

A Heightened Beer State of Mind in Madrid

Beer lovers this is for you again! You can read my [first article on craft beer bars in Madrid](#) to explore/discover more. The main idea is to go try and find your favourites'.

There truly is a very special place just North of Metro Bilbao that I like to call the **triangle of craft beer**. It involves 3 craft beer bars that are within throwing distance of each other. It really is the perfect place to have your heart's desire of good beer satisfied without feeling trapped in the same bar the entire night. **The 3 bars are named ANIMAL, Oldenburg and Cervercería L'Europe**. What they all have in common is their huge offer of various beers from across the world. This selection of bars promises a night out where you know your next destination and be sure to arrive as well.

ANIMAL I wrote about in my [previous article](#) and you can follow the link to take a look. It is a bar that consistently offers excellent beers from all parts. Tivo, the owner, also speaks good English.

1) [Oldenburg](#), in Calle HARTZENBUSCH, 12



Famous for standing in the Guinness book of world records as the establishment that offers the greatest variety of beers per square meter. Opened some 25 years ago, this bar lets you choose among **200 varieties**. One of the very first craft beer bars in Madrid, it inspired the opening of Fabricas Maravillas and is loved by the owner of [La Buena Cerveza](#). However beware there are 2 Oldenburgs and this is the younger bar. More of an institution than an ordinary bar, the brilliant thing here is that you can order **Alt bier**. This beer is brewed according to the German “**Reinheitsgebot**” (shouting it makes the pronunciation easier) and originates from Düsseldorf. It is a dark beer that is incredibly hard to find unlike the Cologne cousin Kölsch beer. If you are familiar with the LENT beers, **Thor** is brewed after the same recipe.

Alt bier is the beer of my home city and I will always be biased to this incredible bar for stocking it. The Belgians, apart for being famous for having no one famous (name 10 famous Belgians, footballers excluded) and no government, make incredible beer. Oldenburg offers the most varieties of **Belgian beer in Madrid**. Every beer brand in Belgium has its own beer glass to drink from. The glass is designed to increase the flavour of the beer.

Metro: Bilbao

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2) [Cervercería L'Europe](#) in Calle Cardenal Cisneros 19



You enter and believe you have been transported to the German Alps to celebrate a round of après ski fun. It looks like a drinking hall with kitsch decorated around the bar so skiers are reminded there is a home away from home. Terrible decoration aside, this place does offer excellent beers on tap and even more in bottles. In fact, it claims to have the largest offer of beers on tap and in bottle, check out the website, with nearly 100. The whole menu is online. The food here is **typical German beer food on offer**. Lots of sausages, potato dishes and sandwiches to soak up the beer.

Those that like an after work delight will be happy to know that between 18 and 20h all beers on offer are half price.

Metro: Bilbao

[Facebook](#)

3) **Irreale** in Calle Manuela Malasaña 20



The other bar not included in the triangle of greatness. However this bar does feature in the same street as **La Tape**. You just have to love this city. Irreale only recently changed location to their new home a few months ago. Recently having relocated from Calle de la Ballesta 15, this place is a gem. Having taken over the space from Ave Phoenix, the bar offers 12 different beers on tap. Similar principal to **ANIMAL**, these beers will also change once the keg is empty, meaning a lot of variety. The only two beers they always serve are **La Virgen** and **Schneider Weisse**. The latter being easily one of the best wheat beers in Europe.

The real advantage with **Irreale** is that it offers you the pub feel whilst also offering food. Most, however, stick with the beer and if you prefer the smell of hops and alcohol to chorizo and tortilla I recommend you take a visit. However let's think bigger better more exciting! Media pinta beats caña, pinta beats media pinta, but the king will always be the keg. You need a place for a birthday party or a friend's leaving due, **Irreale** will let you rent the **cellar of the bar**

for free. All you need are thirsty friends and yourself if you order one keg (20 litres) and the room is yours free of charge. They will also give you a 10% discount on the keg you order. Price will range with beer type so just go in and have a quick chat. English fluency is minimal here.

Metro: San Bernardo / Bilbao

[Facebook](#)

For more articles related to Madrid's drinking culture, check out:

- [A Beer State of Mind in Madrid](#), on the city's best craft beer bars
- [Martinis, Margaritas & More](#), on Madrid's best cocktails
- [La Buena Cerveza](#), an international beer shop offering a huge variety plus tastings and more

Beer State of Mind in Madrid

A bucket of Heineken for 5€, a pint of Mahou for 1,50€ and a can of whatever offered for 1€ by the smiling street vendor. Cheap is easy, cheap is good. **Madrid** is littered with examples of how to drink to your heart's content for under a tenner. Taste, well it all tastes the same, doesn't it? The beer sold in more than 95% of bars in this city does taste similar. The name changes but it doesn't matter. The aftertaste vanishes as quickly as the first round of drinks.

Price is king and we all know it. Signs of the large

distributors are all around us in the areas of **Malasaña** and **Chueca**. What furthers this dominance is their implied demand that a very high percentage of a bar's income has to be made through their products, unless the owner wants to see a rise in price per litre. This restricts to a large extent the amount of freedom given to owners under contract with the big beer companies.

Luckily, more and more bars are coming to life in this area that are looking to rediscover flavour and verve. So don't just impress your taste buds but dive into a different and less corporate world with the below bars. *Salud*.

1) [La Bodega de la Ardosa](#) in Calle Colón 13



This precious place was one of the very **first Irish pubs in Madrid**, opened in 1892. At the bar, you're likely to meet Antonio or Victor, both friendly faces who've been at La Bodega for years. It feels like an Irish pub when you enter, yet with the unmistakable smell of tortilla in the air. This pub only serves alcoholic beers from the tap and currently serves 4 in total. It's one of the very first pubs in Spain to import **Czech beer**, with its main beer being **Pilsener Urquell** from the city of Pilsener in Czech Republic, the birthplace of pilsner beer.

Another option is **König Ludwig**, a **Bavarian wheat beer** which is excellent for the summer time as the yeast gives it a fruity beer flavour. It won the **World Beer Award** for best wheat beer in 2008. Usually available from the bottle in Madrid, La

Bodega offers this fine brew straight from the keg.



Also on offer is **PUNK IPA** from Brew Dog. **Indian pale ale (IPA)** that packs an even fruitier punch but never becomes sweet and retains its bitter finish. The last beer on offer is **Guinness**. When you enter the pub you have to turn around and face the entrance. Above the door, you'll find a **Guinness** leader board. At the top you'll find a Sebastian from Germany who drank 14 pints in under 4 hours. You would receive free pints once you had surpassed the previous top score. The competition was stopped in 1990 due to health and safety regulations.

If the front bar is too crowded, he or another waiter will offer you to climb under the bar through to the other side, which tends to be more quiet and intimate. Also, it handily places you closer to the toilets, which are at the back of the bar.

La Bodega is also renowned for having some of the best **Vermouth in Madrid**, an option for all the non-beer lovers. If you become a little peckish (hungry), order the **tortilla** or **salmorejo** which are both incredibly good. Each beer is offered

in either pints or half pints, akin to England, and will cost you between 3.50€ to 5.50€.

Metro: Chueca / Tribunal

2) [Las Fabricas Maravillas](#) in Calle Valverde 29



An American from Chicago and a Frenchman from Bretagne created this bar. Living in Madrid, these longtime friends were frustrated that the only decent bar they knew offering **craft beer** was la Cervercería Oldenburg. So approximately one and a half years ago they opened Fabricas Maravillas. Each has a master in beer brewing and all the beer is produced in the same bar you enter. You can see the fermentation tanks through the glass behind the bar.

You can choose from several varieties, some named after different areas in Madrid such as **Malasaña** and **Valverde**. They brew ales, stouts and pilsners. If you're unsure of your selection, just ask to have a try of the beer you fancy. The

staff speaks and understands **English**.

The bar doesn't serve food, only a few crisps (chips for those in America) and olives. It isn't a big bar and if you want to sit you'll have to go early or stand up on weekends because of the amount of people that enter. The bar enjoys a healthy mix of Spanish and **expats**.

If you find it too crowded, you can also find Fabricas' beer at [Bar Martinez](#) (Calle Barco 4), a 3 minute walk away, which is less known and much more likely to have a seat.

Metro: Tribunal

3) **EL ANIMAL** in Calle Hartzenbusch 9



With 12 different beers on tap and many more in bottles in the fridges, this bar offers a **multitude of different beers** with flavour. Tivo, one of the owners of **ANIMAL**, changes the beers on tap when the keg is empty, replacing it with another of the many craft beers he has in storage. He tastes all the beers

himself before serving them to his customers, ensuring their quality is up to his standards. If you can't get enough of discovering new craft beers, this is an ideal place to visit. ANIMAL tends to offer more **Danish, English and Irish beers**, in particular offering a wide selection of ales.



In September, ANIMAL will turn 2 years old. The bar is situated on the same street as the same La Cervercería Oldenburg that the two creators of Fabricas Maravillas used to frequent. **Tivo speaks English** and encourages it with his “we speak English” sticker on the front glass door.



He'll serve you a small portion of food with each beer you order. Tivo knows his beers and can explain to you in detail each taste profile and how the production affected this.

Not a large bar, **ANIMAL** has several tables for you to sit down and eat. It doesn't have a typical pub atmosphere due to the variety of food on offer and seating area. The food is supposed to be excellent and the smell alone made me hungry.

[Facebook](#)

Metro: Bilbao / Quevedo

4) [La Tape](#) in Calle San Bernardo 88



A craft beer bar which feels more like a restaurant than any other bar on this list. This bar offers **7 different craft beers on tap** and the best thing to do if you are entertaining visiting friends is to try the **beer tasting**. You're offered to try 4 different beers on tap for 10€. They change the beers on

a weekly basis except for the first or second. The first is La Virgen, a Spanish craft beer that is very light. The second is a German wheat beer that is both fruity and a bit bitter.

The true treasure, however, is their **huge selection of bottled beer**. They have a menu solely dedicated to beers from across the world. Be sure to look at the very back of the menu where the temporary bottled beers are displayed. They're off the menu as soon as the last one is sold.

Two Madrileños created La Tape a little over a year ago. Having travelled across several countries and continents, they both noticed the lack of different beers on offer, and continue to travel in search of new beers to stock in their bar.

My friends have told me the food is excellent. A restaurant is situated above the bar, serving mainly Spanish dishes and offering a large selection of desserts. A pint of beer will cost between 4-6€.

[Website](#)

Metro: San Bernardo

5) [REVOLTOSA](#) on Plaza del Rey 4
(bar under contract with one of the
big guys)



As summer time is approaching fast and we want to enjoy the sun, I mention this place as an alternative. This bar has a large terrace area outside with tables and umbrellas. They offer **Konig Ludwig** and **Grimbergen** (a Belgian beer) in bottles. It is a good place to try the more popular Spanish craft beers. Their **5 Spanish craft beers** on offer are **Cibeles**, **Aoora**, **La Virgen**, **Sagra Premium** and **Burron de Sancho Rojo**. Going early to **REVOLTOSA** has its advantages, as all beers will be 50 cents cheaper during the day. The night prices start from 21.00 onwards.

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Metro: Banco de España / Chueca

Also check out [Round 2, A Heightened Beer State of Mind in](#)

Madrid!

And...

- [La Buena Cerveza](#), an international beer shop in Chueca offering a huge selection of beers, tastings and workshops
- [Cervezas La Virgen](#), a microbrewery in the outskirts of Madrid offering tours, tastings and hot-dogs & sandwiches

La Buena Cerveza, all things beer in Madrid

My first encounter with beer was many years ago (well, not too many). When I was a child in **Madrid**, I used to go to the **bar** with my dad to watch football and spend the afternoon together. My father, an Englishman with a Spanish family, always said that I should get used to **beer** as soon as possible so I'd appreciate it better. To help me along, he would always pass me his glass and look away so that I could take a few sips, feeling like I was doing something wrong.



A few weeks ago, I was running late to meet up with friends at [Mercado de San Anton](#), when a little sign caught my attention: “*talleres de elaboración de cerveza*” (or in English, **homemade beer workshop**). Once again, as if I were a little boy, the feeling of doing something wrong popped into my head. My friends will have to wait, cause I’m going in!



Once I got through [La Buena Cerveza](#)’s door, I found Nacho across the shop, a **Madrileño** from **Vallecas** (a south-east neighbourhood of Madrid). As we started talking, he kindly offered me a cold *La Cibeles stout*—a **Spanish craft beer** from Madrid. As we drank, he told me he had always dreamt of opening a **beer shop** in the center of **Madrid**. In his dream shop, a customer could find not only 1,000 different kinds of beer , but also a place to taste and experience the deeply

cherished beverage.



At **La Buena Cerveza**, feel free to ask the owners to open up a beer for you from the fridge. Though it's not a bar, you're welcome to buy a beer and drink it there (for tasting purposes, obviously!)



Nacho and Manuel (brothers and co-founders of **La Buena Cerveza**) organize **beer tastings** every two weeks. They cost **15€** and include at least 5 different beers. Here you'll also find the reason why I first came in. For a reasonable price of **85€**, you can see yourself making your own beer in a seven-hour workshop. And if that's not enough, you can even make beer at your own home, and have them store it for you in the right conditions until it's good enough to drink!



If you're interested in going to the tasting but aren't comfortable with your Spanish just yet, get in touch with us and we can help out!

Address: c/ Pelayo 5

Metro: Chueca or Gran Vía

[Facebook](#)

Tlf 910060524





Bar Lambuzo, a family-run Andalusian restaurant offering a mix of activities in their wine cellar

Tucked away in the side streets of Sol, [Bar Lambuzo](#) is an Andalusian oasis in the center of Madrid, lovingly run by a family from **Cádiz** with a history in the food business that goes back to their great grandfather. This family has brought all their favorite recipes and passion from their home to the capital. In fact, the bar makes it a point to sell products from Southern regions such as Cádiz, Seville and Huelva, calling itself an **Abacería**, meaning a bar that sells local products.



the entrance invites you in with thousands of wine bottles decorating the walls

Opened a little over a year ago, **Bar Lambuzo** has already become a beloved neighborhood spot for its authentic cuisine, warm ambience and family-style service; it is a haven for Andalusians living away from home, and for anyone seeking a **true taste of the South in the center of Madrid.**



with friends in Bar Lambuzo's underground cellar, tasting wines from Bodegas Barbadillo

What's more, **Lambuzo** offers **fun activities in the downstairs wine cellar**, from football forums to **wine-tastings** and **olive-oil-tastings**. I've been to the tastings and highly recommend them! At the last wine tasting I went to, we had a presentation from [Bodegas Barbadillo](#), a winery from Cádiz that is actually the house wine at Bar Lambuzo. As usual, we tried three different types—rosé, white and red—the red was really spectacular.

In between each generously poured glass, we were served an assortment of homemade tapas: ***ensaladilla rusa*** (potato salad), croquettes ***de ortiguilla*** (translated into English as "sea anemone", so let's keep it in Spanish), and ***ragu de ternera con arroz*** (veal stew on rice). The tapas were wonderful as always, and the wine portions are best described as **plentiful**. The bottles were left open on the tables, and we were welcome to serve ourselves as much as we liked. Meager portions are unheard of here.



Owner and father Pepe serving at a wine tasting in the cellar

On Thursdays, Lambuzo also holds **Microteatro**: they showcase 30-minute theater performances, from 9pm-11pm. Each session costs **4€**, plus you're more than welcome to grab a drink at the bar and bring it down to the cellar as you enjoy the show, and then go right back upstairs for more when it's over.

As far as the menu goes, father **Pepe** will gladly tell you about the daily specials, and you can't go wrong with anything on the set menu. Their star dishes are from their selection of **fried fish**, a staple in Andalusian cuisine. And you can count on it being good—the first time I went, a guy from the South of Spain popped out of his seat and called up a friend to say: "You won't believe it. I'm in Madrid eating real *pescaito frito*".



assorted pescadito frito



boquerones fritos con limón (fried white anchovies with a squeeze of lemon) and white wine from Bodegas Barbadillo

My husband, James, and I have been going to **Bar Lambuzo** practically since it opened. What keeps us going back so often is the warm service and delicious food and wine (not to mention, really affordable!). Our favorite dishes are their varied **croquetas** (croquettes), **salmorejo** (a cold, tomato and bread-based soup), **arroz con atun rojo y pisto** (*rice with tuna and ratatouille*), and **solomillo al whiskey** (*whiskey pork loin, served on delicious handcut fries*). For dessert, try the

tocino del cielo (similar to creme brûlée without the crunchy top), made by Ignacia.



Croquetas



Salmorejo, a cold soup or dip originating from Cordoba,

made with tomato, bread and olive oil, topped with tuna and then drizzled with some more, olive oil



solomillo al whisky (pork tenderloin with roasted garlic, served on top of handcut french fries)



tocino de cielo, made by daughter Ignacia (similar to creme brûlée without the crunchy top layer)

Lambuzo's tapas range in price from 3€-5€, and main dishes average at 11€. For lunch. They offer a menu del día (set lunch menu) for 10€ with a starter, main dish, drink, plus coffee or dessert. And they have an express lunch menu for 8€, including one dish.

If you decide to go to Lambuzo for dinner, I recommend making a reservation—the secret's out and the place gets packed!

Info:

[Facebook page](#)

[Web](#)

Hours: Tuesday – Thursday: 13:00 – 16:30, 20:00 – 0:00

Friday – Saturday: 13:00 – 17:30, 20:00 – 1:00

Sunday: 13:00 – 17:30

Closed on Mondays

Price range: 10-20€ per person

There are currently two locations:

1. The first **Lambuzo** is the one with the downstairs cellar:

Address: Calle de las Conchas, 9

Metros: Sol, Callao, Santo Domingo or Opera

2. **Lambuzo** has just opened a second location in [Chamberí](#) which is smaller but still has the same charm and family feel:

Address: Calle Ponzano, 8

Metros: Iglesia & Alonso Cano

The Cocktail Room, Madrid's one-stop cocktail shop



Consider [The Cocktail Room](#) your one-stop shop for anything cocktail-related in Madrid, offering all the skills and tools needed for the art of mixology. Here you can delve into adventurous [workshops](#) on classic **gin & tonics** and luxurious **aphrodisiac cocktails** (better than couple's therapy!), partake in daring **sake** and **bourbon tastings**, or try a three-hour [course](#) on how to make the **10 Best Cocktails in History**. And for any aspiring star mixologists out there, [The Cocktail Master](#) course offers 51 days and 153 hours of hands-on professional training.

If that doesn't quite cut it, **The Cocktail Room** also sells a wide collection of rare liqueurs, drink-making gadgets and

recipe books. They even boast a showroom, professional testing-lab and space for private events.



[The Cocktail Room](#)'s chic style blends effortlessly into its home on calle Castelló, 98, in the heart of Madrid's upscale neighborhood. Run by a dynamic and international team who share a common passion for the craft of mixing the perfect drink, **The Cocktail Room** is often called upon to host some of Madrid's most stylish events, such as **Madrid Fashion Week**. Their creative mixing talents, hip themes and extensive knowledge put **The Cocktail Room** on top of Madrid's burgeoning cocktail scene.



Check out their [Facebook](#) page or their [website](#) to see their ongoing **courses** and upcoming **events**. And keep reading to hear about my personal experience at the **Aphrodisiac Cocktail Workshop**.



I was invited to **The Cocktail Room** on Valentine's Day with my husband, James, to their first **Aphrodisiac Cocktail Workshop**, created and delivered by Max Vázquez. By the sound of it, I imagined I was going to attend a tasting, where I'd be sipping chocolate and cherry cocktails while listening to the

ingredients for how to make the perfect mood-boosting concoction. Little did I know, the theory part was going to be brief. As I entered the candy and heart-decorated room with just a handful of other couples, Max and his assistant explained what was in store for us.



We would be making elixir-like cocktails from scratch, customized for our partners who were blindfolded. **Yes, blindfolded!** There was a table filled with all the different cocktail components; aromas, citrus, syrups, liqueurs, fruits, different-sized cocktail glasses, and more. After Max gave us a 20 minute introductory example, it was time for us to jump in and start mixing.



With our blindfolded partner waiting patiently beside the bar, our job was to pick out the five ingredients we thought they'd like, have them smell each one, and guide us based on their senses. Once we decided on each component, we helped our blindfolded partner to put the cocktail ingredients into the shaker, and then shake it up and pour it successfully into the glass (which we also picked out for them), without spilling all over themselves or the person sitting next to them. We topped it off with the fruit of our choice and voilà. Then the tables were turned.



an example of how to help your blindfolded loved one to make an aphrodisiac cocktail. much better than couple's therapy...



my husband, James, tasting the white chocolate liqueur I
picked out for him

Some couples got it right, some couples didn't. James got it

right. He made me a cocktail which I named ***Orange Delight***. I, on the other hand, didn't fare so well. I mixed way too much sweet amaretto, with way too much sweet white chocolate liqueur, then added too much chocolate aroma, and well, let's just say it took plenty of post-attempts and tweakings to make it drinkable.



the cocktail my husband made me :)

The Cocktail Room offers a variety of different [courses](#). Since G&T's are my drink of choice, my next workshop will have to be the Gin Tonics workshop that they offer on Saturdays. Which one do you want to try?

[Web](#)

Address: c/ Castelló 98

[Courses](#)





Wine Bus, visit wineries around Madrid without having to drive

Founded by Ignacio Segovia, **Wine Bus** takes groups of up to 20 people on day trips to **wineries around Madrid** every Saturday. And as its name entails, passengers are welcome to drink as much as they like, because someone else is driving.

Owner and passionate guide, **Ignacio Segovia**, or Nacho, fell into the wine business as “a way to reinvent himself”. He worked in marketing for many years, but started to write about wine on his website, [Vende Vinos](#), in 2008. As he began

visiting wineries around Madrid, he soon discovered the magic that was being kept secret. He got to know the men and women who ran the wineries, saw the land where the vineyards lay, and the surrounding towns that have been preserved in time. Ignacio knew that's where he wanted to be. **He's been organizing tours to these wineries since 2011.**

What makes **Wine Bus** special, according to Ignacio, are the stories that the winery owners tell. Ignacio has contacts with around 30 different wineries in Spain, enough so that **Wine Bus can visit a different winery each Saturday**. Even if Ignacio has visited some wineries on a number of occasions, he says that each time is different; each group of people is different, and the memories that the winery owners bring to life are always different. Ignacio says that he loves going on these tours so much that he doesn't feel as though he's working at all, and feels lucky that he's been able to turn his passion into reality.

For the first time one week ago, I went to visit a winery with **Wine Bus** in a town called **Adrada de Haza** in Burgos. As soon as we piled into the bus, Ignacio was already explaining the ins and outs of the wine industry. An hour into the bus ride, **Jesus Lazaro** hopped on. Jesus is the owner of Bodegas [Kirios de Adrada](#), the cellar he opened with his father in 2001.



Our first stop was the vineyard itself. Then we entered the winery. Then the main cellar. And then the other hidden cellar that used to be the town's nightclub!



Finally, at 2pm, it was time to sit down, try some wines, and eat. We tasted three different wines: a rosé, white and red. My favorite was the red, but perhaps that's because **Ribera del Duero** is my favorite wine hands down.



We munched on **roasted red peppers** and the best **morcilla de burgos** I've ever tasted (and the group of Spaniards I was with said the same).



All the while, Jesus went outside to make the *chuletas* (pork chops). He lit a pile of vines, and as it burnt down, he laid out the pork chops onto the grill. With the help of Ignacio, the pork chops cooked to perfection.



Ignacio, or Nacho as his friends call him, holding up a glass of Ribera while awaiting the pork chops



After we ate and had a few too many glass of wine, we hopped back on the bus and went to a nearby town called [Aranda de Duero](#), which is very famous for its wine culture and history. There we visited the **Ribera del Duero Museum** where we had a guided tour through astonishing underground wine cellars and caves. Let's just say that this town is chock full of wine history. Even the bar, **La Casona de la Vid**, has a treasure chest below it.

All in all, it was an awesome day organized by [Wine Bus](#). Every Saturday they offer trips to different wineries around Madrid, so I highly recommend it, especially if you go with a group of friends!

Price:

The price for the entire trip was **59€** for the tour and trip, and **20€** for the meal!

Booking info & Discount with Naked Madrid

If you'd like to go on a tour with The Wine Bus, you will get a discount if you enter the **promotional code "Naked"**

You can book the tour through The Wine Bus's [website](#).