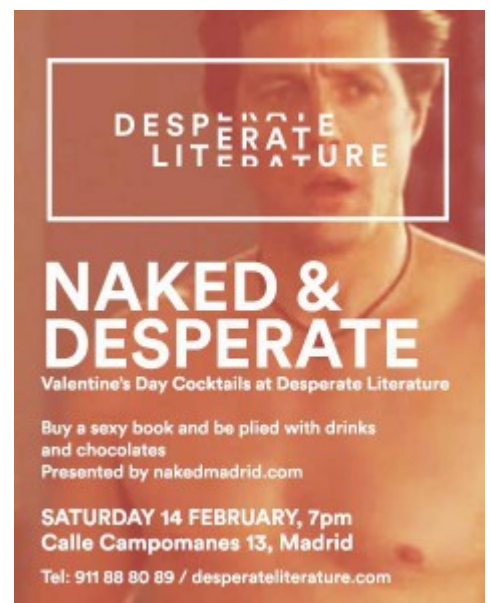


Desperate Literature, so much more than a bookshop

Four years ago I stumbled upon a newly opened gem, [Desperate Literature](#). I immediately went in, spoke to the staff (who were practically still building the place), and wrote an article about it: [Desperate Literature, for book lovers in Brooklyn, Santorini and now Madrid.](#)

Something about it felt so homey to me. Perhaps it was the English-speaking staff, the familiar titles on the shelves, or the fact that they were playing my brother's kind of music. It just felt like I was stepping into an avid reader's living room in New York rather than a bookshop in Madrid.



I haven't stopped going back since. Many of the times I've gone in with friends and family, we've either been offered a cup of green tea or a glass of whiskey. Naked Madrid even co-hosted a Valentine's event there in 2015. I remember there being lots of mulled wine, chocolate, and a discount in the erotica section.

So much has changed since then, yet the same wonderful vibe and essence remains. The staff is still rotating,

international and friendly as ever. The book selection of both new and old titles in English, French and Spanish keeps on growing. With so many great additions, it was time for a new article, with updated pics too.

First some background info

For anyone who hasn't been yet, Desperate Literature sells by far the best selection of English books in the city, from art and philosophy to history and sociology. Plus a nice "boozy books" section where you get a shot of free whiskey with every purchase. You can also find titles in other languages, as well as handpicked rare editions, signed copies, tote bags, postcards, maps, and more. There's even a kids' section!

Desperate Literature was founded by hardcore book fanatics: Craig Walzer (UK), Corey Eastwood (US), Charlotte Delattre (France) and Terry Craven (UK). Between them, they also own [Atlantis Books](#) in Santorini, Greece, and [Book Thug Nation](#) and [Human Relations](#) in Brooklyn, New York.

Charlotte and Terry are currently running the shop (and living upstairs). Before coming to Madrid, they both worked for several years at the world-famous Paris bookshop [Shakespeare and Company](#). Lucky for us, they're bringing the same philosophy to Desperate Literature, making it much more than a bookshop – it's also a community, event space, publishing house, and a home. According to Terry:

"Desperate Literature's aim is to create a place where people meet for and through literature and to that end we're developing not only our stock, focusing on having the best literature in English, Spanish and French, but a whole array of literary events, a literary magazine and all types of literary collaborations."



Great events: readings, concerts, and more

Desperate Literature has truly blossomed into an international haven for literature and art. It collaborates with local and expat writers, poets, musicians, and artists on a regular basis. They constantly put on cozy concerts, trivia nights, chess events, readings, and talks, as well as fun holiday-themed events like Bloomsday and Christmas sing-alongs. All these intimate events are healthily booze-infused, and usually cost just €3 entry including a drink.

Children's corner

In the back you'll find a very sweet children's corner full of class titles that will make you feel nostalgic, from Dr. Seuss to Roald Dahl. There's also a cute little couch where you can curl up with a good read.



First literary prize

Desperate Literature launched its very own short fiction [prize](#) this year, receiving over 450 entries. They offered a €1000 prize, a stay at the beautiful Civitella Ranieri foundation, and publication in various literary magazines, as well as events at Desperate Literature and Shakespeare and Company.

We'll be launching again in December 2018 and (hopefully) every year to come, with the aim of putting our small bookshop on the international scene for excellent experimental fiction written today.

And first magazine and book!

The shortlist from the fiction prize even led to the publishing of Desperate Literature's first book "[Eleven Stories](#)" in April. And they put out their first magazine last year, [La Errante](#).



While all these additions are undeniably impressive (and there's certainly more in store), what speaks to me most is that the shop continues to feel as warm and cozy as ever, almost as if you were walking into a friend's personal library. Plus the music is great, the signs are quirky, and you're likely to make a friend or get offered a drink if you stick around awhile.

If you're interested in getting to know more about Desperate Literature, definitely stop in and say hello. For more info, here's an insightful article written by Katie Dycus: [Portrait of a Bookstore: Desperate Literature \(Madrid\)](#).

Desperate Literature

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & [Instagram](#)

Address: Calle Campomanes, 13

Metro: Santo Domingo, Opera, and Callao

Restaurante Lúa, authentic Galician cuisine with a Michelin-starred touch

Galician chef Manuel Domínguez took a big risk when he decided to open a restaurant offering an exclusively fixed menu 14 years ago in Madrid. The concept was almost unheard of at the time. But today, that bet has paid off.

His award-winning [Restaurante Lúa](#) continues to offer Galician-inspired dishes with truly innovative touches. The quality and creativity of his cuisine has even earned him a Michelin star – Lúa is the only Galician restaurant outside Galicia to

hold one.



Lúa, which means “the moon” in Galician, is Manuel’s personal project that he’s been dedicated to for well over a decade with a signature culinary style and unique tasting menu. He bases his cuisine off traditional Galician recipes made with seasonal, fresh and local ingredients.

His success led him to move from the original location to a larger space on Calle Eduardo Dato with a dining room, a bar area with high tables and a terrace that opens up in summer.



There's even a private room that can be booked for special occasions.



Manuel's personal passion for design is reflected in all the decor, from the furniture to the art.



The restaurant's main attraction is the Menú Lúa tasting menu (€68) consisting of three *aperitivos*, two starters, two main dishes (meat and fish), a pre-dessert and a dessert. Oenophiles can order this same menu along with a wine pairing, Menú Lúa Chea (€90). If you're not in the mood for a tasting menu, not to worry – you're also welcome to order off the regular menu, which features half- and full-size portions of Galician-inspired dishes with a twist.

What's more, [Lúa](#) has over 150 wine labels on offer and a short list of champagnes from small producers. We shared two bottles of the restaurant's very own red and white: "A Tiro Fijo." Both are made exclusively for Lúa and with local ingredients from the Coto de Gomariz bodega in Orense. The wine's flavor was truly unique, with a hint of Albariño which is my favorite.



The star of the menu is Galician-style octopus prepared in two ways: the classic *pulpo a feira*, the authentic recipe from the owner's hometown of Carballiño; and the oven-baked octopus accompanied by potato purée and garlic sauce. We tried the first and for anyone who's ever been to Galicia, you'll know it's the real deal.

We sampled several other small portions of their most popular menu items, such as the foie micuit over pear empanada and caramelized San Simón cheese which was a burst of so many different flavors in just one bite.



We also had the *patatas bravas* made of shrimp – a deliciously deceiving trompe-l'œil. The list goes on but I'd rather you experience it first-hand for yourselves.



For dessert we grabbed a seat out on the terrace and ordered the cheese cream with violet soup. The cheese itself was outstanding, and the “violet soup” was inspired by traditional Spanish *Violeta* candies. We rounded off our meal with some *licor de café*, straight from Galicia of course.

This was my first Michelin-starred dining experience and now I

do understand what all the fuss is about. I won't give away too many more details about Lúa, but let's just say that if you appreciate the art of gastronomy and have a love for good food, it's well worth a visit.

Restaurante Lúa

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#)
 - **Address:** Pº Eduardo Dato, 5
 - **Phone:** 91 395 28 53
-

Fratelli Figurato – two Neapolitan brothers bring pizza passion and innovation to Madrid

Fratelli Figurato is a newly opened pizzeria in Madrid's Chamberí neighborhood, brought to us by two brothers hailing from Naples who share a strong passion for pizza and innovation.

Before founding [Fratelli Figurato](#), Riccardo and Vittorio had both worked in marketing and lived in different parts of the world. It wasn't until December of last year that they decided to give it all up to pursue their true calling: reinventing the Neapolitan pizza.



The mastermind behind the kitchen is Riccardo, who's been a pizza-making aficionado for years, creating his own methods and putting spins on Italian culinary tradition. You'll always spot him sporting a blue New York Yankees hat.

Vittorio is in charge of marketing and communication, and designed the restaurant's image and personality. He's the crazier one of the two, although he shares the same passion for gastronomy and creativity as his brother.



Together, the Italian duo has made their dream come true with [Fratelli Figurato](#). Lucky for us, we now get to delight in their welcoming, family-run restaurant serving delicious Naples-style pizzas featuring innovative techniques, elaborate processes and special ingredients.



Their pizzas stand out in particular for the light dough – Figurato’s trademark recipe created by Riccardo. It’s fermented for an impressive 36 hours and made with top-quality ingredients. With each pie you order, you get to choose from three dough options: traditional, wheat and five-grain.

After greeting the two brothers and hearing all about the restaurant's story and mission, here's what went down at the table:



We each ordered a glass of Italian wine: a white *Casal di Serra*, and a red *Lacryma Christi*. To whet our appetites we were given slices of Tuscan-style salami. A perfect and simple appetizer.

You can't go wrong with any of the pizzas listed on the menu, but seeing as it was our first time, we asked to try the most standout options – mortadella and pistachio, and squash and pancetta.



The first is made with a cream of ricotta and pesto, and provolone cheese. After leaving the oven, it's topped with thin slices of mortadella from Bologna, bits of toasted pistachios and basil. We had it prepared on traditional dough.



The latter is made with cream of roasted squash, provolone and crispy pancetta. It's topped with walnuts and basil. We ordered it on five-grain dough.

The mix of ingredients and flavors was so unexpected and delicious. Not to mention the dough was outstanding and very light.



To round it all off, we ordered their most in-demand dessert, the Sicilian-style cannoli. Divine.

All the star dishes certainly have a signature Figurato flair. We'll definitely be going back to try everything else on the menu!

Fratelli Figurato:

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#)
- **Instagram:** @fratellifigurato
- **Address:** Calle de Alonso Cano, 37
- **Metro:** Alonso Cano
- **Phone:** 914 85 79 93

La Porcinería, get your pork on

Welcome to Madrid's first pork bistro! Situated on a quiet street on Calle Lagasca, the newly opened **La Porcinería** is a creative tribute to *cerdo* in all its culinary glory.



The decor is light and casual, with pig cartoons and quotes sprinkled all around. You're welcomed into the street-level entrance with a few high tables and an open bar. Downstairs you'll find a cozy dining room where we had dinner on a Tuesday night.



All dishes on the menu contain pork, as you can imagine, with only one exception (that we didn't try). There's a nice range of items to choose from – some Asian inspired, others more traditional, and a few surprises in the mix. Our server, Alex, recommended we start off with a bottle of red and had us sample their signature starters and mains.



First up was the Thai-style pork *bombón*, so satisfying to cut into and find tender strips of pork inside with a mix of flavors and textures.



Then came a real treat for both the eyes and tastebuds – fried artichokes with fine strips of pancetta. First Alex topped it with freshly shaved foie and then proceeded to flambé it at the table.



We also had a *lagarto ibérico* (a special cut of Iberian pork) served on top of a rich, velvety layer of yuca purée with white truffle. If you're into truffle, this is your dish.



We rounded off the savory part of our meal with the Sicilian-style Iberian burger that was topped with provolone cheese and grilled onions, and came with a side of homemade fries.

Feeling completely satisfied and not overly stuffed, we couldn't have asked for a better pork-filled experience! That is, until dessert came.



The chocolate *salami* cake with ice cream was the perfect finish – don't worry, the only nod to pork in this dish was the fun presentation. After devouring every bite, we slowly finished off the delicious bottle of red. I don't remember what type of wine it was, but it came recommended by Alex as a house special that night. So just make sure to ask your server for a suggestion!

So pork fans, La Porcinería should definitely be on your list.

Info

- [Instagram](#), [Website](#), [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** C/ Lagasca 103, Madrid
- **Metro:** Núñez de Balboa
- **Phone:** 910 33 38 74

Trikki, homemade New Orleans cuisine with family recipes

Trikki restaurant was opened in Chamberí about a year ago by owners Yuliet McQuitty (New Orleans) and Rodolfo Rodriguez (Venezuela), and together they've brought the spirit of New Orleans to the neighborhood. As soon as you walk in, you'll feel a refreshingly down-to-earth ambience and lots of jazz-inspired decor, from drum-shaped lamp shades to drawings of musicians and trumpets on the walls.



Yuliet will graciously greet you and walk you through the whole menu; while each dish will be prepared from scratch by

Rodolfo, a.k.a. “the kitchen commander.” Everything at Trikki is made from traditional home recipes and select ingredients to bring the authentic flavors of New Orleans to your table.



The menu features all the city’s classics: **fried green**

tomatoes, gumbo, jambalaya, po' boys and the famous bananas foster dessert. You'll also find a few Venezuelan items sprinkled in there. Since it was our first time trying New Orleans cuisine, Yuliet suggested we order their signature dishes – all packed with flavor and spices.

Here's how it went down:



We started with a **half-portion of fried green tomatoes**, a delicious introduction to what followed.



Next up was the **gumbo, a hearty New Orleans stew** filled with rice, chicken, sausage, langoustine and so many other delicious ingredients. What stood out to me the most was the okra – I don't think I've ever had okra in Madrid.



Then we had the ultimate **jambalaya**. This rice dish is on the spicy side, so Yuliet recommends people try it on their second visit to Trikki, unless you like a little kick to your meal. It turned out to be James' favorite dish of the night.



Yuliet also said a true New Orleans experience wouldn't be complete without trying one of the Po' boys, which are essentially gigantic sandwiches. We ordered the one with soft-shell crab, lettuce, tomato and a special sauce. So good.



Needless to say, we had a full-on feast! So when we got to the homemade dessert section, we ordered what seemed like the lightest option: *quesillo*, a typical Venezuelan dessert that's similar to flan with a hint of lime.

On our next visit we'll save room for the New Orleans's classic: bananas foster, served on a dish that they flambé right in front of you. We did get the chance to watch the pyrotechnics at the table next to us, however, and it looked amazing!

Here's a pic of the bananas foster from Trikki's [instagram](#) so you get the idea.



So when it comes down to it, Trikki's concept is rather simple: home recipes, traditional ingredients and Southern hospitality, which makes for a great combination. Just make sure to go with a good appetite and friends who like to try new dishes and flavors.

Trikki

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Calle Santa Engracia 109
- **Metro:** Alonso Cano

Where to Take Your Mom in Madrid – Round 2

Knowing where to take your mom in Madrid can be tough, especially if she's already visited you five or six times. So here's a follow-up to my [first version](#) of this post with some fresh ideas, some favorites, and some recommendations from fellow Naked Madrid writers – and my mom, too, of course. She also helped me edit this whole piece. Thanks ma!

Not to mention these ideas are great for any out-of-town guests. Here goes:

1. Museo del Romanticismo for an intimate art experience



Madrid has several charming museums worth visiting, and if you're like me, you'll appreciate their small size. My mom and I loved [Museo de Artes Decorativas](#) and [Museo Naval](#); but we enjoyed [Museo del Romanticismo](#) the most. Something about wandering around someone's former mansion makes it unique, and each room tells a different story. Just stay on the grey carpet or the attendant will scold you, like she did my mom when she wanted to take a closer look at the 19th-century furnishings and art! Plus it has a wonderful tea room.

For more ideas, check out [Madrid's obvious and not-so-obvious museums \(and how to get in for free!\)](#)

2. Mad Improv events for fun and laughter



This was such a great discovery. My mom has been to Madrid several times over my ten years of living here, yet we never quite found the right way to spend an evening out that didn't just involve food. [Mad Improv](#) is an English-speaking theater group that holds shows (right now on Thursdays at La Escalera de Jacob) and regular workshops and jams at [VeraContent](#) (Naked Madrid's sister company).

Jams cost 3€ and include a first drink. Anyone is welcome to get up and join in on improv games, or you can just watch if you're on the shyer side – understandably so, as you'll see some pretty impressive improvisors up there. Either way, you're going to laugh a whole lot. I promise.

Here's a [full post on Mad Improv](#) to find out more.

3. Juana la Loca for excellent Spanish food



Juana la Loca is an exceptional family-run restaurant in La Latina, serving Spanish food with lots of fusion and lots of love. Everything you eat here is exquisite, from the *pintxos* at the bar to the main dishes. I had been several times before I finally got the chance to speak to one of the family members, the son, who explained everything on the menu with such passion. Culinary arts clearly run in the family.

4. Bosco de Lobos and Ana la Santa for cozy and chic dining



I wanted to include a few more restaurants on this list so I asked for recommendations from [Cat](#), one of Naked Madrid's most active writers. With no hesitation at all, she said: "[Bosco de Lobos](#) and [Ana la Santa](#) are both mum pleasers!" Bosco de Lobos is situated in a beautiful courtyard of an architecture school in Chueca, and its casual-chic look immediately lures you in. Ana la Santa also has a great location, right in Plaza Santa Ana. Cat especially recommends going here when it's cold outside, as it's the perfect place to warm up.

Check out [Cat](#)'s articles on [Bosco de Lobos](#) and [Ana la Santa](#) – I'd definitely take her word for it.

5. Chuka for Japanese ramen and gyozas



Once you've had your taste of Spanish food, you shouldn't feel bad about going to an [international restaurant](#). Really, it's okay. Madrid's culinary scene is full of fusion cuisine from all over the world, and Madrileños love it. [Chuka](#) is one of our all-time favorites for ramen, gyozas and baos. And we just found out the owners are actually two Americans who have been living in Madrid for over a decade. Go figure!

Here's a full post on [Chuka](#). Another great restaurant nearby is [L'Artisan Furansu Kitchen](#), offering French-Japanese fusion cuisine and a *menú del día* that changes daily.

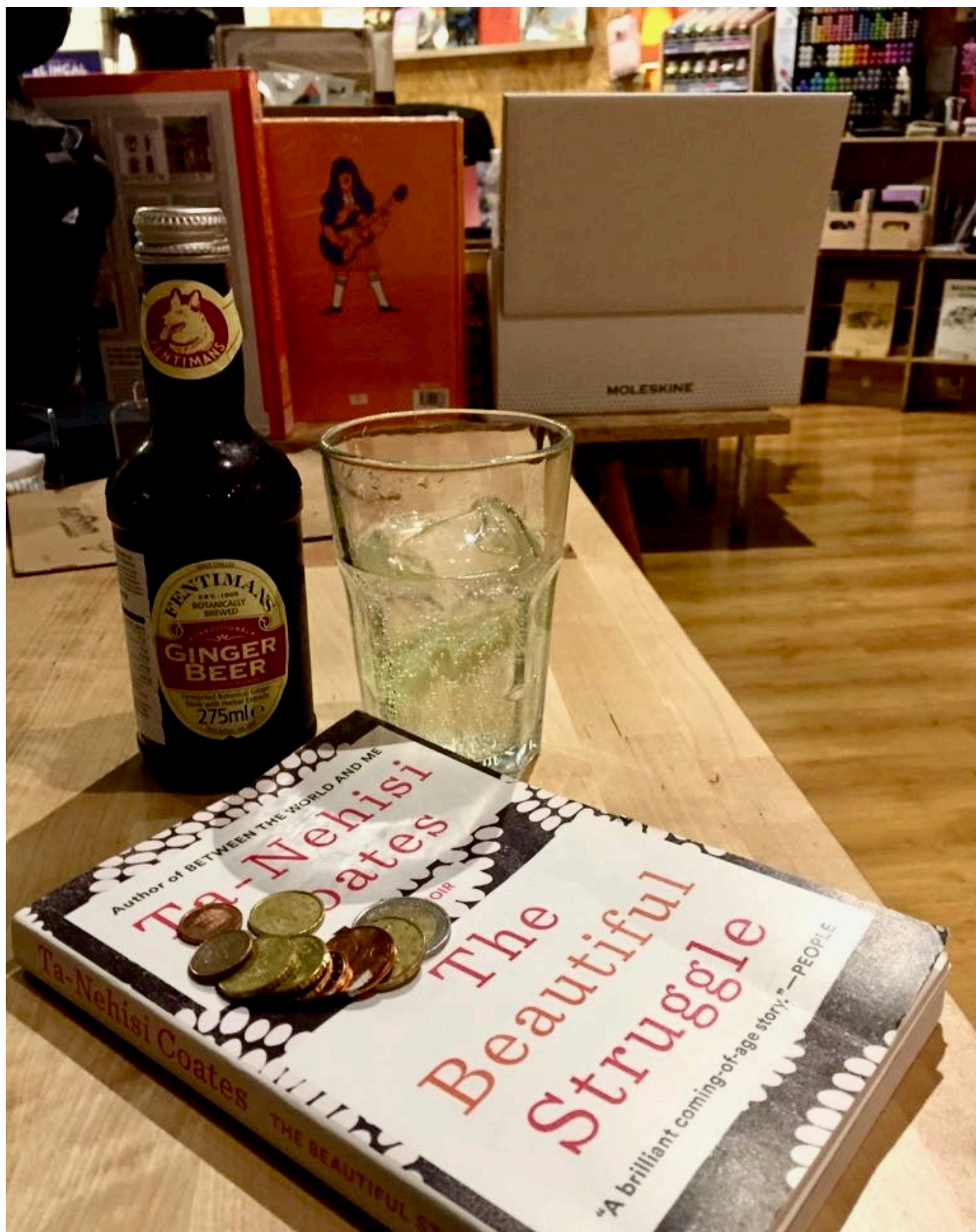
6. Salmon Guru for fun cocktails



Before going into Chuka we had a half hour to kill so we walked down the street and got a drink at [Salmon Guru](#). This funky bar has a great cocktail selection and truly unique decor. If we'd stayed a little longer and sampled another round, my mom thinks we might have solved the mystery of what "Salmon Guru" actually means.

Read our full post on [Salmon Guru here](#).

7. Swinton & Grant for when you're working



Coffee shops are always great places to park your mom while you're working (or napping). If she hasn't brought her own book with her, she'll surely find something to read at [Swinton & Grant](#) – a café that sells art books and also has a

downstairs gallery – while enjoying a *cortado*, a spicy ginger soda, or a beer.

Another one of my mom's favorites, mentioned in the [previous article](#), is [Café La Libre](#), right by the Reina Sofia museum. She couldn't resist going back twice on her most recent visit. And we always make a pit-stop at [Desperate Literature](#) to check out their international book selection and delightful event calendar.

8. Templo de Debod for stunning views



This beautiful ancient Egyptian temple is perched on a hill providing breathtaking views of the city, making it the perfect spot to watch the sunset or have a picnic. [Templo de Debod](#) is also a great place to walk to after a visit to the Royal Palace or the [Cerralbo Museum](#) which are both a hop skip away. You'll find a free-entrance museum inside the temple – one of [Mad Improv](#)'s organizers, Summer, said her parents loved

it.

9. Casa Pueblo for another cocktail



I've been going to this bar since my first year in Madrid. You can bring anyone here – a date, a friend, a colleague. There's something warm and special about [Casa Pueblo](#) that makes me keep coming back. And my mom couldn't agree more. There's also a small stage in the back where they regularly put on live music.

10. The Rastro for a Sunday flea market experience



pic from [Madrid No Frills](#)

When I asked for a recommendation from [Leah](#), she said: "My mum absolutely loves the Rastro, of course. She wants to buy everything but can't fit it in her suitcase, but she always manages to squeeze something in like a spoon!"

Leah has been writing about and capturing the Rastro for years on her awesome blog, [Madrid No Frills](#), and instagram accounts [@rastrolife](#) and [@portaitofmadrid](#). Here's her latest Rastro-inspired post: [Seven eccentric museum-worthy collections found only in the Rastro](#)

11. Shopping day in Malasaña – and a mandatory drink afterwards



Mojitos at Cubanismo, a rooftop bar in Malasaña

When it comes to shopping, I like getting it over with in one shot on Calle Fuencarral (which merges with Gran Vía if you want to hit all the big stores like Zara and H&M). Afterwards, there's beer and tapas waiting for you at some of our favorite spots. I recommend going into one of the happening food markets in the area – [Mercado de San Ildefonso](#) or [Mercado de San Anton](#) – both with great outdoor seating areas.

Another amazing place for a post-shopping drink is El Paracaídas. This multi-story and multi-purpose concept store actually has two rooftops – our favorite is [Cubanismo, a tropical rooftop escape!](#)

12. Food tour for insight into Spanish

bar culture and cuisine



Another Naked Madrid writer, Melissa, recently went on the [Context Tavernas and Tapas Tour](#) in Barrio de las Letras. Melissa is a true foodie, and works as a full-time writer and translator at [VeraContent](#), where she researches Spanish food on a daily basis. She said the culinary tour was truly insightful, and a wonderful way to better understand the history and nuances behind Spain's delicious cuisine as you enjoy every bite.

Read Melissa's full article on the [Context Travel Tours](#) here.

Don't forget to read round one of [Where to Take Your Mom in Madrid](#) for more ideas!

You might also like: [Take a Peek Inside 5 Historical Madrid Bars](#)

Of course Madrid is full of more options that mothers will love, so please feel free to share in the comments!

Get interactive at “Mad Improv” theater workshops and shows!

Madrid’s theater scene is brimming with activity. You’ll find live micro-theater being performed in bathrooms and lingerie stores, as well as acting classes and alternative shows scheduled daily throughout the city.

But there isn’t much available in English, which is why I want to introduce you to **Mad Improv**, an English-speaking improv group that’s been shaking things up in Madrid’s interactive theater scene since 2014.



Mad Improv hosts shows and workshops on a regular basis, all run by its cast members in English. **Free improv workshops – called “gyms” – are held on Sundays from 5pm-7pm.** Gyms are purely donation-based and absolutely everyone is welcome so you never know who might show up. People have even come in on flight layovers!



They also hold **monthly open shows** – called **“jams”** – where anyone can get up on stage and play improv games. Jams cost €3 with a drink (which probably comes in handy).



Locations for gyms and jams vary from [Fundación First Team](#) in Sol to Retiro when the weather allows. And right now they have a new set of [upcoming shows](#) at La Escalera de Jacob!

So check out their [Meetup](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages to stay up to date. Once you attend an event you can also ask one of the organizers to add you to the whatsapp group.

My experience – great way to step out of your comfort zone

I had secretly always wanted to drop in on an acting class, but never got around to it until this summer when two friends, Riju (India) and Laura (Spain), enthusiastically agreed to join me at one of the Sunday gyms. This was in August so the workshop was held in Retiro behind the Palacio de Cristal.



An international group of about 15 people showed up – the different backgrounds and languages definitely added an element of fun and spontaneity to the mix. And our organizer, Summer Banks (in the photo below), did a great job at including everyone and making sure the exercises were easy to follow.



What started out with simple warm-up games quickly gave way to more challenging improv activities that admittedly made me feel ridiculous. But it's a wonderful way to get out of your comfort zone, connect with people and laugh a lot. My friends and I left with the feeling that we wanted to try our hands at improv again (and hopefully do it better next time), which meant **the fun far outweighed the awkwardness!**

Chat with the founder, Ben



Just before going to the workshop, I had met up with Mad Improv's founder Ben Nathan-Serio at the newly opened [Plántate Café](#). After studying drama in NYC and working in the field, Ben moved to Barcelona where he first started working in children's theater. Four years in he launched his own interactive theater production, *The Barcelona Time Detectives*, and was also a founding member of [BIG, The Barcelona Improv Group](#).

When Ben came to Madrid, he quickly became involved in Madrid's English-speaking theater scene and founded Mad Improv in 2014. Ben says, "The reason I started Mad Improv was because there was no improv community here; I wanted to reach out to the community in a bigger way, to get people involved."

What makes improv and interactive theater so special is that it's empowering, says Ben, as it allows for genuine human interaction and connection. Not to mention, getting out of your comfort zone is both invigorating and fun.

LOMBARDI CASE

ASESINATO EN LA MOVIDA



**LIVE
IN
THEATER**

INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES
NYC

24 y 29 de Junio - 19:00h

La industrial - C/ San Vicente Ferrer 33

Tickets: Oficinas de La Industrial c/ San Andrés 8 Local

Tickets Online: www.liveintheater.com/madrid

CAN YOU SOLVE THE CASE?

AN INTERACTIVE MURDER MYSTERY

SPANISH & ENGLISH

In addition to Mad Improv, Ben also recently co-founded [Live in Theater Madrid](#), a NYC-based group whose hit interactive show, *The Lombardi Case*, debuted here in summer. It's a truly unique and entertaining two-hour event where the audience tries to solve a murder mystery – [read our previous article about *The Lombardi Case* on Naked Madrid!](#)

More to come

While Mad Improv and Live in Theater are alive and kicking in Madrid, Ben just relocated to Austin, Texas, where he's taking part in a 9-month research lab called [The Interactive Deep Dive](#). And he can't wait to "come back with some very fresh, invigorating ideas for Live In Theater, Mad Improv and just the city in general."

So stayed tuned, because we'll make sure to fill you in on what's in store.

Mad Improv Info:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Website](#)
- [Meetup](#)

Live In Theater's "The Lombardi Case" comes to Madrid from NYC!

It's not everyday that you get to help solve a murder case, interview a drag queen, or be transported to another era. But

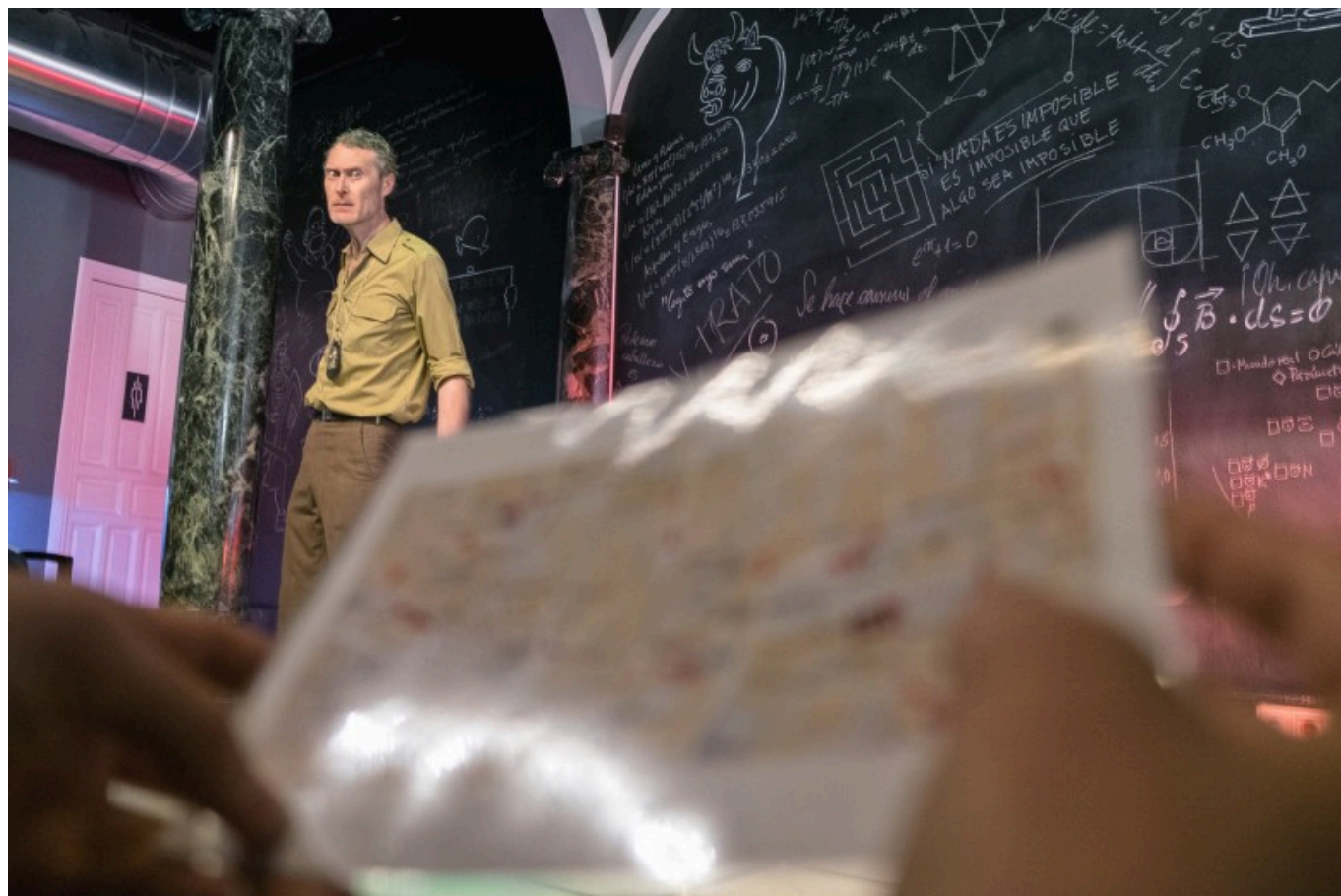
that's what you're in for with the interactive show *The Lombardi Case*, brought to us by the NY-based **Live in Theater** group. I had the chance to go the premiere in May and here's what it was like.



When I stepped into the theater, I was first greeted by a cop with a Brooklyn accent, played by a Scotsman; and then grabbed a seat among the 60-person international audience. We got split into small teams and an officer presented us with the case details in effortless Spanglish.



It's suddenly the early 1980's and we're in the midst of Madrid's sex- and drug-ridden *La Movida* movement. The daughter of the US ambassador has just been murdered. And it's on us to find out who did it.



Readily equipped with clues, a map and a list of suspects – from a doorman to a junky – we headed out onto the streets to conduct our interviews at nearby locations like a jazz bar, public plaza and street corner; and then came back and tried to solve the case with our findings.



The 7-member bilingual cast relied heavily on improv to communicate with us as we interrogated them, and they impressively stayed in character the whole time.



Although none of us ended up solving the tricky case, it was a really fun and unique experience, with lots of laughter and participation between the actors and audience. I loved being able to play an active role in the show, get out there on the street, interact with new team members and in Spanglish, no less. All in all, it's a guaranteed great time and as a benefit you'll get to learn about the history of Madrid.



Since the debut, **Live in Theater** has put on two more productions of the *The Lombardi Case* in the heart of Malasaña at [La Industrial](#). While the format is identical to the NYC show, the storyline has been adapted to Madrid's history. For example, the original takes place in 1975 which works in a time of drugs, disco and gentrification in NYC, while the Madrid show takes place in the early '80s during the time of *La Movida*, the experimental movement that broke out after the fall of the Franco regime. This is especially pertinent as audience members get to actually interview suspects in the neighborhood that was the epicenter of the movement, Malasaña. Another key difference is that here, the show is put on in Spanish and English.

LOMBARDI CASE

ASESINATO EN LA MOVIDA



**LIVE
IN
THEATER**

INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES
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AN INTERACTIVE MURDER MYSTERY

SPANISH & ENGLISH

The *Lombardi Case* has been brought to Madrid by three partners: [Carlo D'Amore](#), the founder (and guru) of the NYC-based theater group, **Live in Theater**; [Leslie Freschet](#), who's been living in Madrid for 25 years; and [Benjamin Nathan-Serio](#), who's been an active member of Barcelona and Madrid's English-speaking theater circuit for nearly a decade. He's also one of the Madrid organizers and co-founders of [Mad Improv](#).

A few weeks ago I had the chance to sit down with Ben and talk about the *Lombardi Case* and what makes interactive theater so special. He said:

The show offers a truly unique experience for the audience because interactive is empowering. It's a real niche for actual human, genuine interaction. There's something magical about this show. It's not just conversation in a bar or speed dating, or meet-ups; it's super empowering because you become a cop. You have a mission. You become a detective. There's a murder, and you need to solve it! And there's a time limit... urgency.

See a show!

Stay tuned for upcoming productions by following their [Facebook page](#) or put in a request by emailing them at liveintheaterproduction@gmail.com.

You can also book them for private events such as company team-building exercises. The show has a very versatile format – you can hire them to go into your apartment as long as it has 2 rooms, with 3 actors playing 6 characters; and it can also be presented to up to 200 people.

And if you feel like getting more involved in Madrid's interactive theater scene, definitely check out [Mad Improv](#) which holds free improv workshops on Sundays and monthly performances.

Plántate Café, a specialty coffee & plant shop in Lavapiés!

Specialty coffee shops are in demand in Madrid, and thankfully so. I'm sorry old-school bars, but after trying high quality espresso, it's really hard to enjoy your *café con leche* anymore.

This feeling was particularly strong for Kevin, a Canadian who's been living in Spain for eight years and is the owner of the newly-opened Plántate Café. "Everybody who's into coffee will be able to tell you a story about their first good cup," says Kevin. "After that moment there's no turning back."



Kevin's first was in London at Brown's of Brockley, and it literally changed his life. While living in Lavapiés for

years, he longed for a good cup of coffee so badly that he'd bike up to Malasaña's [Toma Café](#) every morning. When the daily trek turned unsustainable, he decided to buy their coffee beans and start making cold brew at home. Then he got a V60 to make filter coffee.

Little did Kevin know, he was slowly becoming a coffee connoisseur. "Opening up a coffee shop was just a side project." But as is often the case with side projects, they become your full-time job. And that's just what happened.



Kevin opened Plántate Café in July. Before setting up shop, he and his two friendly baristas – Antonio (Spain) and Fernando (Brazil) – went to train with the top roasters at London's Square Mile so they could bring their skills back to Lavapiés.



The guys at Plántate Café are fully dedicated to spreading the specialty coffee culture done right, and proud of the relationships they have with their suppliers. They get their house espressos from three top roasters: Puchero, from Valladolid; Right Side, from Barcelona; and Square Mile, from the UK (whose decaf is said to be the best in the world).



Their drink menu features the musts: flat white, macchiato, cold brew, filter coffee, an assortment of teas, and more.



And if you're in the mood for a snack, you can order toast with avocado, a cup of yogurt with chia seeds or cake.



You can also buy plants such as cacti and orchids (hence the name, Plántate Café), plus magazines and coffee-making gear from leading brands like Hario (Japan).



Since opening they've received a lot of local love from the neighborhood, thanks to a balance of excellent coffee and treats at fair prices, a friendly staff and a great ambience.



So come on in and check it out!

Info

- **Instagram:** @plantatecafe
- **Address:** Calle Mesón de Paredes, 28
- **Metro:** Tirso de Molina / Lavapiés

Museo Cerralbo, an art

lover's dream house

If you're looking to explore [Madrid's museum scene](#) beyond the famous Prado and Reina Sofia, I recommend starting with [Los Cinco Museos](#), five former mansions that are all perfectly restored and house outstanding art collections: Cerralbo, Lázaro Galdiano, Artes Decorativas, Sorolla and Romanticismo.

These five museums take you on a journey to a different era, allowing you to see and feel what life might have been like when they were occupied. While each one is worth visiting, [Museo Cerralbo](#) is my personal favorite. I've been here twice – first on my own and then on a [guided tour](#) – and both times I was blown away by the museum's special charm.



Tucked away on a side street near Plaza de España and Templo de Debod, this museum is one of the former residences of the

Marquis of Cerralbo, who lived here with his family in the 19th century. Today, everything remains exactly in tact, from the furniture and art pieces to the wall colors and lighting.



As you walk through its many rooms and corridors, let your imagination run wild, picturing what life was like when this

house was actually a home.



The Marquis was a well known archeologist and passionate art lover. He amassed a collection of art, furniture and objects from Spain and around the world that you can see in every nook and cranny. You'll see beautiful paintings, mirrors, chandeliers and clocks dispersed throughout, and so much more.



The house has two floors. The first floor was where the family actually lived their normal lives, while the second floor is

where you'll find the extravagant ballroom and dining room, for example, that were meant to be shown off to guests.



Each particular room had a different purpose and decor, acting as a unique exhibition space. Here are a few examples.

The armor collection

After going up the gorgeous stairway (the house was actually designed to accommodate for a unique wooden banister), guests would step into the hallway displaying the Marquis's armor collection. This is my favorite exhibit.

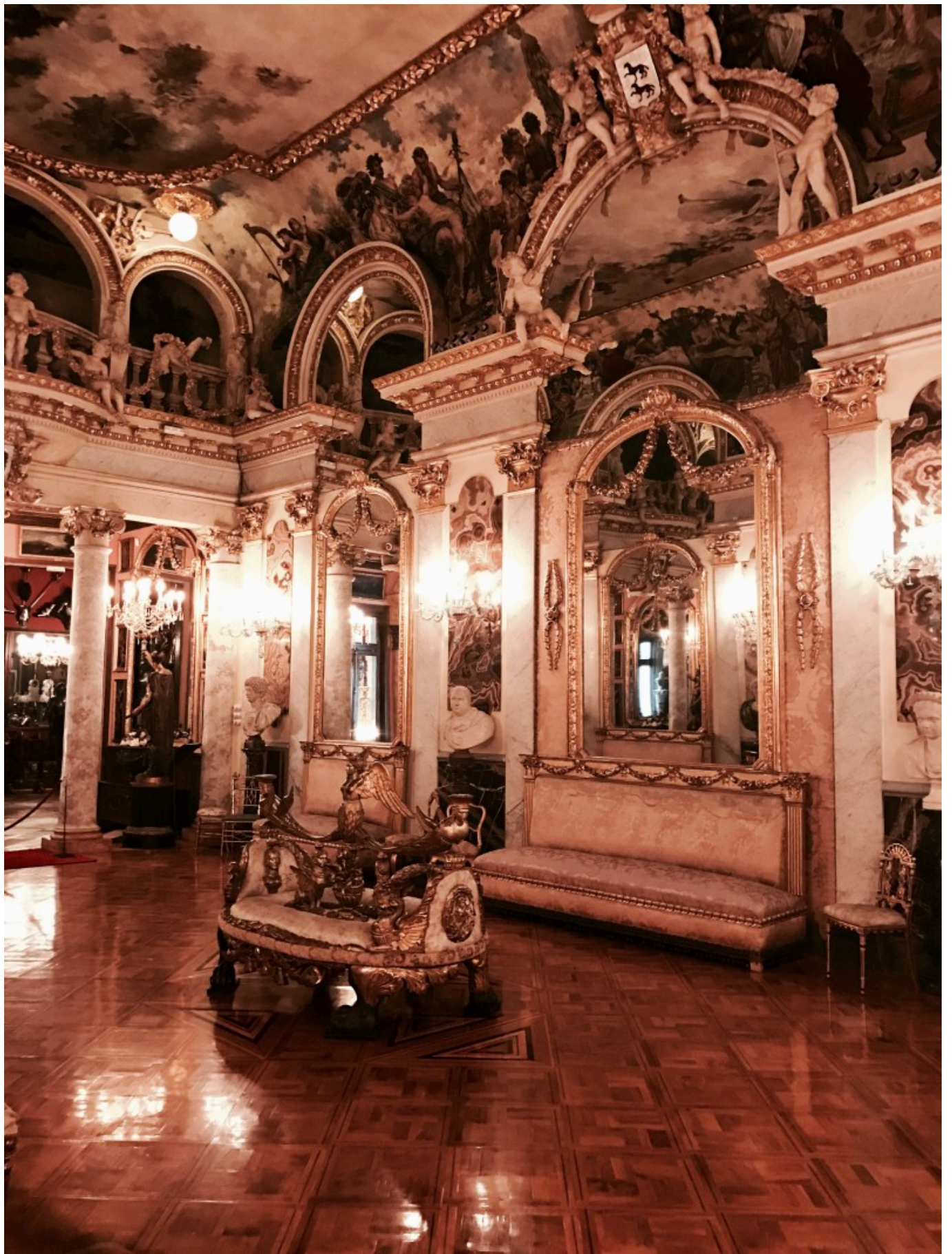






The ballroom

To the right of the armor collection you'll find the stunning ballroom. I would certainly like to dance here one day...



As you can see, the Marquis was particularly fond of playing with lighting and mirrors to add as much depth to each room as

possible. And not an inch of the house was left unadorned.



The library

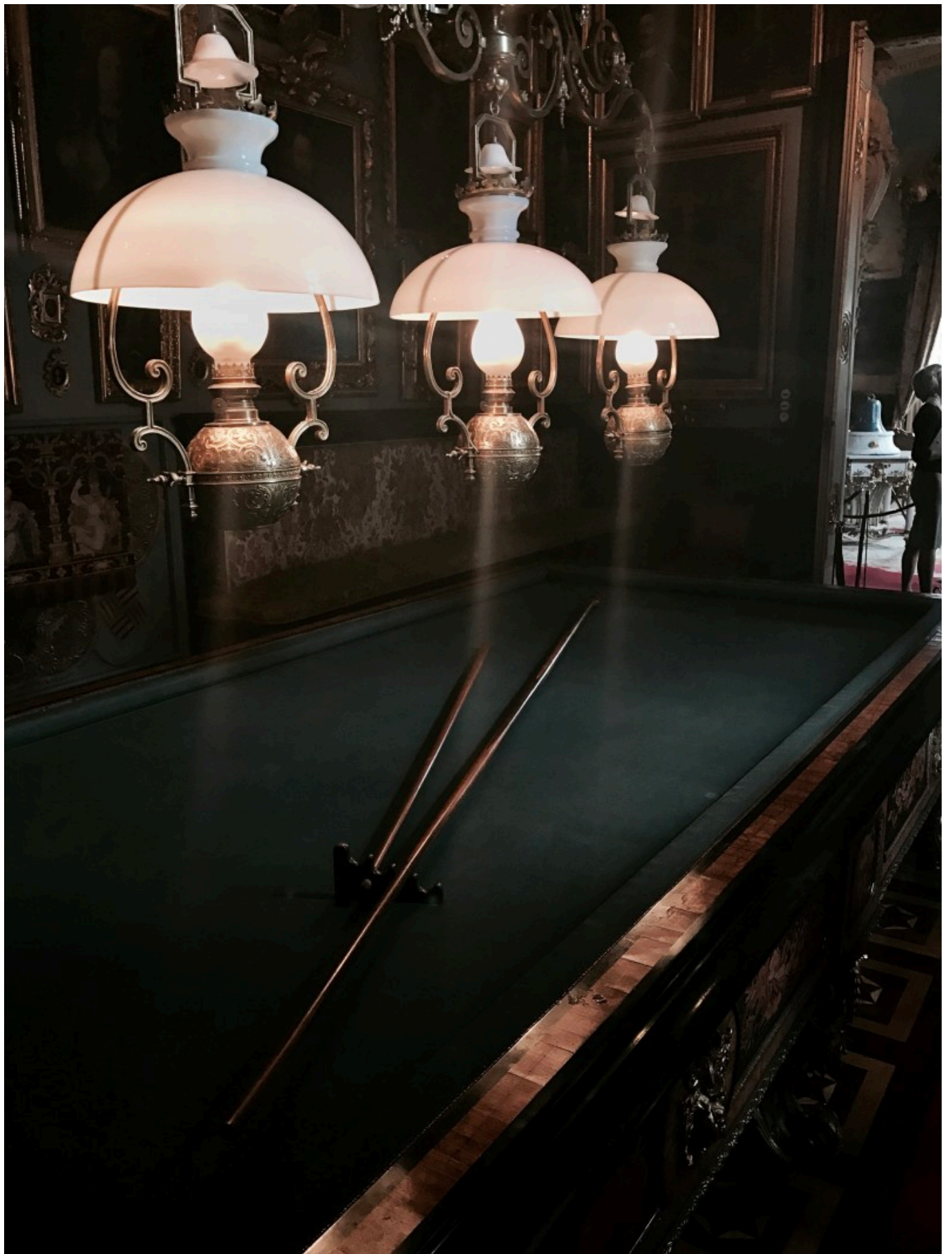
The library features British-style decor and houses an impressive collection of books in several different languages, some dating back as far as the 15th century. Here you'll also find one of the largest coin collections in Spain.





The billiard room

Right off the dining room you'll find the billiard room. In that time, women weren't expected to join in on the game, so there was a seating area designed just for them to watch as the men played.



Snapshots of more rooms and objects

There are so many little rooms and corridors to check out, each one providing a window into another era and giving your eyes plenty to marvel at. I don't want to give away too much, so here are just a few more images to give you a glimpse of the Cerralbo Museum's collection. But please don't pass up the chance to see it in person!









Photography by Jose Luis Magaña from @asecond.art

Info

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- I highly recommend [booking a guided tour](#) in English, Spanish or French
- **Address:** Calle Ventura Rodríguez, 17
- **Hours:** Tues–Sat 9:30am-3pm; Thursday also from 5-8pm; Sundays and holidays from 10am-3pm
- **Metro:** Plaza de España
- **Los Cinco Museos** pass: if you want to visit all five of these former mansions turned museums, you can purchase a €12 pass called [Los Cinco Museos](#) at any of their ticket offices. The pass gives you unlimited access to all five museums for 10 days, and after that you can enter on Saturdays with a plus one for the rest of the year.

You may also like:

- [Madrid's obvious and not-so-obvious museums \(and how to get in for free!\)](#)