

# Somos Restaurant & Garra Bar, the Jewel in Barceló Torre's Crown

Sometimes hotels are just a place to lay your head before an obscenely early flight – I mean, why else would you ever willingly opt to stay in a Holiday Inn? Then on other occasions, they're the scene of pure indulgence and relaxation (that's where [Mr and Mrs Smith](#) properties come into the equation). But more often than not, hotel restaurants remain unloved and overlooked in favour of their rooftop pools or swanky spas. The poor relation of the hotel bar as it were.

However, just last Tuesday, instead of dismissing Somos, the restaurant located inside the achingly chic Barceló Torre Hotel. I made myself a reso and headed towards the always vibrant Plaza de España to discover that Somos is very much the jewel in this hotel's crown.



Not just a place to rest your weary self after a day pounding the city's pavements, Barceló Torre can be surmised as a luxury designer hotel, located in one of the most iconic buildings in Madrid. At first this felt like a bold claim from their PR team, but one that I can attest to having enjoyed nothing short of 5-star treatment; something that I could easily get used to.

First things first, the concept of the restaurant is actually genius – when you eat out as much as I do it's easy to get jaded by the standard gastronomical offerings, but not at Somos restaurant. Madrid is a city with a differing day and night scene which Somos sought to encapsulate through its very different menus.

I'm a sucker for attention to detail, but Somos has elevated this into an art form – let me explain. Somos is actually the first dual restaurant that evolves with the city. Everything from your plates (which I was quite tempted to shove in my

handbag), to the menu, to the breathtakingly beautiful skyline that Somos looks out onto, changes over the course of the day.

Case in point: the evening menu looks like a CD – for those of you who’ve spent much time in my beloved Madders, you’ll know that Madrileños don’t shy away from a fiesta, or a dancefloor for that matter. So this felt like a very fitting touch.





Back to the skyline, it's worth noting the setting is nothing short of being truly stunning. Each table faces outwards, so should you be tired of looking at your companions chops over your delicious dinner, you can cast your gaze over the city which never fails to impress.

If you've read one of my previous restaurant reviews (cheers Mum and Dad) you'll know that interiors are my porn. I mean it, I get giddy over a well upholstered chair like no other, therefore it's necessary to note that Somos has been decorated by the prestigious designer Jaime Hayón; an international icon of contemporary design and considered by *Time Magazine* as one of the top 100 important creators of our time. They weren't messing about with the dreamy decor.







What I ate basically reads like a roll call of my version of a last supper: cherry gazpacho, ceviche, marinated tuna with a delectable avocado hummus (yes, that's a thing), a perfectly seared ribeye fillet, finally rounded off with two puds as I sat and watched the sunset over Gran Via, Madrid's answer to Broadway.





Somos is the most recent offering from [Grupo Le Cocó](#) and with

there being whisperings of a new locale opening this September in Chamberí; it looks as though they're set to become quite the foodie tour de force. The entire experience from top to toe felt like an ode to the city that I've come to call home.

Call me soppy, but a trip to Somos made me fall in love with this city all over again. Admittedly this happens fairly often but make no mistake, dinner at Somos isn't an invitation – it's an obligation.

*All images from Somos Restaurant*

## Somos Restaurant

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@somosgarra](#)
- **Located in:** [Barceló Torre de Madrid](#)
- **Address:** Plaza de España, 18

---

## La Musa Malasaña, the restaurant equivalent of a little black dress

According to Yves Saint Laurent, “Fashions fade, style is eternal.” And in my humble opinion he's absolutely spot on. Trends come and go, new restaurants pop up more often than I get my roots done (you heard it here first, no I'm not a natural blonde) and seemingly zeitgeist bars can often sink without trace.





However, some places become perennial favourites that barely need an introduction. Part of the fabric of the city, they become the kind of places so comfortable to visit, that they really are the foodie equivalent of popping on your favourite little black dress, you know, the one that makes you look hot to trot but requires minimal effort.



When struggling for dinner inspiration or in times of when you simply can't be bothered to cook (it happens, let's be honest) I head to [La Musa](#) – partly out of sheer convenience (it's about a 3 and half minute stroll from my flat, yes that's a personal best in stilettos) but trust me when I say it's nigh on impossible to ever spend more 20 euros on dinner AND drinks. Wine ordered, check. An abundance of tapas that's never swimming in grease and is both pleasing to the eye and not just the tum, double check.





Having recently gone an understated renovation, [La Musa Malasaña](#) is looking lovelier than ever – you know a bit like a friend having gone through a recent break up and has hit the gym, hard. My friend and I ordered a few small plates including one of their most infamous dishes called a ‘bomba’ – I still don’t quite understand what it is, but I will divulge that it’s carby (yes that’s a word) meaty and downright delish, so be sure to opt for one, if not two.



I always come away from La Musa with my appetite satiated and my purse (although feeling lighter) not depressingly so. They don't take reservations so I suggest you pop on your LBD, get in line with your twenty euro note in tow and enjoy.

## Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
  - **Address:** Calle de Manuela Malasaña, 18
  - **Phone:** 914 48 75 58
  - **Metro:** San Bernardo / Bilbao
-



# Salmon Guru, seriously fun spirits near Plaza Santa Ana

The terms *craft cocktails* and *celebrity mixologist* can make eyeballs roll faster than you can say Vesper Martini. Because with all the clapping of mint leaves and fancy garnishes, it's easy for a place to take itself too seriously.

And while the folks behind [Salmon Guru](#) do have some serious credentials (proprietor is mixology mastermind Diego Cabrera), you won't find any stern-faced barmen shaming your request for vodka here. The only thing serious at this spot is the bartenders' love for well-made drinks.



The dark, unassuming exterior on Calle Echegaray does little to reveal the neon lights and quirky decor inside. The front

room is all 50s-era bungalow, with a bar and palm-print swivel chairs to one side and low seating against dark wood paneling on the other.

But don't stop there. Follow the neon glow toward the back room and you'll find yourself in the middle of a pop-art light extravaganza, with neon lightning bolts on the ceiling and familiar comic book faces on the walls.





As soon as you sit down you'll have a menu and glass of water plunked in front of you. If you've lived in Madrid for any

length of time, you know how rare it is to find a spot who'll bring you a free glass (let alone keep it filled).

Just like the decor, the menu is an eclectic mix. You'll find perfectly executed classics listed alongside their in-house inventions. If you're not sure where to start, don't be shy!

The bartenders are more than happy to recommend a drink based on what you like. Even better is to simply ask about their favorites, which is how I found myself sipping a Laphroaig-infused old-fashioned that isn't on the menu.





Pasión, a blend of rum, coconut milk and passion fruit





Vesper Martini & classic Manhattan

Need one more reason to check out Salmon Guru? **The place is a must for whiskey lovers.** If you don't see your favorite amongst the extensive selection of American bourbon and rye on the shelves, ask to see their secret whiskey menu.



All in all, if you're looking sip impeccably made drinks somewhere that's hip while being unpretentious, definitely check out Salmon Guru.

## Info

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Echegaray, 21
- **Metro:** Sevilla or Anton Martin
- **Phone:** 91 000 61 85

## By Danielle Owens, [Website](#) & [Facebook](#)

*A former Oregonian, Californian and Bogotana, Danielle is (for now!) settled in Madrid. Since 2014, she's chronicled her experiences living abroad on her blog, [No Longer Native](#).*

---

## I lucked out at Luzi Bombon

I am a country girl by birth and now a bona-fide city girl by choice. However, the downside of living in Madrid means that I now rarely see greenery on a daily basis (unless you count the succulents that I 'try' to keep alive in my humble abode). But on the flipside, being an urban dweller gives me access to some of the fanciest places to eat, with the best part being that they're often right on my doorstep.



Whilst I love a Netflix binge like most millennials, I still relish any given opportunity to don my glad rags and go out for a proper slap up dins. So dress up I did when I headed to Luzi Bombon with a suitably stylish friend in town, and wowzers did we enjoy a veritable feast from beginning to end.

Luzi Bombon isn't located in an area of Madrid that I often frequent, i.e. it's not within walking distance of my apartment. I had to treat myself to a taxi (partly due to the vertiginous heels that I was tottering about in) but it's undoubtedly central enough to appeal to both locals and out-of-towners alike.



What struck me first were the wall-to-wall photogenic diners – you won't just be salivating over the menu if the evening I visited was anything to go by. The clientele was as upscale as the perfectly mixed G&T that I was sipping on within minutes of arriving – a G'Vine in case you're interested.

It's a sexy venue; possibly the slinkiest of all the [Madrid-](#)



[based Grupo Tragaluz](#) (which also runs [Bar Tomate](#)) offerings with low lighting casting an Insta-worthy filter over my dining companion. Now until recent years I'm not ashamed to admit that I had relatively simple tastes – but due to external influencers in the form of more adventurous friends, I'm starting to pride myself of never saying never and giving anything a go. In that spirit, I sampled as much as was humanly possible whilst wearing leather and not wanting to be forklifted out of the venue.



The standout star of the show was the giant 'fruits de mer' platter that caused the table to groan under its sheer weight. Recommended by the waitress who clearly knew her stuff, it was a-ma-zing and has turned me into a complete crab convert. Obviously it's not the kind of thing that I'm whipping up at home, which gave the whole meal an even greater sense of occasion. Even as a novice foodie, I have told every man and his dog about that platter and now I'm urging you to hotfoot to Luzi Bombon and do the same.

Dinner doesn't come cheap but if you're looking to impress, aka maybe bag a second date with the object of your affection, Luzi Bombon is a fab place to pull out all of the stops. As someone who's rarely lured out of her barrio, Luzi Bombon is well worth the cab ride and gym class that you'll undoubtedly need to do the following day (in order to burn off every savoured calorie). If seafood platters and pretty peeps are your jam, Luzi Bombon is the (meal) ticket for you.

## Luzi Bombon

- **Facebook & Instagram:** [@luzibombon](#)
- **Address:** Paseo de la Castellana 35
- **Phone:** 917 02 27 36
- **Metro:** Rubén Darío