

Mario Modiano's Bar Mitzvah



This picture was taken in our courtyard in our house in Salonica in 1939. The event was my bar mitzvah ceremony, and there was a reception at home, for all the people that honored us on this event.

My father Sam Modiano and my mother Nella are in the middle. There is my brother Lelo Modiano, Zizi Benveniste and Zizi Saltiel. There is my grandfather, Eliaou Modiano and my fathers' sister Lily. Many of the people in the picture are my fathers' employees from the newspaper: there are printers, there are reporters, administrative staff etc.

What I remember more vividly from my bar mitzvah is the hard time I had trying to learn enough Hebrew to be able to read the text. I had a teacher who came home and taught me how to parrot the text from the Torah that I was supposed to read at the service in the synagogue. I very much regret that I never really learned Hebrew. After the service at the synagogue there was a reception at home, and the whole family as well as many of my father's colleagues and employees came to celebrate with us. I also remember that on that occasion my maternal uncles gave me a bicycle as a gift, and that I fell in love with it. I just would never part with the bicycle so much so that the neighbors claimed I even went to the toilet with the bicycle.