 to 2003 reached an average of 85%, a very high percentage for conference centers in Spain. The number of people attending the various events during the center's first five years of life came to 1,868,257, a spectacular figure which gives an idea of the Euskalduna's overwhelming popularity.

Added to the 8,289,544.39 euro surplus over the same five-year period, is the highly positive economic impact the center has had on the Basque Country's GNP. According to calculations made by the consulting firm KPMG, the economic impact from activities associated with the center between 1999 and 2003 amounted to 212,383,000 euros.

Considering the investment that went into starting up the project, the wealth generated by the Euskalduna Jauregia in the Basque Autonomous Community in its first five years is nearly three times the amount of the initial investment. In addition, the impact has led to the creation of 1,059 permanent jobs annually for each of the five years.

The Euskalduna was the first conference center in Spain to be awarded ISO 9001 quality certification, a distinction which only three centers in Spain currently share.

**Azken urteotan
eraikitako
azpiegituren artean,
arrakastatsuenetakobat, Euskalduna
Jauregia da, Bilboko
Nerbioi ibai ertzean
kokatua.**