

# ISCAR AND CASTLE

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The first written mention of Íscar was in the year 939 AD, as told in the Muslim chronicles showing the path followed by the troops of Abderramán III, in his quest to destroy the early Christian settlements south of the River Duero driving them to Hinc' Skr [Castle Íscar], which was found in a state of abandon and its people ravaged by poverty.

The remaining Christians reconquered Iscar in 1086 AD, following the capture of Toledo by Alfonso VI, the king who, according to the legend had entrusted the colonization to Álvaro Fáñez of Minaya. As written by Infante Don Juan Manuel in his book *The Conde Lucanor*: "Don Alvar Háñez era muy buen omne et muy onrado et pobló Ixcar, et Morava y."

Build on the ruins of its ancient fortress, with its sea of pine trees as far as the eye can see, Iscar's Castle stands majestic looking over the village. The oldest preserved parts of this fortress (probably date back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century) are remains of the curtain wall and the inside structure of the tribute tower (Donjon).

To provide a defence against possible attacks from the west side, weak point, the enclosure was re-enforced in the second half of the fifteenth century for defensive purposes. At the back of the Main Tower, a large defensive spur, flanked by two turrets transformed the ground floor into the shape of a pentagon.

In this side also a new body was added as a defensive barbican, with a small artillery barrier with three circular barrel turrets (inside are loopholes called "mailboxes"). And for safety a Moat was dug into the limestone rocks whose access was by a drawbridge.

On one of these turrets appears the shield of Pedro de Zúñiga y Avellaneda and his wife Catalina de Velasco y Mendoza, II Counts of the Miranda del Castañar, which dates this work at between 1478 and 1493.

Outside, there are a mound where it believe that the first castle is situated After the arqueological excavations, it has been demonstrated that this artificial high pinnacle used to installation of a war machine called Trabuchette to try demolished the Tower by the troops of Fernando IV in 1307, during the wars to win the dominion of the Señorío de Vizcaya.

The Donjon is thirty metres high and is divided by wooden structure with four levels, reformed by a cross vault built in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor with two mission, decoration and firewall. In the first thirty years of the sixteenth century, the vault stalls were reinforced with a robust colum and to prevent any debris from the tower, it was necessary to have the south wall completely rebuilt. The last work done was a new barrel turret inside the south curtain wall whit the same mailbox.

Archaeological excavations conducted in 1998, at the eastern end of the parade ground, have brought to light the remains of walls and floors of various residential settlements. Perhaps like a hunting pavilion with two levels. Its facade was formed by a gallery of porch columns and arches of the late Gothic style of the early sixteenth century.

Over time, our Counts' lost all rights and privileges to Íscar. The properties were handed over to the other villagers and their heirs. In 1989, a Iscarensian family purchased the castle and after several years of neglect by the family, the City Council of Iscar managed to recover it, the castle was finally purchased on March 13<sup>th</sup> 1991 for the sum of €78,000.

From the signing of the Master Plan in the year 2002 to the present day, the castle has received and investment of €4.000.000 for restoration and consolidation works, jointly funded by the City of Iscar and other participating agencies such as the Bank Caja España Obra Social, Diputación de Valladolid, Junta de Castilla y León y Prodercal "Mudejar path".

In 2005, into the courtyard, next to this palace zone was discovered a cistern that is vaulting of brick and stone where we can see the figure of the horseman riding horse and a bull made of graphite desing. There is another cistern in the top of the Main Tower.

Its fence and further consolidation, like the parade ground paving, and the hunting pavilion will enable to host more of its own events, such as concerts, meetings, Joining the already popular Medieval Fair "Master and Apprentice" during the month of July.

Likewise, there are the "Featuring Visits" where the story of our castle is told by visitors, in which the tourists wear period clothes, and perform the stories of our own Counts.