

# MADRID, SPAIN

## DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION RESIDENCE, BYNE HOUSE

The residence of the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission to Spain is a stately townhouse built in 1885 by Don Manuel Caldero, the Marqués de Salamanca and the principal developer of the neighborhood that now carries his name. American architect Arthur Byne and his wife Mildred Stapley purchased the property in 1931. Byne was a world authority on Spanish architecture and art as well as being an antiques dealer. The many books the Bynes authored on Spanish architecture and interior design have been republished and remain standard textbooks. Original volumes are highly prized by collectors. The house is one of the few original surviving period houses in the neighborhood.

The Bynes transformed their classical residence into a showcase of authentic Iberian artifacts from the tenth through the nineteenth centuries, mixed with reproduction floors, ceilings, fireplaces, doors, and windows. There is an inviting porte cochère and a grand interior marble staircase. Since their occupancy, the living quarters have been enlarged, a kitchen wing added, and fireplace mantels installed.

The mantel in the main salon bears the coat of arms of the Solis family of Salamanca. The seventeenth century limestone fireplace in the library features carved lilies in a jar, symbolizing the Virgin Mary. The wood coffered ceilings (artesonado) are part of the Muslim Mudéjar tradition of handcrafting tessellated pine boards. The polychrome ceiling on the second floor landing contains a large, eight-pointed Moorish star surrounded by smaller stars, and there are black and white marble floors and raw wood doors throughout the house. The dining room contains a 300-year-old natural pine ceiling supported on medieval stone brackets ornamented with carved human and animal heads. The adjacent carriage house is now a guesthouse.

Arthur Byne attended the School of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and studied in Rome. In 1914 he became curator of the Museum of the Hispanic Society of America. His watercolors were exhibited internationally. Byne won a silver medal at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915 and was awarded the Spanish Gran Cruz del Mérito Militar. He sold artifacts to publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst, including the fifteenth century Barbastro Ceiling, now in the Billiard Room at what became know as Hearst Castle in San Simeon, California. Byne also shipped the Santa Maria de Ovila Monastery to San Francisco in 1931 for a medieval museum proposed by Hearst's architect, Julia Morgan.

The United States Government purchased the property from the executor of the Byne estate in 1944. It is listed with premier status on Madrid's historic register.

