

Lady Madonna – take a day off the diet

It's very easy when living in Madrid to slide into a certain pattern and become all about the booze. Wine's cheaper than water (seriously, I've paid more for a Perrier than I have for a Pinot on more than one occasion). Cañas replace coffee and without realising, you've wound up on an unintentional liquid diet that's bad for both your purse strings (as well as your head).



Having said that, there are times when you want to chow on down without breaking the bank and dress up for dinner – [Lady Madonna](#) has got this nailed. Tucked away on Calle Orellana 6 (a stone's throw from Alonso Martinez metro) it is a little oasis amongst the local eating options that include Burger King *that said there's a time and place for a Whopper but

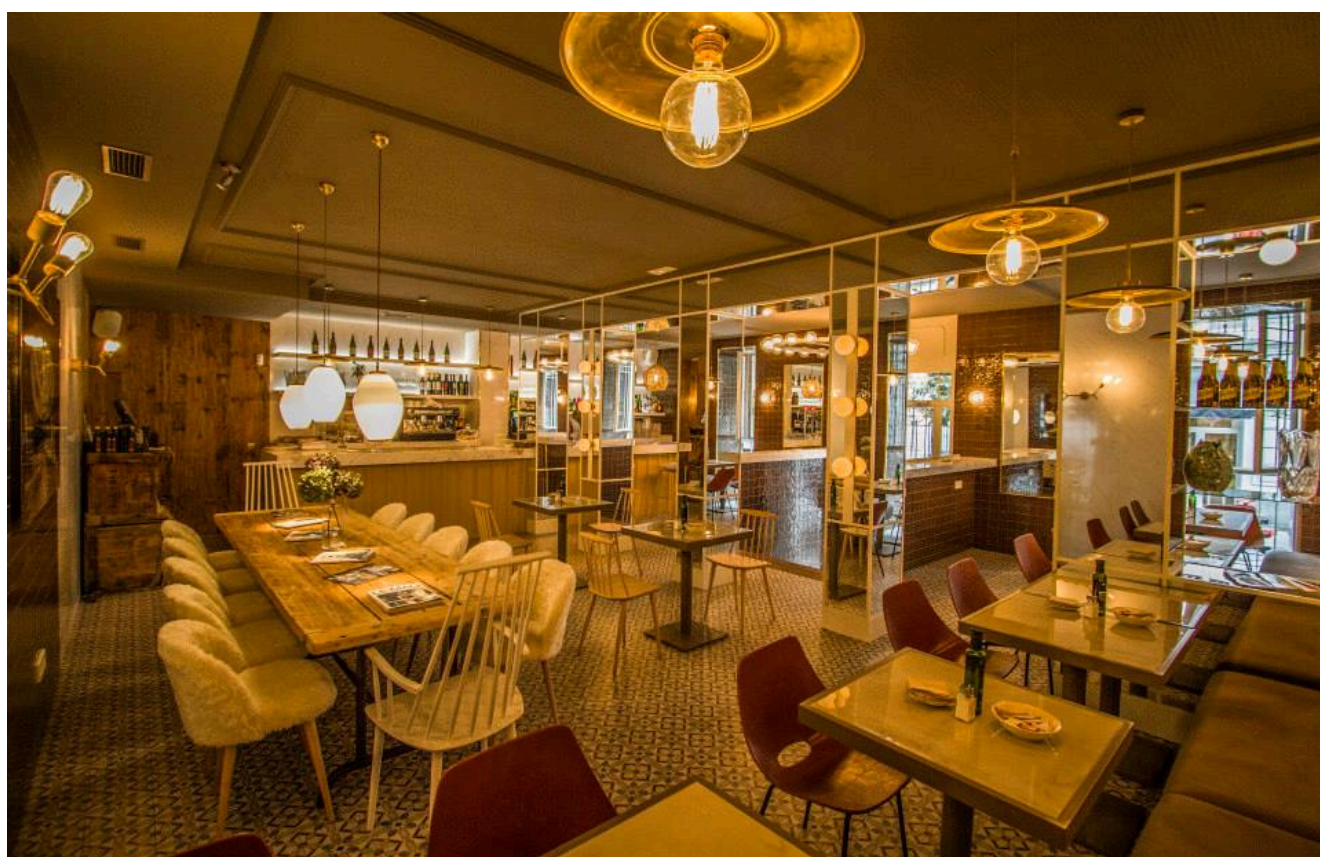
maybe not on a Friday night!

First discovered on a random Thursday whilst on a quest for a trendy *terrazza*, I experienced what can only be described as the **best cake that I have ever had in Madrid**. It involved Chocolate. It involved Guinness. Weird you say? Nope, more like a party in your boca and everyone should be invited. There literally aren't enough superlatives to describe its deliciousness – instead I suggest you order it on arrival and wrap up your dins with another one come desert time (again, speaking from experience).



Not only is the food borderline orgasmic (not just my opinion,

it's been uttered by my dining companions if I seem too easily pleased) but the décor is literally like something torn from the pages of Wallpaper Magazine. In other words, not a piece of Ikea furniture in sight and somewhere that I'd quite happily move into after kicking out time. You're greeted with gorgeous tiled floors, plates that almost got swiped and popped into my handbag and lighting that seemed to create an Instagram filter effect which is never a bad thing in my book. [Lady Madonna](#) is completely cornering that New York warehouse vibe.



I'm steadily working my way through the menu but the following things stood out as being calories well spent: the **Gambones a la Brasa** managed to tempt a confirmed carnivore into seafood submission, whereas the **Ensalada de Burrata** even had me eating my greens. If like me, dinner isn't a delight without some decent red action fear not, a glass of Rioja is "una ganga" at 2 euros 50 a pop.



Gambones a la brasa – grilled shrimp

I was warned by the hip (but not scarily so staff) that if you want a table on a Saturday night you need to be booking up about a week in advance. My concern is that after a rave review that might up the ante to a fortnight. Either way, Lady Madonna is the kind of place that cocoons you with its culinary chicness but has you pining for your Oysho jammies by the time you pay the bill (or maybe that's just me/an attack of my eyes being bigger than my belly!).

Try it, you might like it.

All images from [Lady Madonna](#)

Lady Madonna

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@ladymadonna_restaurante](#)
- **Address:** Calle Orellana, 6
- **Metro:** Alonso Martínez

▪ Phone: 915 02 41 82

Swinton & Grant: Art, Books, Coffee

We wandered Lavapiés on an overcast day, searching for our regular *dosis* of *cafeína*. As we crept to the door of [our usual haunt](#), my friends and I found a CLOSED sign awaiting us.

Spain's *siesta* schedule had tricked us yet again – even baristas need a break. The time had come to try a new café.



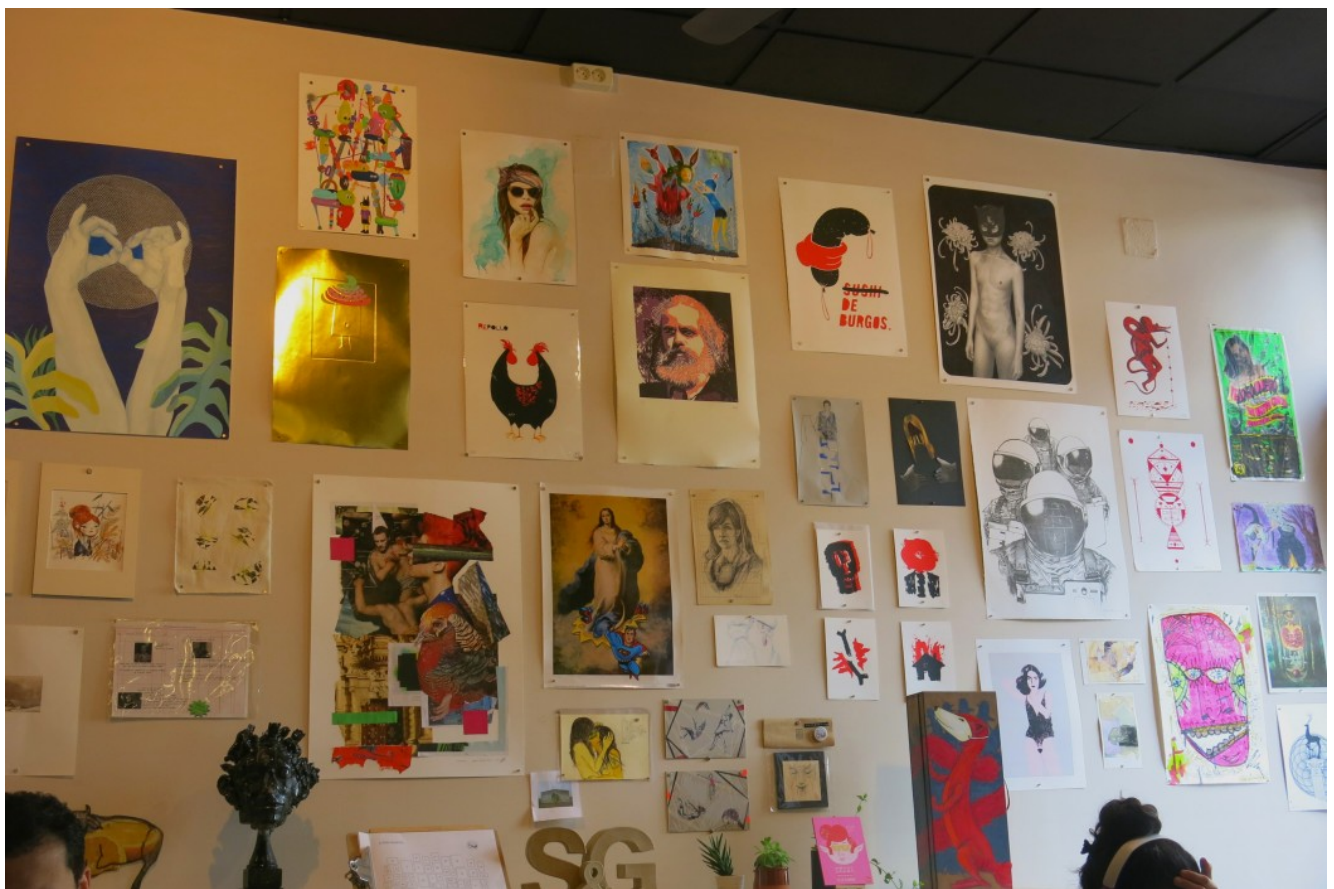
Open since last May, [Swinton & Grant](#) sits just off the

Glorieta de Embajadores, amid North African falafel joints, street art, and cherry blossom trees. As you walk down **Calle Miguel Servet**, you'll first notice just how big the place is.

Natural light streaks through black velvet curtains, revealing two main areas: on the first floor, **Ciudadano Grant**, a café-bookstore. In the basement, the **Swinton Gallery**, a large space for local artist exhibitions.



Swinton & Grant, Embajadores





Hip folks feel at home here. Bare bulbs and LEDs light customers' way to the pressboard bookshelves lined with English and Spanish biographies, comics, and children's picture books. Jars of LEGOs and framed pictures of Leonard Nemo draw your eye to bottles of Arizona Tea, Jones Soda, and fresh cakes and cookies. Bon Iver, Jorge Gonzalez, and Fleet Foxes tickle the ears while you waltz through the space.

The menu, with its own abstract artwork, impresses. **Coffees** come cheap (around €1.40). For a small charge, you can enjoy the flavor palates of **special bean blends** from Costa Rica, Kenya, Colombia, and other countries. **Teas** come in all sizes, colors, and temperatures.



The café offers a **desayuno special** before 1PM every day. While you appreciate the art that is half-Banksy, half-neoclassical, you can try the classic *pan con tomate*, a ham and cheese sandwich, or a slice of cake with your choice of beverage – all for €2-4. If you're still hungry, go for a full-size *bocadillo* or a giant cookie.





After your *sobremesa*, take a look downstairs, where artists hang their work in **rotating exhibits**. Next on the program are characteristic contemporary pieces from [Luis Pérez Calvo](#),

[Victor Solana](#), and [Antonyo Marest](#). If you're feeling fancy, feel free to buy the art, with prices ranging from a few euros to a few hundred.





Since my first fateful detoured day into Swinton & Grant's doors, it's quickly become one of my favorite Madrid spaces. These days, when I'm in the mood for comfort, cake, and

caffeine, I invariably make my way to Embajadores.

Info:

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

Address: *Calle Miguel Servet 21*

Metro: *Embajadores*

Some photos courtesy of Keith Lema

You may also like:

[Best Cafe-bookshops round 1](#)

[Best Cafe-bookshops round 2](#)

[El Cafelito – for coffee lovers in Lavapiés](#)

[Desperate Literature – Santorini, Brookly and now, Madrid!](#)

Discover The Hat's secret rooftop bar. You're welcome.

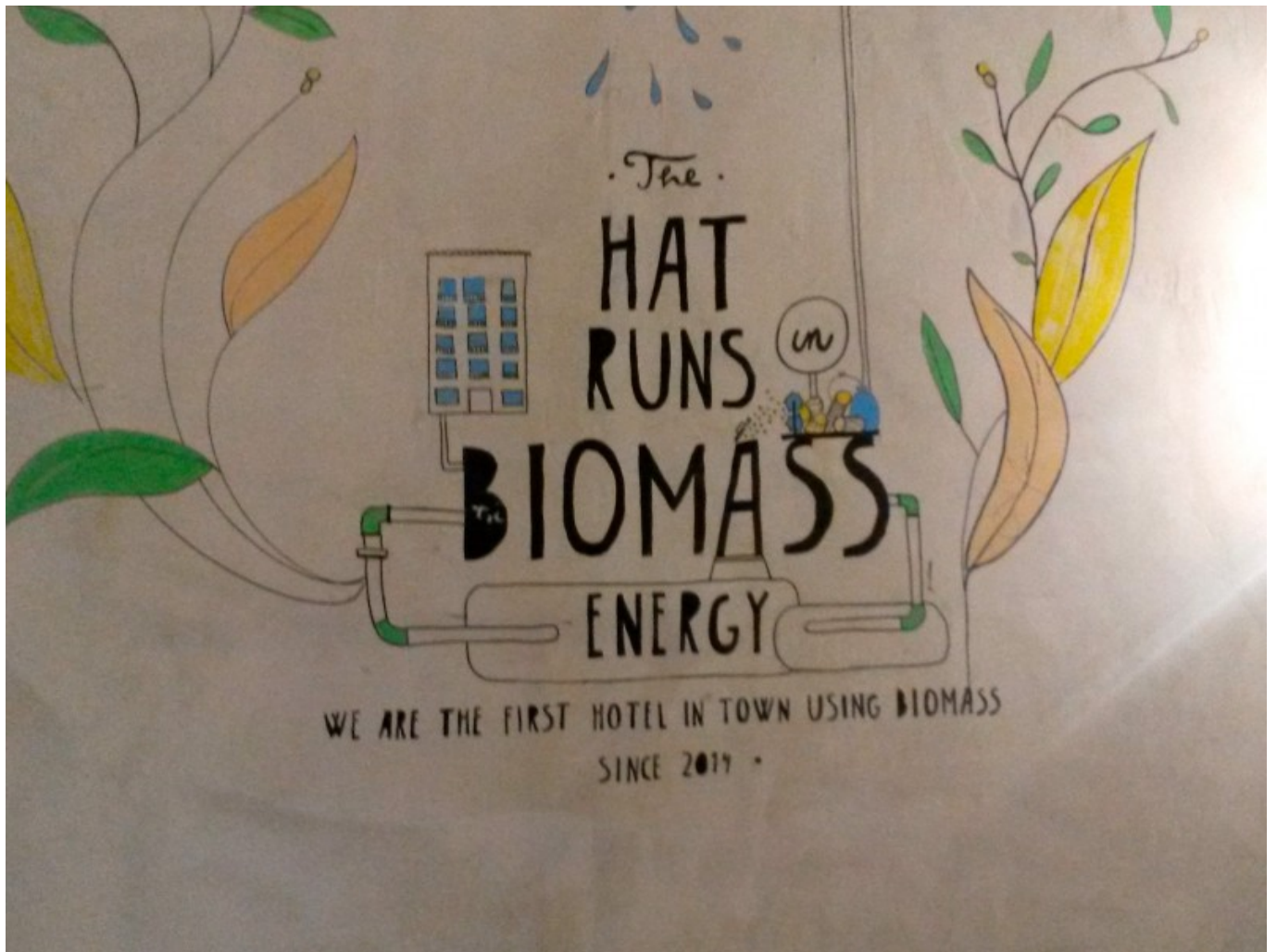
Madrid may be landlocked, but it has some pretty unbelievable [rooftop bars](#), and you'll find my favorite at **The Hat**. Why? Because it's laid-back, central and totally unexpected.



Just a stone's throw from Plaza Mayor, **The Hat** is a hotel –

but the kind you've never seen before. The first hotel in the city to run on biomass energy and appeal to 'smart travellers', The Hat boasts ultra-modern interior design and also holds free walking tours and markets.





But the best part is the rooftop bar, where you can enjoy the quaint views of Madrid's old buildings while basking in the sun and sipping on your favorite **iced** drink... How could you not want to spend the whole day up here?



James and I first discovered this secret **terraza** during winter, thanks to a small yet very clear sign out on the street.



With **outdoor heating and a nice indoor space**, The Hat's rooftop bar quickly became our spot. It's cozy on even the coldest winter night in Madrid. Along with a glass of red, I always ordered the **tosta de queso de cabra con cebolla caramelizada** (toasted bread with goats cheese and caramelized onions) and James got the **pincho de tortilla**. Both come with a **side of potato chips and a shot of salmoro** (a wonderful little addition to an already delicious treat). I've also got my eye on their **quiche**, although I haven't tried them yet.



Yesterday, we finally made it up to **The Hat's rooftop bar** for the first time this Spring. On one of those perfect sunny days in Madrid, we thought it would be impossible to find a table – but we did! And it was simply the nicest place to spend a day like that in the bustling city center. The only downside is that if you don't get a seat in the shade, Madrid's sun can be quite intense. So remember to get something to cool off – I recommend a **mojito** or **tinto de verano**.







The Hat will certainly be included in the upcoming round four of our series on [Madrid's best rooftop bars](#), though it deserved its own post too.

Info

[Facebook](#)

[Website](#)

Tel +34 917 72 85 72

Address Calle Imperial 9

Also check out:

[Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 1](#)

Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 2

Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 3