The Hovse 2015: Christmas Calling, and better than ever

It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas, everywhere you go! The wind in the air and the need for big coats further emphasize the fact that the holidays are indeed upon us. This means that the days are being counted down to vacations or trips to various destinations with our families.



Last year I discovered **The Hovse**, the pop-up Christmas market from Better Pop-Ups located in a vacant mansion mere minutes from my apartment in Chamberí.

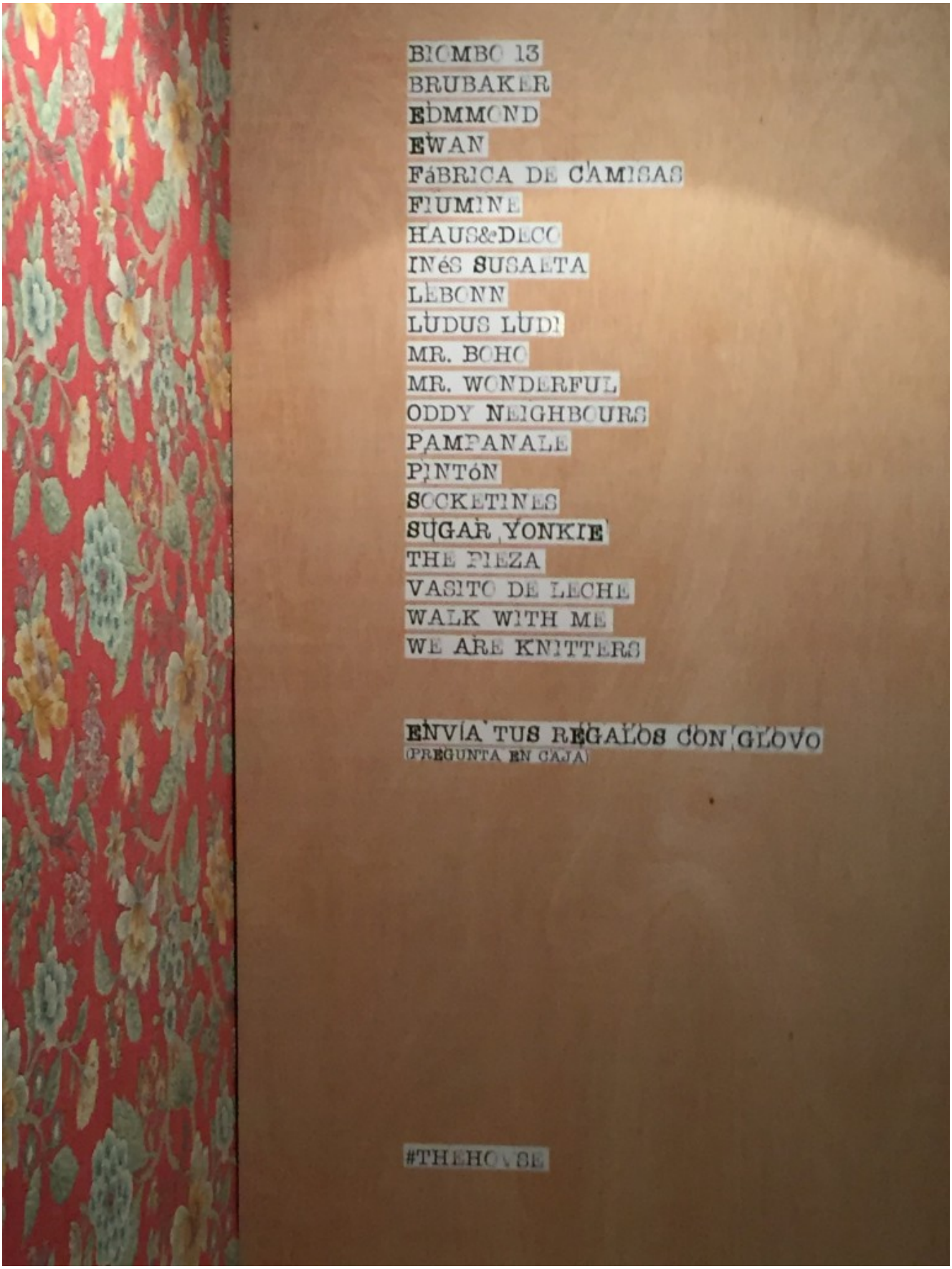


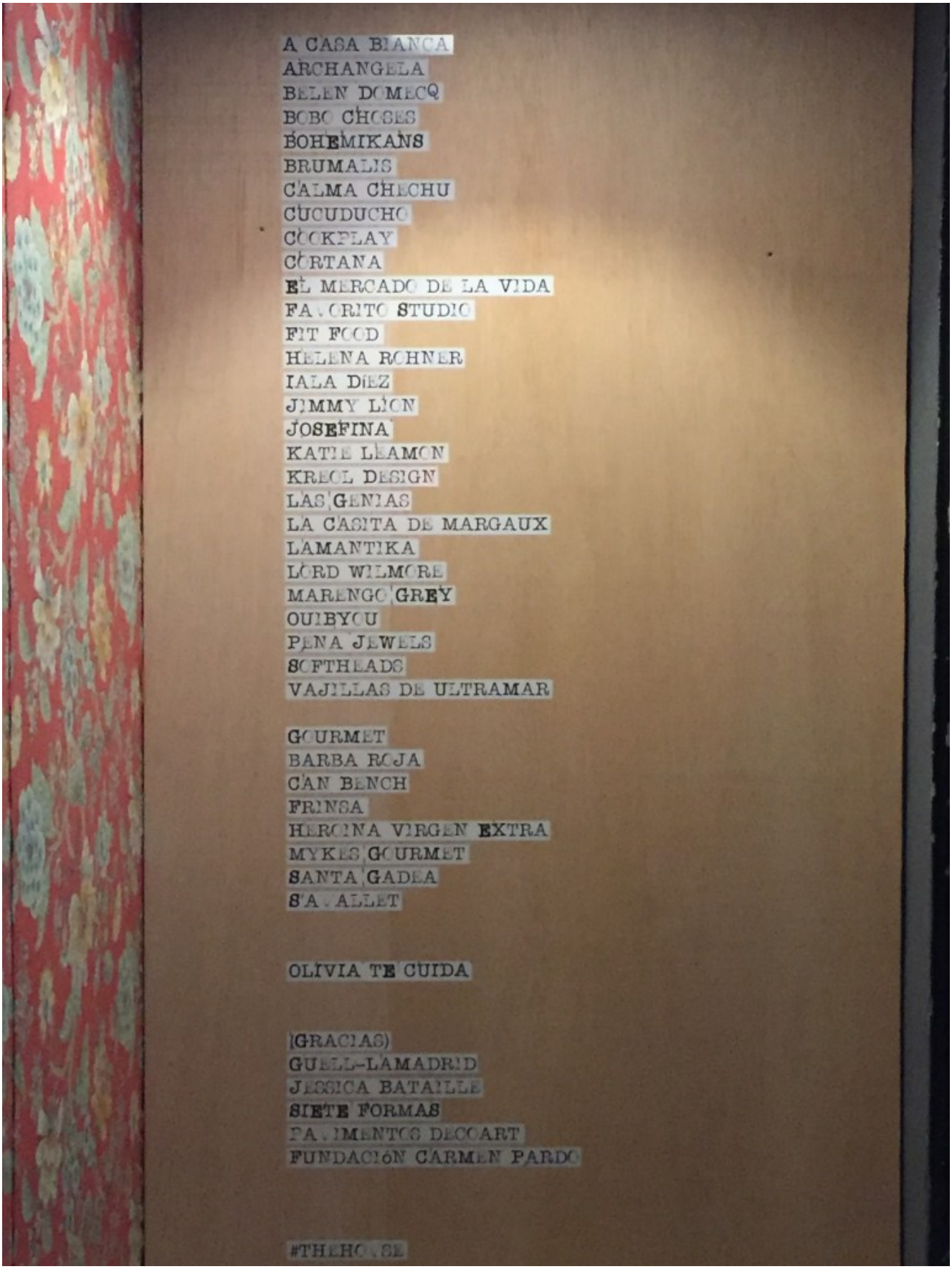
After making weekly pilgrimages to the house throughout most of the holiday season, I managed to touch down in New York with amazing original Chrismukkah presents for the family, my ride-or-dies, and for myself as well (spread out for Hanukkah, Christmas, and one to open for Reyes just so I don't feel left out while jet-lagged on January 6th). I went on my first scouting mission of many to **The Hovse** of the year, and here's my report back:



In what looks just like any typical Chamberí mansion, you walk into this three-story house and are transported into a spacious holiday area with lots of different vendors, greeted by holiday lights and papers reminiscent of snow. Many of last year's vendors are back for another round (including **Helena Rohner**, **Ouibyou**, **Mr. Boho**, and our beloved **Mr. Wonderful**), but there are lots of newbies as well.

Here are the lists of the first-floor and second-floor vendors:


BIOMBO 13
BRUBAKER
EDMMOND
EWAN
FáBRICA DE CAMISAS
FIUMINE
HAUS&DECO
INéS SUSAETA
LEBONN
LUDUS LUDI
MR. BOHO
MR. WONDERFUL
ODDY NEIGHBOURS
PAMPANALE
PINTóN
SOCKETINES
SUGAR YONKIE
THE PIEZA
VASITO DE LECHE
WALK WITH ME
WE ARE KNITTERS
ENVÍA TUS REGALOS CON GLOVO
(PREGUNTA EN CAJA)
#THEHOUSE


A CASA BIANCA
ARCHANGELA
BELEN DOMECQ
BOBO CHOSES
BOHEMIKANS
BRUMALIS
CALMA CHECHU
CUCUDUCHO
COCKPLAY
CORTANA
EL MERCADO DE LA VIDA
FA.CRITO STUDIO
FIT FOOD
HELENA ROHNER
IALA DIEZ
JIMMY LION
JOSEFINA
KATIE LEAMON
KREOL DESIGN
LAS GENIAS
LA CASITA DE MARGAUX
LAMANTIKA
LORD WILMORE
MARENGO GREY
OUIBYOU
PENA JEWELS
SOFTHEADS
VAJILLAS DE ULTRAMAR
GOURMET
BARBA ROJA
CAN BENCH
FRINSA
HEROINA VIRGEN EXTRA
MYKES GOURMET
SANTA GADEA
S'A. ALLET
OLIVIA TE CUIDA
(GRACIAS)
GUELL-LAMADRID
JESSICA BATAILLE
SIETE FORMAS
PA.IMENTOS DECOART
FUNDACIóN CARMEN PARDO
#THEHO.SE

But there’s more…

You’ll also find **Mercado de Motores**‘ mainstays **La Mantika** in case you need to get a blanket for your apartment to deal with the cold, **Katie Leamon** stationery, and lots of leather goods in case you want a perfect **Made in Spain leather bag, pouch, or wallet.** And below is a photo of handmade jewellery by **Helena Rohner**, a Madrid-based jeweller whose store in La Latina I wrote about in a **previous post**.



There are even some really cool aprons (I think I may have just given a spoiler alert about somebody's present, but sorry not sorry)


MARENGO GREY

This year, the biggest innovations come in two forms:

Innovation #1: The Food

As always, **The Hovse** has dining spaces where hip eateries set up shop and you get the benefit of trying eats from these places without having to fight with all of Madrid to grab a table. Two of this year's players are in **Salesas**, aka the area behind Calle de Génova and the Plaza de Santa Bárbara in between Alonso Martínez and Chueca that's becoming Madrid's Soho: **Olivia Te Cuida**, known for it's healthy offerings (as the restaurant's name implies), and **MEAT**, acclaimed and written about all over town for its burgers (**MEAT's space is up on the terrace**).



If juicing or health food is more your style, you'll also find a temporary outpost of **Fit Food** – where you can try a big selection of the juices on offer (and perhaps tempt you to try a Detox treatment in January so you can fit into clothes you

buy during *rebajas*).

Innovation #2: Sybilla Atelier

This year's *Premio Nacional de Moda* winner, **Sybilla**, has taken over the entire top floor of The Hovse with a temporary atelier. You're transported deep inside her world, with samples of all of her different cuts with colors. The clothes look absolutely dreamy, as well as the collaboration with a French accessories label.



And the best part?

The team at the Atelier will take your measurements and you can get something custom-made. Talk about something TRULY made just for you!
So run over to **The Hovse** and get the coolest **Madrid holiday gifts** for everyone on your list –from family, friends, ride-or-dies, and anyone else who you may find special.

Info

- **Web**: The Hovse by Better
- **Address**: Calle General Arrando 40
- **Metro**: Alonso Martínez, Rubén Darío, Iglesia
- **Hours**: open every day from 11 AM to 9 PM until December 24th (Christmas Eve)

For more on holiday shopping in Madrid, check out:

- **Best Gifts from Madrid**
- **Casa Mira, Best Turrón in Madrid**
- **El Riojano, Madrid's best pastry shop**

Running Events in Madrid: February

Put your running shoes on this February! From cross country routes, to half marathons and duathlons…whatever floats your

boat!

As always, Madrid has come up trumps this month with a range of different runs to choose from. I have listed all the runs I could find, some in central Madrid, while others are further afield in **Torrejón de Ardos**, **San Sebastian de Los Reyes** and **Parla**, to name a few.

I'm getting nervous already for my second half marathon (**10a Media Maratón de La Latina**), as I've already signed up for it, no going back now…

So here is what February has in store for you:

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1. Corre por una causa

Distance: *10 kilometres*
When: *Sunday, 1st February, 9:30 am*
Where: *Lago at Casa de Campo*
Website

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2. II Maratón Via Verde del Tajuna

Distance: *42 kilometres (21 k & 30 k also possible)*
When: *Sunday, 1st February, 8:50 am*
Where: *Madrid, Metro: Arganda del Rey*
Website

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3. I Carrera Popular villa de Brunete

Distance: *42 kilometres (21 k & 30 k also possible)*
When: *Sunday, 1st February, 11:00 am*
Where: *Madrid, Metro: Arganda del Rey*
Website

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4. XV Dos Leguas Fuente de La Chopera

Distance: *10 kilometres*
When: *Sunday, 1st February, 10:45 am*
Where: *Leganes, Madrid, Parque de la Chopera*
Website

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5. I Campeonato Duatlon Circuito del Jarama Gran Premio Fangio

Distance: *10 kilometres*
When: *Sunday, 1st February, 11:00 am*
Where: *San Sebastian de los Reyes, Madrid*
Website

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6. XIII Cross del Rector de La Universidad Camilo Jose Cela

Distance: *4 & 8 kilometres (cross country)*
When: *Saturday, 7th February, 12:00 am*
Where: *Villafranca del Castillo, Madrid*
Website

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7. IV Carrera Solidaria Manos Unidas

Distance: *5 kilometres*
When: *Saturday, 7th February, 12:00 am*
Where: *Torrejón de Ardoz, Parque del Ocio, Madrid*
Website

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8. II We Run 10k Ciudad de Parla

Distance: *10 kilometres*
When: *Sunday, 8th February, 10:00 am*
Where: *Parla, Los Prados*
Website

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9. Medio Maraton Distrito de Fuencarral

Distance: *21 kilometres*
When: *Sunday, 8th February, 9:00 am*
Where: *Madrid*
Website

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10. III Maratón de Cobena

Distance: *42 kilometres*
When: *Saturday, 14th February, 12:30 am*
Where: *Cobena, Madrid*

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11. Cross Universidad de Alcalá de Henares

Distance: *4 & 8 kilometres (cross country)*
When: *Saturday, 14th February, 12:00 am*
Where: *Alcalá de Henares, Madrid*

12. Patones Xtrem 2015

Distance: *14 kilometres (mountain running)*
When: *Sunday, 15th February, 10:00 am*
Where: *Frontón de Patones de Abajo*
Website

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13. 1a Carrera Popular Cerro Tablado

Distance: *10 kilometres (cross country)*
When: *Sunday, 15th February, 10:00 am*
Where: *Granja Cerro Tablado*
Website

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14. Cross de Valdebebas

Distance: *10 kilometres (cross country)*
When: *Sunday, 15th February, 10:00 am*
Where: *Madrid*
Website

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15. V Raid Villa de Madrid

Distance: *20 kilometres*
When: *Saturday, 21st February, 08:30 am*
Where: *Jardines de Sabatina, Madrid*
Website

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16. XI Combi-Dos Torrejón

Distance: *25 kilometres*
When: *Sunday, 22nd February, 10:30 am*
Where: *Torrejón de Ardoz, Madrid*
Website

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17. 10a Media Maratón de La Latina

Distance: *21 kilometres*
When: *Sunday, 22nd February, 9:30 am*
Where: *Madrid, C/ Guareña, Metro: Aluche*
Website

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18. II Carrera Solidaria Medula para Mateo

Distance: *5 & 10 kilometres*
When: *Saturday, 28th February, 10:00 am*
Where: *Parque Juan Carlos I, Madrid*
Website

If you are interested in staying up to date on running events in Madrid, or reading my "running diary" please subscribe to GoGuiri (www.goguiri.com) my personal running blog.



Best Cafe-bookshops in Madrid, Round 2!

Welcome to round two of the **best cafe-bookshops in Madrid**! As you may have noticed in **round one**, Madrid's central

neighborhoods boast quite a lot of quaint coffee shops and bars that encourage drinking and reading under one roof.

There’s something about drinking coffee or wine amidst a sea of books that makes me feel right at home. Whether you’re looking for the perfect place to enjoy a quiet conversation or a good read, here are five more wonderful cafe-bookshops in Madrid that you’re bound to fall in love with.

1. La Central de Callao



La Central (featured in the cover photo) is a trendy bookshop near Callao and hands down the most modern of all on this

list. It boasts three floors, a happening café with a full menu and a selection of much more than books on offer. At La Central, you can also find funky mugs, quirky bags, useful calendars, board games, wrapping paper, you name it. It's a great place to get **gifts in Madrid**.

- **Facebook**
- **Address:** C/ Postigo de San Martín, 8
- **Metro:** Callao

2. J&J Books and Coffee





A long-time staple among Madrid's expat community, this corner bar has a downstairs bookstore selling a large selection of primarily used English-language books, including ESL resources. Up at the bar, you can get craft beer, wine, coffee, bagels and other things to munch on. Also check out J&J's free events, including language exchanges and pub quizzes (trivia nights). Lots of fun!

- **Facebook**
- **Address:** c/ Espíritu Santo, 47
- **Metro:** Noviciado

3. italiana_madrid





This Italian café and bookshop is located on one of Madrid's most vibrant streets – Corredera Baja de San Pablo – which is lined with great bars, cafes and restaurants, such as **Aió Pizzería**, **Elemental Bistro** and **Gymage** with its rooftop terrace. At **italiana_madrid**, you can get a strong espresso or Aperol Spritz, plus browse through a wide selection of Italian reads ranging from cookbooks to children's books. It's also across the street from one of the city's favorite theaters, Teatro Lara.

- **Facebook**
- **Address:** Corredera Baja de San Pablo, 10
- **Metro:** Gran Vía

4. La Ciudad Invisible



A travel bookshop selling food and drinks, this two-level cafe boasts huge windows, high ceilings, and plenty of large tables, couches and comfortable armchairs to choose from, making it a great place for getting work done and meeting friends. Plus it sells a killer **Rebujito for 2€** (a really refreshing yet deceptive drink from the South containing sherry, white wine and soda water). It's also across the street from one of my favorite restaurants in Madrid, **Bar Lambuzo**.

- ***Facebook***

- ***Address:*** *c/ Costanilla de los Ángeles, 7*
- ***Metro:*** *Opera & Santo Domingo*

5. María Pandora



María Pandora is one of my favorite spots in the city. Perched atop a hill overlooking Parque las Vistillas, behind the Royal Palace, here you'll find the perfect place to watch the sunset while enjoying a glass of champagne (the house specialty) or your drink of choice. Although María Pandora is more of a bar than a coffeeshop, it still deserves a spot on this list of literary cafés. It also holds events such as poetry nights, microtheater, and book readings. **Check out our full article on María Pandora here**.

- **Website & Facebook**
- **Phone:** +34 910 42 82 13

- **Address:** Plaza de Gabriel Miró, 1
- **Metro:** La Latina or Ópera

Make sure to read: "Best Cafe-Bookshops in Madrid, Round 1"

Also check out our favorite bookshop in the city, Desperate Literature

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Get fit and festive this month!

So here it is, Merry Christmas… and this month's installation of the best running events in Madrid! As usual Madrid has come up trumps in terms of scheduling a great run almost every weekend.

Why not truly get in the festive spirit this month and sign up for the **Papá Noel race**, you will receive your very own Santa Claus costume (obvious bonus) and you have the opportunity to help Madrid break the record for the largest number of people dressed as Santa running at the same time. How can you resist? Alternatively, get yourself pumped and end the year with a bang at the **San Silvestre race** on New Year's Eve!



The support at these events is always so encouraging. This band cheered us on at the **4a Carrera Popular, Corre por el Niño.**

So here is what December in Madrid has in store for you:

1. VIII Carrera Solidaria:

Distance: 5 & 10 kilometres

When: Sunday, 7th December, 9:00 am

Where: Paseo de Castellana

Website

2. 4º Trofeo Club Iberia Virgen de Loreto:

Distance: 10 kilometres

When: Monday, 8th December, 11:30 am

Where: Parque Juan Carlos I

3. III Carrera Popular de Papá Noel El Corte Inglés 2014:

Distance: 5.5 kilometres

When: Saturday, 13th December, 10:30 am

Where: Paseo de la Castellana Avenue Concha Espina corner, metro: Santiago Bernabeo Stadium

Info: Sign up online for €12.60 to receive your **Santa Claus costume**! You have until **Tuesday 9th** to sign up. Collect your costume from participating El Corte Ingles department stores.

Website

4. Carrera de la Solidaridad

Distance: 5 & 10 kilometres

When: Saturday, 13th December, 10:00 am (10 k) 10:25 am (5 k)

Where: Casa de Campo

Website

5. XXXIV Trofeo Akiles:

Distance: 5 & 10 kilometres

When: Sunday, 14th December, 9:30 am (5 k) 10:00 am (10 k)

Where: Campo de Futbol, metro: Lago Casa de Campo

Website

6. New Year's Eve – San Silvestre Vallecana 2014:

Distance: 10 kilometres

When: Wednesday, 31st December, 17:30 – 18:00 depending on which category you fall into.

Where: metro: Santiago Bernabeu

Website

Just a little update from my end – Last month I completed my first half marathon! All 21 kilometres in 2 hours and 8 minutes. Although by the end of it, to say I was running slower than snail's pace is an understatement.



Photography by **Lauren Haynes**, my personal cheerleader, at the half marathon.

If you are really into running and you want to stay up-to-date with the latest running events in Madrid and beyond, please check out my blog: www.goguiri.com where you can also read my running diary.

Happy running everyone!

The Table By: A new gastronomic concept to bring restaurants from across Spain (including chefs and utensils) to Madrid!

The Table: a new gastronomic concept

Over the next six months, six leading restaurants from across Spain will come to Madrid for one month at a time. Along with them, they'll be bringing their very own dishes, cuisine, local products and chefs to offer a truly unique gastronomic experience in the heart of the Spanish capital. **The Table** calls itself a pop-up restaurant, although it's much more; it is a new gastronomic adventure that is taking the idea of "pop-up" to a whole new level.


THE TABLE
BY
ABASTOS 2.0

Image from: The Table By

The Team: Better

Better is the young and creative team behind **The Table**. An unconventional agency that organizes pop up markets and events, Better's projects have one thing in common: they are unique, creative and innovative. On this occasion, Better is creating **The Table** in collaboration with Hotel Urso and Alejandra Anson, Director of Elite Gourmet. Together they have brought a new concept to Madrid.

The Place: Hotel Urso



Image from: URSO Hotel & Spa Madrid

Located in the center of Madrid, **Hotel Urso** opened its doors in August and its building dates from 1915. Urso was a fine choice to host such an event, as it is one of the most

beautiful hotels I have ever seen.

The Idea: Bring a whole restaurant to Madrid

The core idea behind **The Table** is essentially common – hotels invite star chefs to their kitchens all the time. However, Better has gone even further, as they thought: **Why only bring a chef when you can bring the whole restaurant?**

The Table invites restaurants to come to Madrid for a month to serve their dishes while using their own utensils and products, as well as promote their region's cuisine. What's more, the team at Better visits the original restaurant prior to the event to get inspiration from its surroundings and decorate the space at Hotel Urso accordingly. So it's as if you were transported to a restaurant in Galicia, Bilbao, Barcelona, Cantabria ….

What's on now: Abastos 2.0 from Galicia

For this first event, **The Table** is recreating Galicia. Until November 23rd, you can enjoy authentic dishes by two young Galician chefs, Marcos Cerqueiro and Iago Pazos, from **Abastos 2.0**, a restaurant that has three locations: Taberna, Galphón and O Loxe.



The decor is also original, elegant and minimalist.



For this first occasion, the team bought bottles, buckets, plates, etc., and pasted them to the wall to reflect different cultural traits of the region.

Abastos is located in the wonderful city of **Santiago de Compostela**. Their kitchen is 100% Galician, and so is the wine. You'll notice that the products they use are not only fresh but also completely authentic. Here in Madrid, at Hotel Urso, you'll find yourself eating the same fish from the same fishmonger that the restaurant uses back home in Galicia, as they made sure to get it delivered to Madrid for The Table.



This is a “recogedor de migas de pan” (a crumb duster), the original one that the restaurant uses in their galician restaurant.

Galicia’s cuisine is known for its “materia prima” (raw material) which is why the tasting menu focuses on just a few star ingredients from the region, such as octopus (pulpo), pan gallego (Galician bread), and marisco (seafood). The restaurant has prepared two typically Galician tasting menus for the event. The first menu consists of **9 dishes (45€)** and the second, **12 dishes (60€)**. Wine is not included.

So, friends, if you want to enjoy a bit of different Spanish cuisine, do not miss out on **The Table**.

We will let you know about future restaurants, but we’ll give you a hint now: the next event is scheduled for December and will be Basque-inspired…

Details:

Make a reservation at The Table

URSO Hotel & Spa

Location: Mejía Lequerica, 8

Metro: Chueca or Tribunal

Exercise opportunities in Madrid

This Saturday, I went to my first zumba class in Madrid. I was excited about my first taste of zumba in Madrid, but going the morning after Halloween was a bit of a blunder. For those who haven't heard of it before, zumba is basically a mix of latino style dancing, which is especially great for those who lack much coordination and/or rhythm like me because the moves are repeated and straight-forward (and you can get away with the moves which you should never really show in public).

So with my back-combed hair, splodges of face paint, fake blood and "bruises" from my "Freaky Doll" costume from the night still partially visible, I put on my sunglasses and dragged my sorry hungover self to my first zumba class.



This is what I looked like *after* the zumba class… ;)

When we arrived at the mercado on Calle de Santa Isabelle by San Antón metro we discovered that the building was covered in scaffolding, and looked fairly desolate. We were on the verge of giving up when we eventually followed some people into the building (so those who wish to try out the first zumba class on the list, persevere my friends, you will find the door eventually!)

To my relief it appeared that the entire class was suffering from the "Halloween Hangover", even the instructor, which really helped the group to bond as we discussed where we had gone the night before. The class started promptly with some warm-up routines, followed by routines of varying intensities. A special mention to the "sunshine dance" which really makes you smile (until you catch a glimpse of yourself in the

mirror!) There was a great mix of music from the likes of Enrique Iglesius, prompting salsa style movement and more hip hop and Bollywood music influences. You literally can't wipe the smile off your face at times as you see yourself with arms and legs flailing all over the place, (well in my case at least!) The incredibly smiley instructor had so much energy and lead the class well, with lots of encouragement and occasional "whooping"! By the end of the class, everyone was sweaty but smiley and we paid our 5 euros (which is great value I think!) and left, promising that we would come again next week. I had almost forgotten about my Halloween hangover, until that is I gorged myself on some delicious Mexican food, after which point I decided it was about time I went home and had a nap.

After my zumba experience, which my friend Mita stumbled across on Lingo Bongo, I decided to investigate further and discovered a wealth of exercise opportunities, especially on lingobongo and Meet ups Madrid. Cheap zumba classes like this are among Madrid's best kept secrets, especially for those who don't wish to fork out their well-earned wages on gym fees. To save you some time, I've compiled a list of some of these weekly classes, activities and clubs to join, (but bear in mind there are a wealth of options available). It is a great way to meet people and even practice some Spanish, for those who are getting tired of doing intercambios over a beer and fancy trying something new.

If you are into running and you want to stay up-to-date with the latest running events in Madrid and beyond, please check out my blog: www.goguiri.com where you can also read my running diary.

Exercise opportunities: Zumba &

Yoga

Zumba classes

What: Cheap zumba classes in the centre of Madrid with a very smiley English instructor.

When: Every week on Saturday 1pm and Wednesday 9pm,

Where: metro Anton Martín. Calle de Santa Isabelle (the big market building) don't be deceived it is open, keep trying all the doors. Upstairs Sala 4 of Amor de Dios Flamenco School

Price: €5

Bootcamp España

What: A group which was formed in 2009, which combine a variety of outdoor exercises inspired by US marine an effective way to get into shape.

When: Madrid Rio (Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 8pm – 9pm) and Retiro (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday various times & Saturday 10:30 am –12 pm)

Where: Madrid Rio and Retiro Park

Price: First session for free (sign up online), then €52 for a month.

Check it out: Boot Camp España

Weekend yoga retreats

What: Regular weekend retreats organised by Yogamente including healthy food (all vegetarian and homemade), yoga sessions all in English. No need for previous yoga experience.

When: Weekend retreats, check Facebook for regular updates.

Where: In the beautiful countryside around Madrid.

Price: Depends on retreat, but average 190 euros (includes accommodation, homemade food and all activities)

Check it out: email info@yogamente.com for availability. Follow on Facebook for regular updates of new retreats: Yogamente Facebook

Hatha Yoga and Zumba classes

What: Two instructors from Colorado who have started up zumba and yoga classes. They offer affordable classes for all levels (seasoned and beginners).

When: Usually Saturday afternoons – check out Facebook for regular updates. Next zumba class: Date: Saturday, November 8th, 2.30 pm. Next yoga class: Novemberr 8th, 3.30 pm.

Where: El Horno C/ Esgrima, 11. It's in studio 9 which is up the stairs when you first walk in, then enter the main doors and make a right and another right, go down towards the end of the hall and you are there!

Price: only 5€ (because everyone should be able to afford fitness, and it's for an hour and a half!)

Check it out: Z & Y Fitness Madrid

Hiking

Intercambio hiking group

What: Group called Hiking Madrid that organises weekly hiking events for mountain lovers who wish to meet new people of all nationalities who have a mutual interest in hiking.

When: weekly events

Where: mountains in Madrid. Each event will give you information about where to meet and catch the bus from.

Price: Depends on the expedition, it is often simply the cost of transport.

Check it out: Website Hiking Madrid or email hikingmadrid@hikingmadrid.com and you can sign up for regular newsletters. Follow on Facebook for regular updates and upcoming events: Facebook Hiking Madrid



nised by Hiking Madrid. Photo taken from their Facebook page.

Spanish hiking group

What: Regular hikes organised by "*senderismo entre semana*" on meet up website. This group has great reviews and it is a good opportunity to meet more Spaniards.

When: Weekly hikes.

Where: Mountains around Madrid.

Price: Transport to mountains, dependent on hike.

Check it out: Senderismo entre semana

Join a sports team: Basketball and Football

Babelsket Madrid (beginner's basketball)

What: Free basketball for beginners. *Babelsket* Madrid is a motley bunch of not very skilled basketball players who heartily welcome all those who want to join their nice-and-friendly games in a fun, relaxed atmosphere.

When: On Sundays at 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Where: The court is in Calle Puerto Rico 54 (metro Colombia)

Price: It's free!

Check it out: Add your name to the list at: Babelsket

More competitive basketball (and practice your Spanish too!)

What: Competitive basketball team in Madrid for those who have played before and would consider themselves good players. Join a friendly Spanish team that play in the Majadahonda league.

When: Training once a week on a Wednesday.

Where: Majadahonda (you may need to catch the cercanias).

Price: Not specified.

Check it out: email: ivanalvarez74@hotmail.com and double check price and location.

Competitive Football teams

1. What: *Fútbol Club Británico* 1st team is looking to welcome new players to the club for this new season. You can train with a UEFA licensed coach and play against other teams. Home and away games so lots of opportunities to travel and see more of Spain too.

When: Get in touch for more details.

Where: Get in touch for more details.

Price: Get in touch for more details.

Check it out: website FCI Britanico or email regional.manager@fcbritanico.com or whatsapp 609754169. Follow on twitter: @BritanicoFC or on Facebook: Facebook Fútbol Club Británico



The Fútbol Club Británico team after 2-2 draw against visiting side Brent FC. Photo taken from their Facebook page.

2. What: *International 5-a-side Football League* has been connecting foreigners and locals in Madrid since 1988. So get in touch and sign up!

When: Get in touch for more details.

Where: Get in touch for more details.

Price: Get in touch for more details.

Check it out: website: IFL Madrid and Facebook: IFL Madrid

If you know of any more clubs, societies or groups that I forgot to mention, or if you are starting up your own classes or your team needs new members

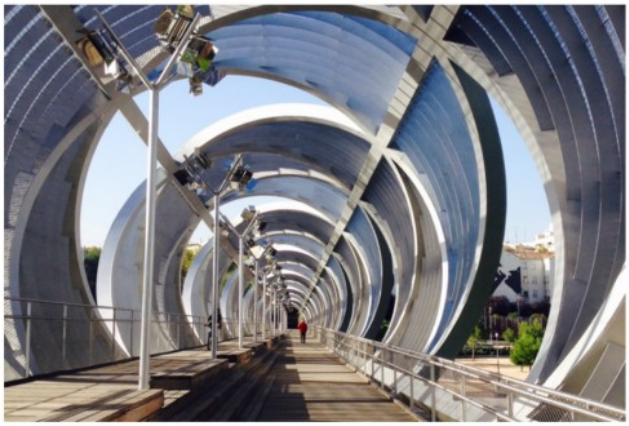
– please leave a comment!

Also, check out our post: Best Places to Break a Sweat in Madrid for more ideas!

Running in Madrid: November 2014

If the word ‘running’ ‘exercise’ or the idea of general movement makes you want to crawl under a rock, it’s probably best you look away now. But before you do… I want to make it clear that I am no running expert, I was always picked last for sport’s teams (sob), so why not hear me out..





Beautiful photography taken by Lauren Haynes on her run along Madrid Rio.

I have recently discovered the world of running (scorn all you like) but I can honestly say, without shame, that I am hooked. I always used to convince myself that I wasn't a runner, and that I did my daily exercise running up and down the metro every day, barging and weaving my way past the incessantly slow Spaniards who did a great job of ignoring my tomato face.

One day, however, my perspective changed. I was walking past *Lots of Colours* (a great shop by the way on Calle Fuencarral

that is actually affordable) and I saw some running shoes on offer in the window for 29 euros (this explains why they absolutely destroyed my feet, but that’s another story). They were taunting me, testing me. I had to buy them to make them shut up!

So anyway, I bought the shoes. Next step: use them. It’s harder than it seems, trust me. On a whim one day, I went out for my first clumsy run, feeling silly and self-conscious, but after at least 15 minutes I found myself running alongside Templo de Debod, near Plaza de España (for those of you who have yet to visit it, at night time it is lit up in a particularly majestic way), and suddenly I almost forgot that I was doing exercise and was simply enjoying the view. Madrid is a great place to run, once you have managed to escape the main streets, and there is the added benefit that you are unlikely to bump into anyone you know.

If I still have your attention so far, you might want to consider some of the great running opportunities there are in Madrid, because believe it or not there are races almost every weekend! The atmosphere is always alive and buzzing, even at 9.30 on a Sunday morning, and if you sign up you get a free t shirt and some food at the end the race (there I knew I could convince you).



Getting ready to start, check out the lycra ;)



Taken at X Carrera Popular Distrito de Retiro, 26th October.

So here is what November in Madrid has in store for you:

1. **4a Carrera Popular, Corre por el Niño:**

   Distance: 4 and 10 kilometres (A little bizarre, but a great one to get started!)

   When: Sunday 9th November, 9:30 am

   Where: Retiro Park

   Cost: 10€ (which goes to El Hospital Infantil Universitario Niño Jesús)

   Website

2. **XXXI Medio Maratón de Villaverde:**

   Distance: 21.097 kilometres (a half marathon)

   When: Sunday 16th November, 9:30 am

   Where: Metro Ciudad de Los Ángeles, line 3.

   Exit: C/Unanimidad (Auditorio El Espinillo)

   Cost: 12.60€

   Website

3. **Derbi de Las Africiones:**

   Distance: 10 kilometres

   When: Sunday 16th November, 9:00 am

   Where: Santiago Bernabéu Stadium, line 10

   Cost: 12€

   Website

4. IV Carrera de los Emprendedores:

Distance: 5 & 10 kilometres

When: Sunday 23rd November, 9:00 am

Where: Retiro Park

Cost: 8€ (possibility of discount if you sign up before 26th October)

Website

5. XXXV Trofeo Jose Cano:

Distance: It varies from 2-10 kilometres

When: Sunday 23rd November, 9:00 am

Where: The nearest metro stops are: Las Musas, San Blas or Alsacia

Cost: free for the first 300 who sign up otherwise 16€

Website

So I wanted to give a little summary of how I got into running, just to prove to readers that I am no athlete, and it can be a great way to keep fit (and for free!) If you know of any more running activities please feel free to share them!



After the X Carrera Popular Distrito de Retiro, 10 kilometre – happy running!

If you are really into running and you want to stay up-to-date with the latest running events in Madrid and beyond, please check out my blog: www.goguiri.com where you can also read my running diary.

Madrid's action-packed English-language comedy scene, interview with Josh and Rusty

Thanks to a whirlwind of stand-up comedy shows, improv groups and international festivals, you can enjoy live comedy in English in Madrid every week! This year alone, the city hosted an international comedy competition and received a visit from the world-famous stand-up comedian, Eddie Izzard, himself.

So, how do I find out about shows and get up on stage?

You can check out our **calendar** for upcoming events, but first, get to know the city's three main English-language comedy groups:

1. Ace Comedy Factory was founded by Joshua Saxon (from London) and Rusty Birdwell (from Tennessee) last March with monthly open mic comedy showdowns at Triskel Tavern in

Malasaña. They've also launched an event called "Comedy Super Team, Go!" which Josh calls the "*best of*", as they perform their most polished sets and feature comedians such as Archie Bezos and Kirk Bonacci.



Rusty on stage at Comedy Super Team, Go! at Ancora

2. Freshly Comedy prides itself on being Madrid's first English-language comedy group. It has two different shows: "*Freshly Squeezed*" (45 min stand-up/45 min improv) and "*Freshly Baked*" (90 min pure improv). At all of these events, expect lots of drinks, jokes and games, plus audience participation…



Freshly Comedy – doing what could only be improv – at Beer Station

3. MAD Improv is an English improv group that meets every Saturday afternoon. The first three weekends of the month are free, while the last is a 4-hour masterclass given by Benjamin Nathan-Serio, costing €25. Anyone can join; you don't have to be a native speaker or have any previous experience. In fact, one Spanish woman joined because she had to do public speaking in English at work. (check out their **meetup group**)



improv workshops in English near Puerta de Toledo on Saturdays from 4:30-7:30pm

Inside scoop on Madrid's English-language comedy scene

To give you a roadmap, I sat down with Josh and Rusty, the guys who founded **Ace Comedy Factory** and collaborate with **Freshly Comedy**. Rusty is one of the leaders of **MAD improv** and Josh organized this year's **Festival Internacional de la Comedia (FIC)**, which featured an outstanding line-up including Reginald D. Hunter, one of the UK's best known comedians whose 200-seat show sold out. The festival also included the **Funniest FICer competition**, Spain's premiere English-language comedy competition held in Madrid and Barcelona, plus a free inaugural event in Retiro – **The Big Comedy Picnic** – in which eighty people set up picnics on the grass.



seen at The Big Comedy Picnic in Retiro

First impressions

When I first met Rusty, I asked him how he got his name. His answer: “Well, my parents just couldn’t decide. My father wanted to call me Chainsaw and my mother, Butterfly!” It turned out this was an “elevated truth”, a tactic both Rusty and Josh use in their sets.



doing improv I assume…

Oh, and Josh likes to be called Batman if possible. He likes bats.



the batman of comedy indeed

Sitting down with Rusty and Batman for coffee at **La Ciudad Invisible** felt like a behind-the-scenes glimpse into their free-style warm-up; the shenanigans that go on when they hang out together often lead them to come up with their best lines.

What's the crowd like?

They get a lot of regulars and people from all over the world. One of the regular comedy-goers, Amy Flippant, from the UK, said: "I remember thinking it was cool to see so many nationalities and accents [on stage] in one event. There were Brits, Americanas, Canadians, and Spaniards, so it's very welcoming." She also witnessed all sorts of comedy, from loud and slapstick to very *very* surreal (especially at the picnic), and lots of first-time performers, too.

Why do you think Madrid has such a widely popular comedy scene in English?

Both Josh and Rusty agreed that the amount of stuff going on is quite unexpected. It shows the city's welcoming nature as well as the power of Madrid's expat community to start new things. Unlike cities like New York and London, there's little competition for English comedy in Madrid; it's a niche market here. What started out with a few English-language comedy nights a month has since turned into an action-packed micro-culture of stand-up and improv groups that are at it all year long. Not to mention the many English-language theater groups. That's a whole other story…

How did you get into comedy?

Both are pretty new to comedy. For Josh, who has a background in Journalism, it was always on his bucket list. On a whim, he participated in the **FICer Competition** last year and has been hooked ever since. Rusty calls Josh "super multi-talented," as he's not only a comedian and host, but also handles the web, organization and PR for many events. Rusty grew up doing theater and improv, and some film acting, although he stopped when he went into writing. While living in Madrid, he got the urge to get back into it and began organizing **Ace Comedy Factory** with Josh last February.

Do you get nervous?

"Yeah, of course," said Josh. He's had a few tense moments on stage, but it's part of the game. "I compare it to getting punched in the face. Once it's happened, you can stand up for yourself." Rusty followed with a quote he had recently heard: "The master has failed more times than the beginner has ever tried."

Their advice for anyone who wants to start something new in Madrid

“Go for it!”

*Images from **Ace Comedy Factory**, **MAD Improv**, **Freshly Comedy** and **Madrid International Comedy Festival***