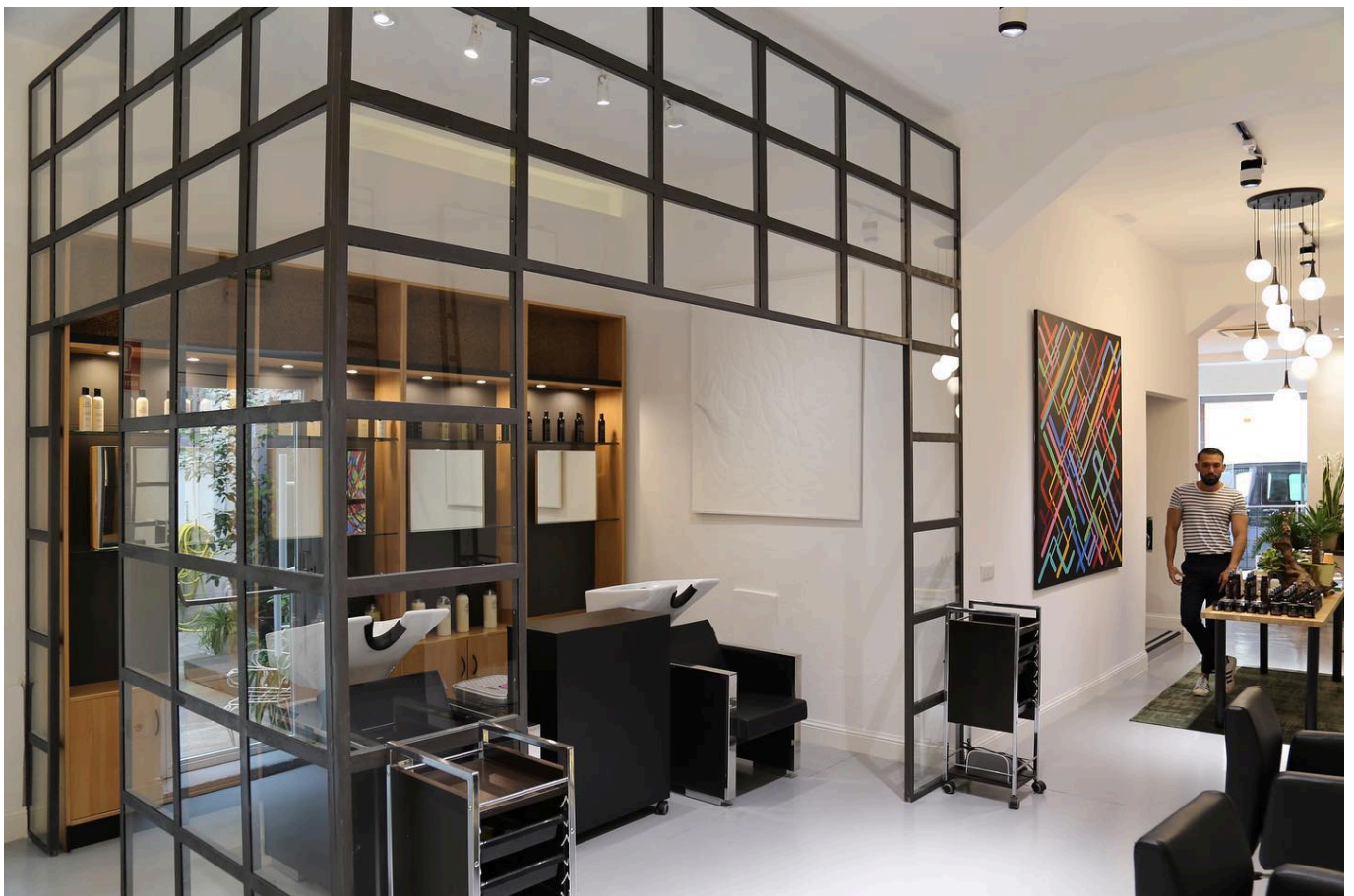
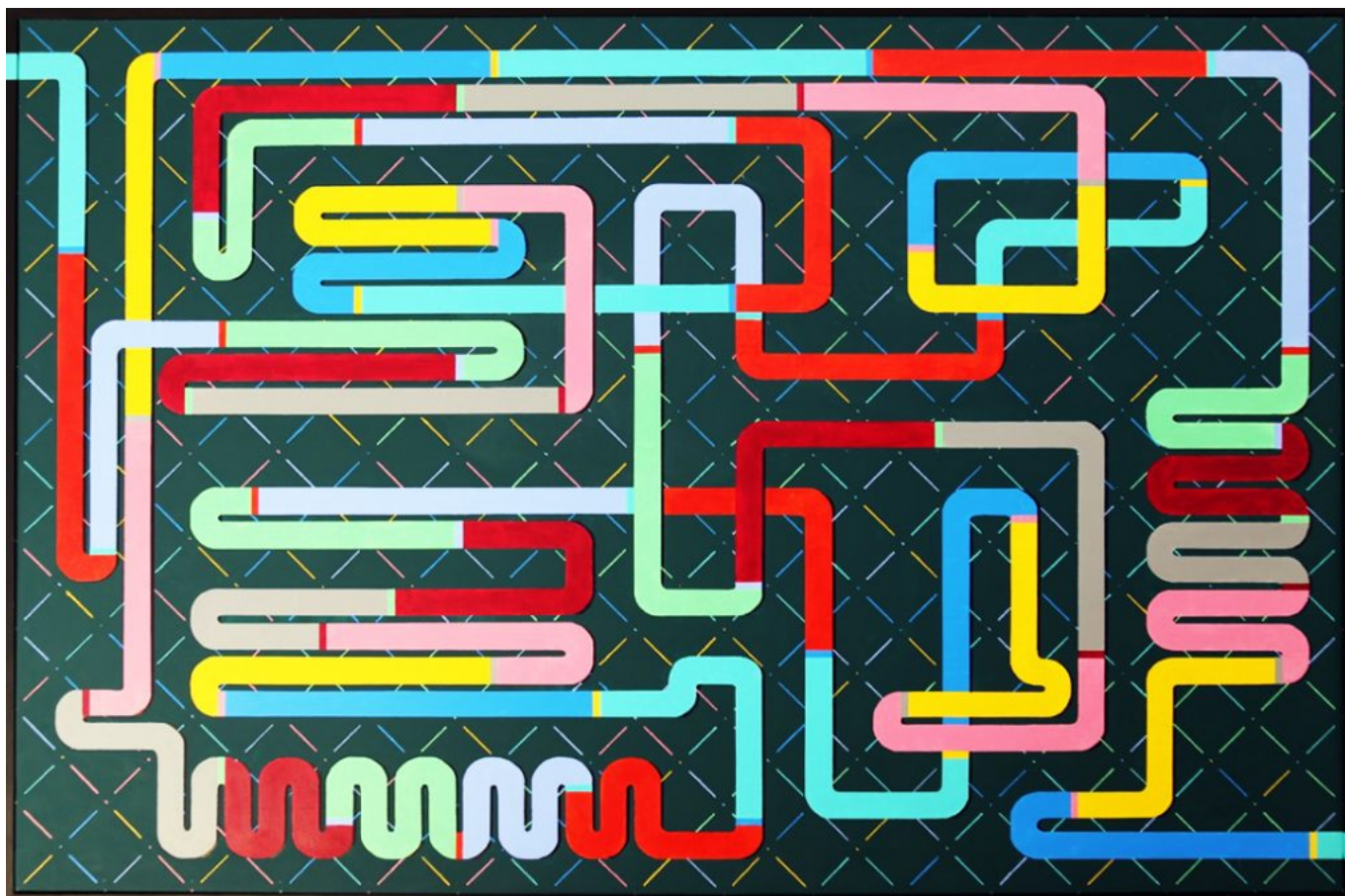


Ara Crinis – indulge in an artful hair salon experience

Soft lights. Greens. Pastels and contemporary art. Not something you expect of a hair and styling salon! Thus you're greeted by a surprise which then transforms into an inexplicable comfort – a place as delightful and friendly as its kind and charismatic owners.



As you walk in, you have the beautiful exhibit of contemporary artist Tomas Gracia. This particular one has been designed around the concept of chaos seeking its own natural order.



The more you reflect on it, the more lost you seem. Lines and hues seem to be in search of their own destinies. Maybe that's the exact point of the exhibit – to have your internal chaos muse over the edgy lines and vibrant tones of Tomas' artwork.



The exhibits are temporary and will include all categories of art and literature in the future, they tell me. The open patio will also house many interesting events.



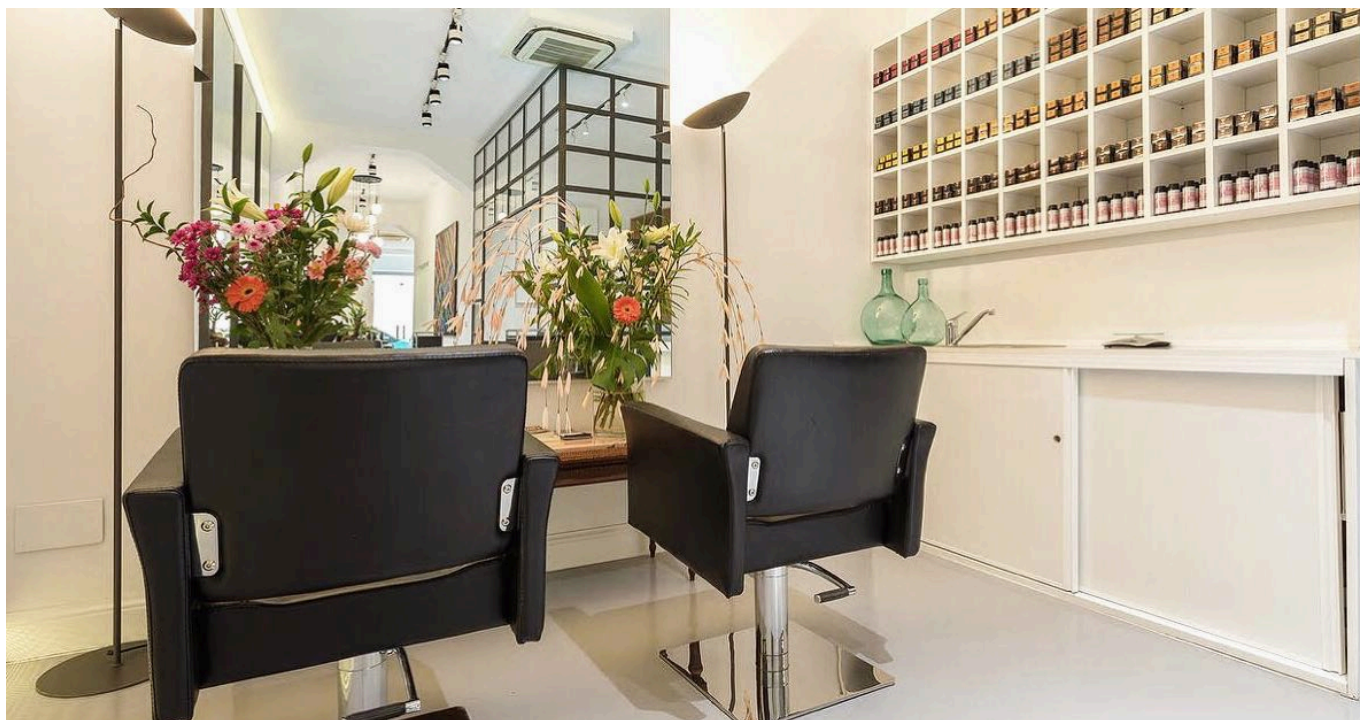
The area of the salon is beautifully decorated with lively greens and flowery tones, immediately transporting you into a spring-like feeling. The collection of books on display and the smell of freshly-brewed coffee add to the urbanism of the ambience.



The serene patio at the end, of course, completes the place beautifully.



As distinct as its name, *Ara Crinis* (which literally translates from Latin into 'a beautiful lock of hair') is the delightful service and experience you receive here. The salon works with the concept of aromatherapy and organics around every service they offer. The cherry on top are the very artful Neo and Carlo, who are the heart of the place.



Hop on over either for a walk around their artful decor, a pleasant cup of coffee with the owners, an exhibit of the next talented artist of the month or an indulgent hair experience – this little spot in Chueca is unlikely to disappoint.

By Arabdha Sudhir

Photos by Carlo Calzolari

Ara Crinis

- [Website](#) [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@ara.crinis](#)
 - **Address:** Calle San Lorenzo, 5
 - **Metro:** Tribunal or Alonso Martínez
-

Massa Pizza, perfect pizza made with pride in Chueca

The barrio of Chueca is known for many things, perhaps most famously though as the epicenter for the world-renowned Madrid gay pride festival – which is ultimately when the barrio becomes a riot of all things rainbow coloured and the always lively neighborhood really ramps things up a notch.

But over recent years I've noticed a shift from Chueca being all about bars. More foodie spots have sprung up encouraging you to part with your hard-earned cash. Just last week I accidentally sampled yet another insta-worthy poke bowl place which continues to be all the rage across the city. But what I'm getting to with this review (and I will get there eventually) was **the most perfect pizza place that I stumbled across a few weeks back.**



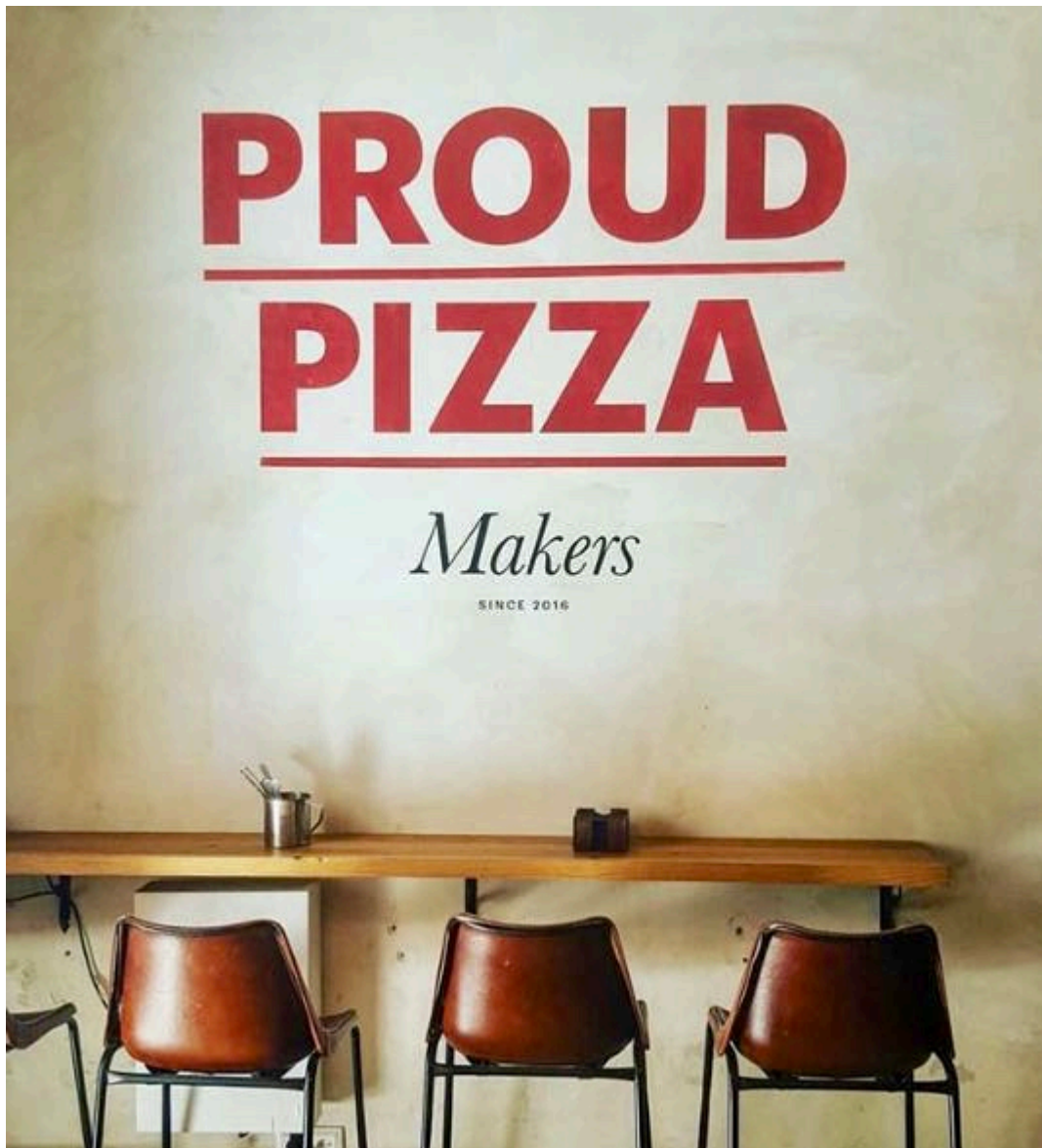
[Massa Pizza](#) is a stone's throw from the perennially popular [Mercado de San Anton](#) and could certainly be described as warm and inviting upon entering. A couple of gin fizzes in, myself and my dinner date selected some starters and neither one disappointed. Beef carpaccio (which is always up there as one of my death row dinners) and roast chicken croquetas which were bites of utter joy – now I realize it might sound strange for croquetas to have made their way into an Italian menu but I'm all for fusion food that's filling and fun.



We both then opted for individual pizzas (I'm grateful that the concept of a doggy bag is becoming increasingly popular in Madrid) – eyes bigger than Nelly much? Both pizzas were lush, doughy but not soggy, crisp on the edges but not burnt and the perfect cheese/tomato ratio in my humble opinion.



Now some people at this point might have needed to be rolled home. Not us. We saved space for the extremely cute (and Instagram worthy) dessert tray/box which was heaving with bite-sized little puds for you to select from. The cheesecake and tiramisu were to to die for but alas, all good things must come to an end.



[Massa Pizza](#) makes for the perfect low-key date night (as it did for us) and it's ideally located smack back in the centre of the city. What do you get when you combine pizza and pride? A combo that's as appealing as gin coupled with tonic.

Massa Pizza

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#)
 - **Address:** Augusto Figueroa 21
 - **Metro:** Chueca
-

Oh happy day at Ohanasana

I'm a relatively late bloomer when it comes to all things health and fitness wise. I'd love to wax lyrical that the only time a dirty Maccies passes my lips is at the end of a night when only greasy carbs will do, but frankly, I'd be lying. However, there's something about hitting your thirties (and I really hope that this isn't just the case for me) that wakes you up to the fact that your body isn't quite what it once was, and that a helping hand from the old spin class and eating some greens aside from the mint in your mojito is no bad thing.

So [Ohanasana](#) was blessing in disguise for something who's dare I say it, challenged in the clean eating stakes. Ticking all my necessary boxes on the decor front – floral chairs, some fluro neon and an exposed brick, all that was left to approve of was the grub. And boy it did not disappoint.



Now before I extol the virtues of fat free, vegan type fun, let me be clear, I love all things calorific so for me to rave about something without there being a chip in sight it has to be good. I started with a juice called "young, wild and free" – I like to think they named it after me! *my tongue is firmly in cheek here. It was a mix of pineapple, mint, cucumber and

coconut water. With every sip I felt like I was radiating the kind of glow that Gisele Bündchen seems to naturally exude. Whilst I may not be Gisele, it was delish and did serve its desired purpose which was to counteract the gins consumed the previous evening.

Next up was a little amuse bouche of gazpacho, it had a slight chilli kick to it which I loved – having grown up near Birmingham (the balti capital of Blighty) I love all things spicy and appreciated the twist on a Spanish summer classic. Next came the build-your-own bowl section (which a fussy faffer like me loves as it avoids any awkward “can I switch the cucumber for more deliciousness that is an avocado”).



I plumped for a quinoa-base laden with gorgeous raw tuna, avo and edamame – topped off with some salty soy while my friend had the “happy” chicken bowl which did exactly what it said on the tin, left her feeling cheery and safe in the knowledge that her lunch was devoid of anything that could hamper

“operación bikini.”



But this is me and I'll never be completely angelic. With the merest mention of a dessert menu I was all over it like a rat up a drainpipe. The best part this time was that the chocolate pot that we shared wasn't packed with nasties and the mouse was even made of butternut squash – what's not to love about getting one of your five a day when it's masquerading as a cocoa fix.



Aside from the food, the service was faultless. Our lovely waiter was the right side of helpful, aka he knew what he was talking about but didn't enforce menu choices upon you and instead gently suggested that we should order the chocolate pot and for that, I was grateful.

Ohana Sana isn't just a luxury for peeps in the barrio either,

available on Glovo, Deliveroo and Uber Eats there's no need to exert any energy if you don't quite fancy going out to sample their wares. Convenient and clean eating, that's a combo that works for me.

Ohanasana

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#)
- Address: [Calle del Barquillo 34](#)
- Metro: Chueca
- Phone: 910 66 49 72

You may also like:

- [The Circle Food, tasty food for staying trim](#)
 - [Honest Greens, feel-good food that tastes good too](#)
 - [Zoco Comidero, eat well and feel great at Madrid's first \(and only\) flexitarian restaurant](#)
-

Don't walk right 'pasta' Propaganda 12

I really and truly love Italy. So much so that if my finances ever return to 'normal' after the battering they've taken from buying a flat, it's where I hope to spend a week over the summer getting some much longed for Vitamin sea.

I love everything from the sing-songy nature of their language, to the style and panache of their locals. And of course, there's the food. To me, there is literally nothing better than a plate of pasta. Like a hug when you're feeling blue, it has restorative powers.

Propaganda 12 is so much more than pasta though. It's like bypassing passport control and finding yourself in the land of limoncello, despite not having left the cocoon of barrio Chueca.



As mentioned, I bought a flat – a process in Spain that felt akin to a root canal, but I survived. And after you've

survived something there's only really one rightful thing to do and that's – celebrate. So off I went (with my Dad in tow) to toast my freshly signed mortgage.

No sooner did we arrive, our hostess (who couldn't be faulted the entire evening) offered us two glasses of champers – I liked the place already and the fizz combined with the decor (my current obsession is all things paint and plate related) made an excellent first impression. The tiles in the bathroom along with the wallpaper are sure to be papped and all over the 'gram.



Again, we completely trusted our wonder of a waitress when it came to wine and she gave us a back story with each bottle.

So on to the food. We shared anti pasta to start. Now so far, you may well think so predictable, but the roast pork that we plumped for was literally so a-ma-zing, that we ordered a second portion.



Now I enjoy pork as much as the next person but this was something else. Tasting of rosemary and served with freshly baked bread, I honestly think I could eat it day in, day out. Whilst I'm becoming increasingly open minded with food, my

Dad's a tough crowd and even he couldn't find enough superlatives to pile on the praise.



We both then had a beef red curry which was spiced to perfection – not bland, not blow your head off hot and two delicious puds, tiramisu and a red fruits cheesecake respectively. Everything was heavenly and as good as anything that I've eaten in Puglia. All the while, the setting is chic yet cosy, the staff friendly but not overbearing.

I also spotted that come weekends, they do a champagne brunch

for the non too pricey sum of 25 euros. Good food, good booze, good times.

An ideal place to brunch, lunch or dinner, pop propaganda 12 on your to-do list right about – now!

All photos from Propaganda 12

Propaganda 12

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#)
- **Instagram:** @propagandadoce
- **Address:** Calle Libertad, 12
- **Metro:** Chueca
- **Phone:** 910 56 70 03

Gin and on it at Le Cocó

Sundays (if you let them) can frankly be a little bit rubbish. And in the winter – even worse. Chances are you're nursing a mild to moderate hangover. There's life admin to smash. And then the potential doom that often comes when you spy the return to work on the horizon.

This often means that Sundays don't have that carefree Friday feeling. They're the waiting room for the working week. However, as I discovered last Sunday, it definitely doesn't have to be that way and Sunday Funday most certainly doesn't have to remain as some intangible insta friendly phrase – especially not in this city.



[Le Cocó](#), the cosy little Chueca spot that I [reviewed](#) back in the summer, is now playing host to '**Gin and Cookie**' **afternoons**. You show up, you drink gin, you eat cookies. There's not much not to love. Between 5-8pm on both Saturdays and Sundays, there's a DJ on the decks helping you to keep your party pants on until your alarm pretty much goes off on a Monday morn.



In my [previous Le Cocó post](#) I mentioned just how how lovely the decor is and now that winter is really starting to bite, it's the perfect place to bunker down for an afternoon and enjoy some copas in good company.



It goes without saying that each bite of the cookies was well worth the calories. The red velvet ones in particular deserve a mention as I could've happily munched the lot – but clearly needed to leave some room for the perfectly mixed G&Ts.



So if like me, you're keen to eek out the dregs of the weekend until the bitter end, make a date at Le Cocó. Remember, the weekend isn't over until the fat lady sings. Or in this case, you've eaten all the cookies.

Info

- [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) & [Website](#)
 - **Address:** C/ Calle de Barbieri, 15
 - **Metro:** Chueca
 - **Phone:** 915 21 99 55
-

Lady Madonna, because Sundays are made for brunching

As an ex-pat in Madrid there are a couple of things that I really miss from home. The M&S food hall (say no more). Boots – I mean who doesn't love a decent 3 for 2 offer; and last but by no means least, a Sunday roast. So in lieu of Roast Beef and Yorkshire puddings, [Sundays in Madrid are all about brunch](#), as opposed to lunch.



Image from Lady Madonna

[Lady Madonna](#) has always been a firm favorite of mine (*you can even read my review on the restaurant [here](#)*). With its pretty little *terrazza*, it's an ideal spot for a post-work drink, or a solid choice when you're looking for a decent dinner that won't break the bank.



Little did I know that brunch was an option and this was no half-baked attempt; they offer a set menu that will set you up for the day – I mean breakfast is supposed to be the most important meal of the day right?



I opted for eggs Benedict followed by carrot cake – both paired with coffee, juice and a mojito that proved to be quite the effective hair of the dog. But there were a good five savoury options as well as desserts, and if mojitos aren't your thing there's also Bloody Mary's and mimosas on offer.



I arrived feeling slightly fragile from my Saturday night antics and left with my appetite having been satiated and feeling virtuous that I'd even enjoyed a little bit of sun all by midday. The best bit, the fixed brunch menu comes in at only 18 euros. Well, it would be rude not to indulge at such a snip.

Lady Madonna

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

▪ Phone: 915 02 41 82

I went loco for Le Coco.

Picture the scene. Lashing rain. Lightning illuminating the dirty teabag coloured sky. Rumblings of thunder so fierce that part of my apartment window collapsed (true story, that's not just for dramatic effect). Oh and have I mentioned that this is July in Madrid, not November in Blighty? So you can only imagine my level of *ganas* when it came to venturing out into a monsoon on a bleak and downright bloody freezing Thursday evening.



The reason for rallying was that my Mum was in town and I didn't fancy having to try (and realistically fail) to produce

dinner from the slim pickings in my fridge. So off we waded to [Le Coco](#); a short stroll over to the neighbouring barrio of Chueca with our brollies in tow. From the outside Le Coco is dinky and unassuming, well, that's what I could make out from my rain soaked fringe at least. But upon entering, not only was it a haven of dryness, it was a cosy one at that.





As soon as we were seated (which was immediate) we were handed a drinks menu. We happily plumped for pisco sours, which brightened both of our moods – shame the same couldn't be said for the colour of clouds that loomed ominously. Anyways, enough of my weather related whining, let's get cracking on the food because boy we did we eat our bodyweight. In our defence, as it felt like winter outside we definitely packed in enough dishes to help us with insulation.



So first there were prawn dumplings, plump, juicy and incredibly moo-ish. I ate 6 without breaking a sweat – although sweat I did, when I dragged myself to a 9am pilates class the following day to work them off. Next came tempura langoustine that rendered me speechless. Friends will confirm that this only usually happens when I'm asleep, so for a dish of something shrimpy to shut me up, well, we're talking about the unfathomable here. They were amazing. Genuinely. [Le Coco](#) is worth a visit for this reason alone.



Now some peeps might have been full after those couple of helpings, not us. Remember the rain, well it had started up again by this point, which gave us the perfect excuse to plump for tacos, a burrata the size of my fist, before ending with the crème de la crème of pasta dishes – and I’ve been to Puglia, I think I know my stuff. It heaved with lobster, crab and cream. I don’t know what they did with these three ingredients but it was downright orgasmic. Hell, if that dish were a man, maybe I’d date it – frankly it was infinitely more delicious than the bulk of Tinder’s offerings. I jest, but really, for a place that looked on first glance similar in style to many, many places in the area, the food was anything but predictable.



We wrapped the evening up with a couple of celebratory cavas for making it out of the house to battle the elements. And I left having forgotten that my red suede shoes (or my Dorothy/Wizard of Oz shoes as I liked to affectionately refer to them) are basically now akin to soggy road kill. Sometimes things don't look that pretty from the outside, Le Coco goes to prove that it's what's on the inside that counts.



Info

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#)
 - **Address:** Calle de Barbieri, 15
 - **Metro:** Chueca
 - **Phone:** 91 521 99 55
-

Bosco de Lobos – a casual-chic restaurant in Chueca

Last month I reviewed the sexy, swish [Ana La Santa](#). If we were to talk in terms of siblings, whilst Ana La Santa may be the mature older brother in the dining out stakes, this means that Bosco de Lobos may be the cuter, younger sister. Smaller in size and with a less obvious position within the city (it's tucked away between Calle Fuencarral and Hortaleza) sort of straddling Malasaña and Chueca if you will, it's the ideal place for a simple lunch on their sun-kissed terraza or for a casual date night that won't break the bank.

The atmosphere was (on a Friday night) buzzing to say the least; packed with punters all gagging to sample their take on eclectic European fare, ranging from wood-fired pizzas, to steak tartare, to heaving pasta dishes. They do a little bit of everything and instead of this being to their detriment (like that friend you have who spreads themselves too thinly) it's all lip-smackingly good.



Like most, I enjoy dining out (ok, perhaps more than most) but I like to do so in places that lack pretention and that do simple things with style. Bosco de Lobos ticks both boxes. Special mention has to go our waitress, Iryna, who was a fountain of knowledge on the wine front, recommending the perfect Rioja to be paired with my steak. We rounded off the evening with a couple of puds and a G&T thrown in for good measure.

Speaking of round, that's exactly how my midriff felt after eating like a Queen. It doesn't hurt that the setting is as tasty as the food, lots of sultry low lighting and artfully dishevelled bookshelves, making the whole place feel cosily lived in rather than sterile Scandi in tone.

Unlike La Musa, they do take reso's so I implore you to make one – you can thank me later.

All photos from [Bosco de Lobos](#)

Bosco de Lobos

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@boscodelobosmadrid](#)
 - **Address:** COAM, Calle de Hortaleza, 63
 - **Phone:** [915 24 94 64](#)
 - **Metro:** Alonso Martínez, Chueca & Tribunal
-

Go Crazy for Cannibal.

New restaurant openings (or in fact any kind of opening) within Madrid are pretty much ten a penny. When strolling round any of the barrios, you'd be hard pressed to not spy an exposed brick or a jam jar cocktail vying for your attention, in what's becoming an increasingly crammed marketplace.

However, there are some new spots that feel no need for fanfare and know full well that the masses are going to flock in their droves. [Cannibal](#) holds this covetable spot. The restaurant equivalent of someone tall, dark and handsome – Cannibal is poised to become the darling of the Madrid restaurant scene and you won't just need to take my word for it; you could ask anyone who was there last Saturday (when it was packed to the rafters).



Madrid non-newbies will remember that the site of Cannibal once housed the infamous brunch spot 'Cafe Oliver' and when it closed its doors, many mourned the loss. So imagine my excitement whilst on my daily walk to work when I spied renovations.



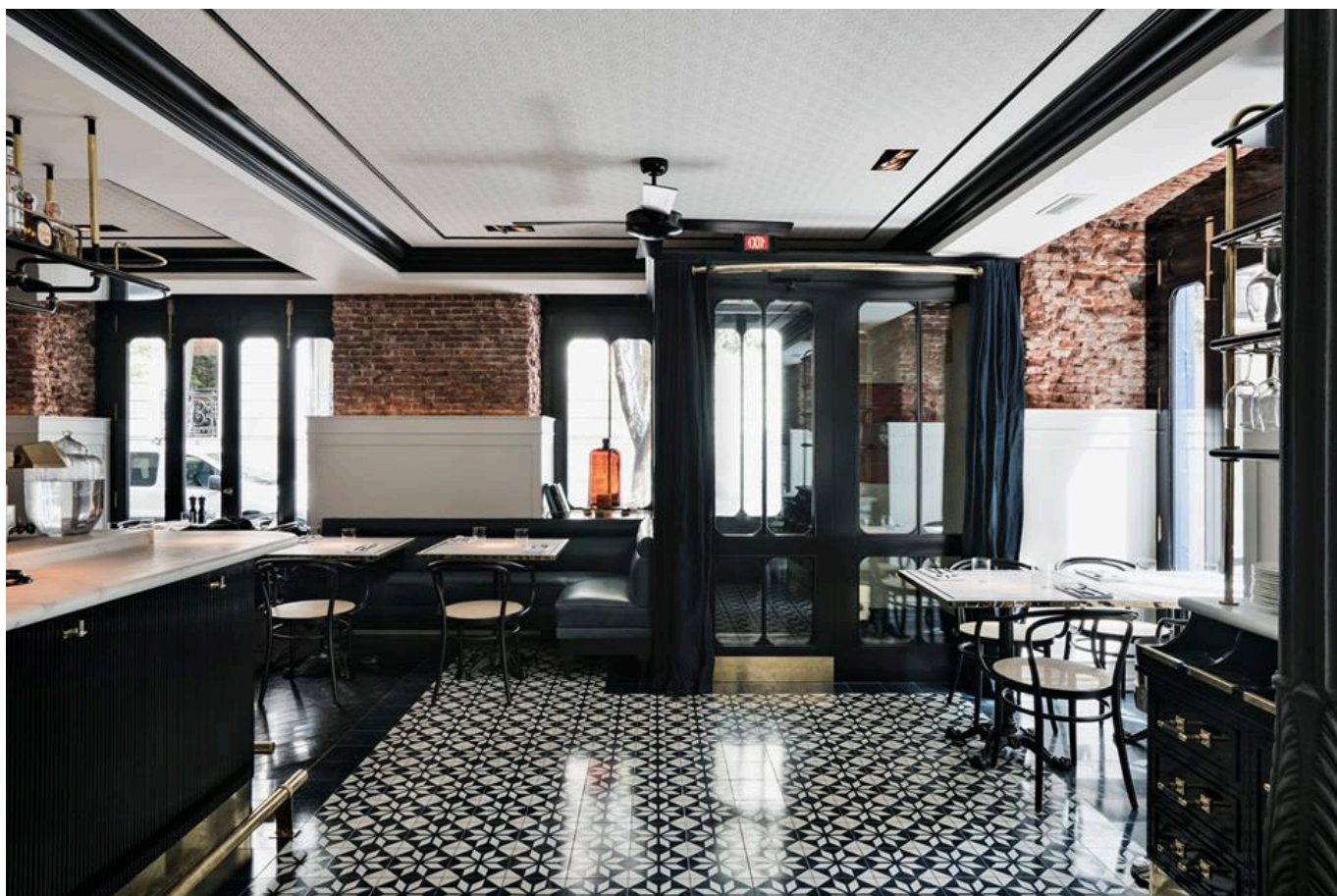
Now painted in an inky blue hue, the newly opened Cannibal is hard to miss. The name alludes to what's on offer dinner wise. The raw stuff. Tartare. Ceviche. Carpaccio. But don't despair if you're not a fan of the cold stuff, the menu offers a mean hamburger and THE most delish Peruvian Pork dish that was inhaled within mere minutes.



Now I could wax lyrical about just how good the food was – because it truly was. We're talking last meal type claims (if like me burrata and steak carpaccio is your idea of food heaven). But it wasn't just the food that had my company and

me swooning; it was the service.

In a country where asking for the bill is usually met with a grunt, the team at Cannibal couldn't have been more charming or attentive – much to the glee of my dinner companions. They happily talked through the menu with genuine interest, they were knowledgeable about ingredients and at no point were our glasses empty. I know this kind of vibe is to be expected in a country like the states, but in the land of jamon this is rare.



It goes without saying that the decor satiated my interiors porn thirst and it didn't hurt to have a window seat on a balmy evening, where you would people watch over your dulce de leche pud.



Like all restaurants reviews, I'm always torn between spreading the word and keeping schtum for fear of a place becoming busier than the Bernabeu on a match day, but the secret's out.



Embrace your inner cannibal and happy feasting. Who cares if it's bikini season with food that good? That's what kaftan's are for.

**All photos are from [Cannibal Raw Bar Madrid's FB page](#) & [Instagram](#)*

Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Website](#) & [Instagram](#)
 - **Address:** Calle Almirante., 12, 28004 Madrid
 - **Phone:** 910 26 87 94
 - **Metro:** Chueca, Colón, Banco de España
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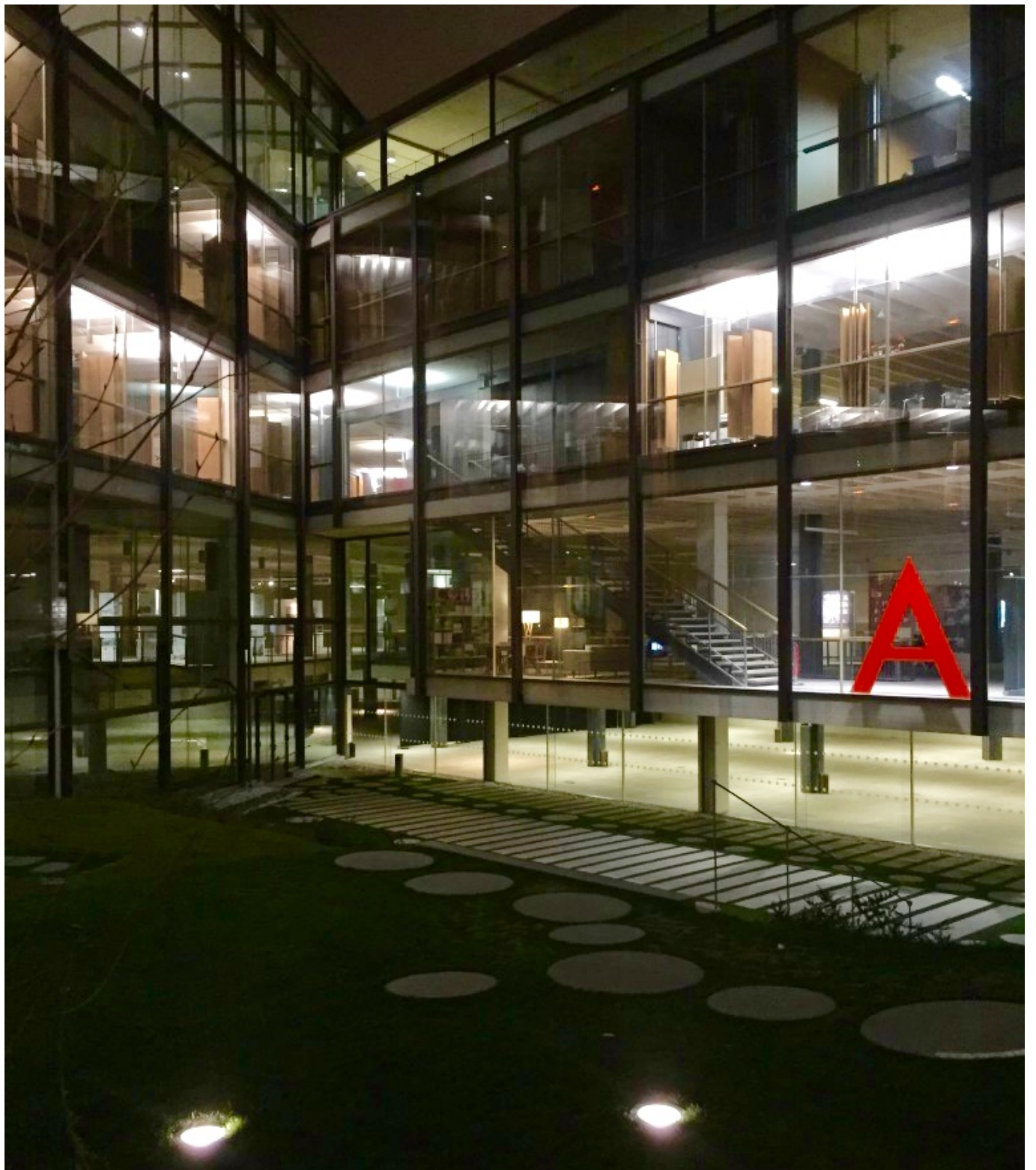
Bosco de Lobos – dine in a secret garden in good company

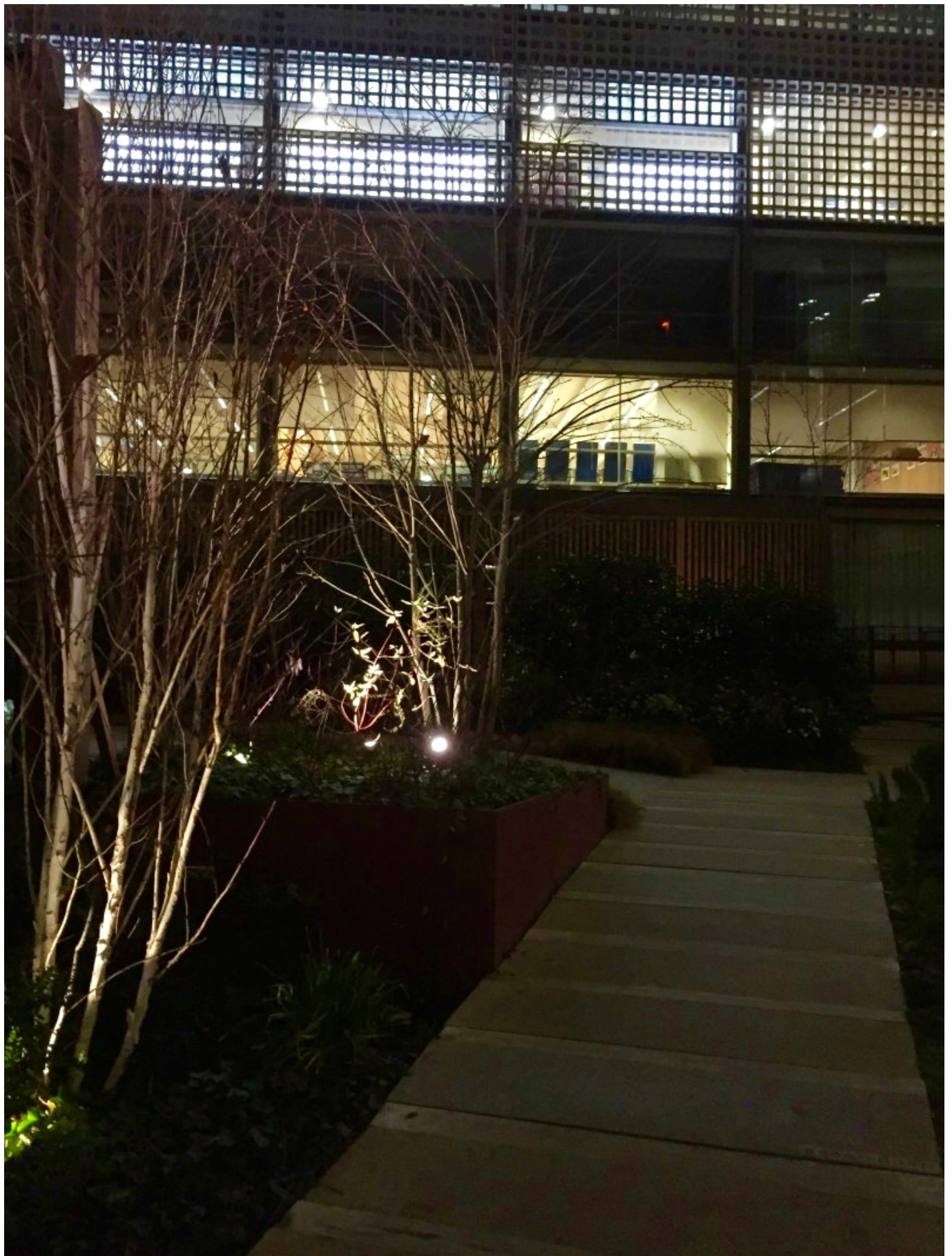
In the middle of Chueca, deep in the courtyard/garden of the Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Madrid, you'll find a glass house that feels more LA than Madrid, and inside that glass house, you'll find [Bosco de Lobos](#). Bosco de Lobos is part of **En Compañía de Lobos**, a restaurant group that has Ana La Santa in Madrid as well as four restaurants in Barcelona and another in Mexico City. It calls itself a restaurant, bar, garden, and a place for work and meetings. And indeed it is a great place to meet, especially for groups. After hearing nothing but great things about it from my friend Carla, and seeing a picture of Blanca Suárez devouring spaghetti on Instagram, it was abundantly clear that I needed to get there.

And so one Wednesday night, my group from my first trimester of grad school got together for a reunion dinner in this wonderful place. While you may get lost the first time you get there, you just go to the back of the Colegio de Arquitectos, and you will find it hidden behind the entrance.



Walking back to the restaurant already gives you a sense of awe, that you know you're in a beautiful place and will be transported from the rest of the city out there.





After a walk down the path to the main entrance, you're welcome at the bar and ready to be transported to dine in a

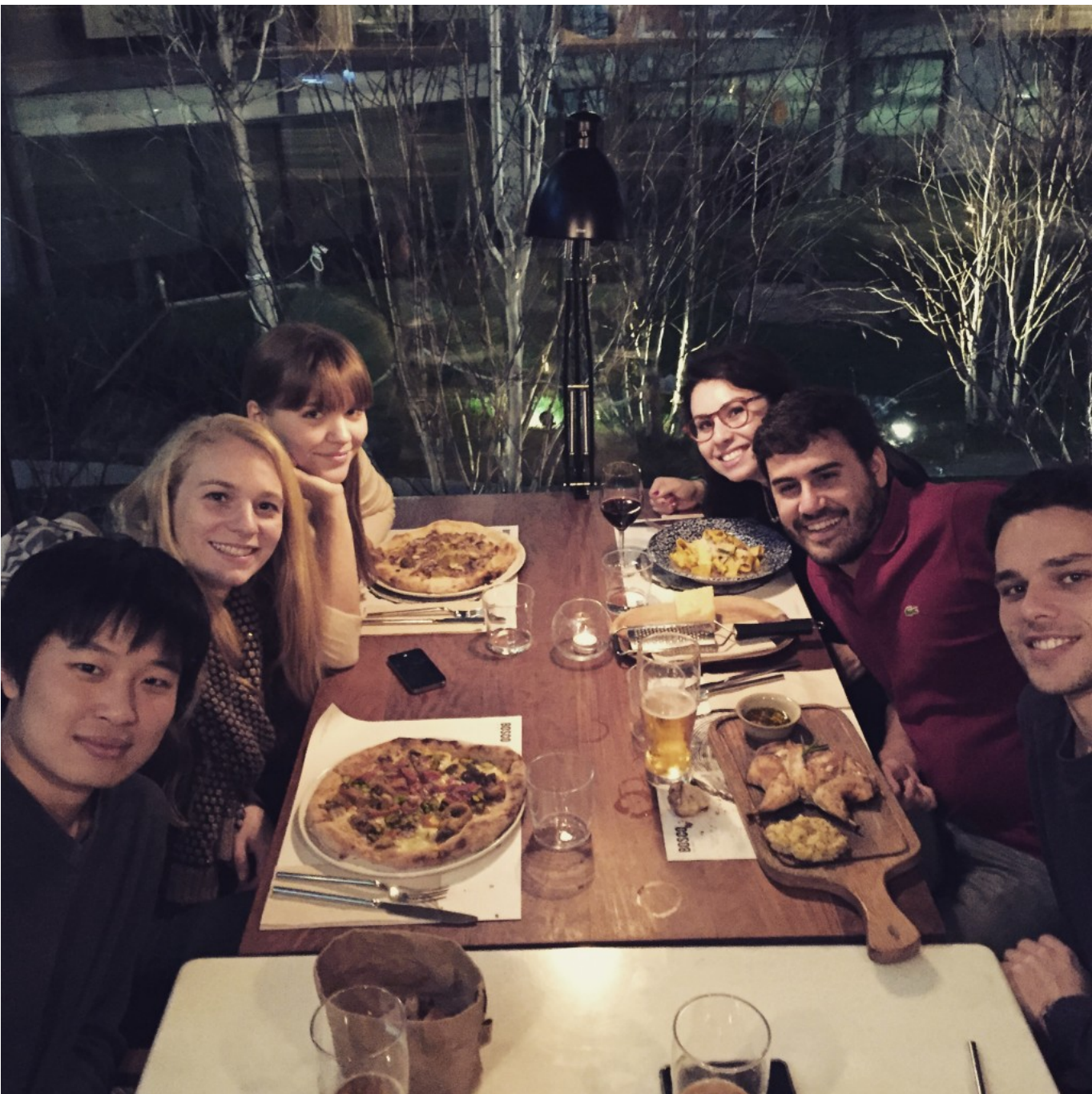
restaurant that has a comfortable feel.

Walking inside is like being welcomed into someone's house, with comfortable tables and shelves with a wide assortment of books. When the weather's warm, tables are set up outside in the garden, allowing for more space. However, we were there in January, so that gives an excuse to go back again.

Here's a photo from their [Facebook page](#) so you can see what it looks like during the day!



We sat in an area overlooking the garden with a wide selection of books and plenty of space for the six of us to have a bonding experience.





Bosco de Lobos serves Italian cuisine, with pizza and pasta the stars of the menu, however there are meat dishes and some

tapas. Many websites laud the lasagna (and that will be what I'll have to have next time), but two of us order the roast chicken, one ordered steak, two ordered pizzas (one the whole-wheat vegetable pizza and the other the taleggio con trufa de inverno), and then I ordered the paparadelle with red-wine meat ragout.



The portion size was great, especially since I do not eat pasta very often. I was not overly stuffed, and I even had

room to try the vegetable pizza. What was nice about the sauce was that it was meat-based, while not as heavy as a bolognese, and the paparadelle was fresh and perfectly cooked. They even left me with my own block of cheese with personal grater had I been in the mood for more.

Everyone in the group was satisfied with our meal, and we spent over two hours together catching up, just like old times.

When you have a group dinner and are looking to feel right at home in the middle of a tranquil garden, then Bosco de Lobos is the place to go!

Info

- Calle de Hortaleza, 63
- Tel.: +34 915 249 464
- [Facebook](#)
- [Website](#)
- Metro: Alonso Martínez (Lines 4, 5, and 10)