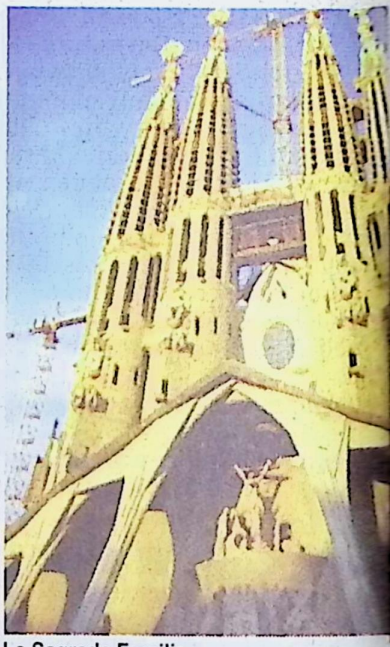
Barcelona Revisited

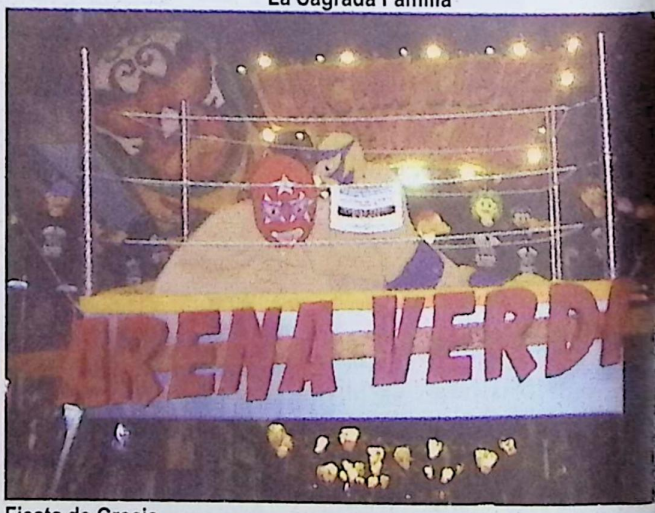
NABEEL ATIQUE



La Sagrada Familia

The last time I was in Barcelona was in 2003. I visited this vibrant city for only three days. It was Thanksgiving vacation in the States, and back in the day when airlines gave good deals, I found a ticket from San Francisco to Barcelona for $500! I was also a lot younger back then and sleep was optional. I made the most of my whirlwind trip to Barcelona, taking guided tours to the Gaudi hot spots and even ventured outside Barcelona to see the beautiful monastery of Montserrat.

Visiting Barcelona last summer, I realised how different it was during the warm month of August. Also, this time I could actually speak the language. Spanish has been a hobby of mine for the past nine months or so and I have a good grasp of the language now. I was accompanied by my friend Bryan who didn't speak the language, so I could play "tour guide". It worked out well, because I knew what all the famous sites were, but newly armed with the Spanish language, I could navigate the city easily, asking people and reading signs. For the most part. You see, Barcelona is in the province of Catalunya, and about half the people speak Catalun. And most of the signs were in Catalun! Nevertheless, we managed, deciphering the Spanish meanings from Catalun.



Fiesta de Gracia

Bryan and I attended a Spanish language school in the heart of the city, near Plaza Catalunya. Exiting the Metro station of Passeig de Gracia and having Gaudi's Casa Battlo, tower over you is some experience. After our classes we'd walk or take the Metro to the other sites, such as La Sagrada Familia and Parc Guell. La Sagrada Familia is truly one of Gaudi's masterpieces. It's towers on all sides seem very different, in typical Gaudi fashion - random and asymmetrical. It is still not completed. Construction began in 1882 and continues to this day. No government or church funds are used to construct it. Parc Guell is another one of Anton Gaudi's magical designs. The tile work is intricate and the houses seem straight out of a fairy tale world. But most impressive is a meandering ceramic bench on a platform with views of Barcelona, the Mediterranean, and the rest of the neigh-



FC Barcelona Fan