

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.

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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.

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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

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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

La Paca, the perfect Malasaña café and bar with art exhibits, movie nights and Chema...

As you walk through [La Paca](#)'s door, you feel like you're in the right place. This **funky café in Malasaña** is always a good choice when you're in the mood for a coffee, a beer, or something stronger.



La Paca's facade on calle Valverde in Malasaña (image from [Facebook](#))

La Paca is divided into two areas: the ground bears a worn-out floor from a different time period, when the place used to be a family's house. **Vintage furniture** from every single corner of Spain fills the room: old sofas, lamps, Galician mirrors, and bird-cages. **La Paca's** owner is an antique collector who travels across Spain in pursuit of treasure troves. You can find his finest pieces either sold at his **vintage store** [La Republicana](#), or displayed at La Paca.



funky furniture at La Paca

One step up and you'll find **Chema**, the star bartender and the man who runs the show. As I say in Spanish, he's "***un terremoto de felicidad***" (an earthquake of happiness). Working alongside Chema is his sister, **Vero**, who's also the perfect host. Feel free to ask them both about the place and their drinks.

La Paca's menu has different types of tea and coffee served with cakes (carrot, cheese or *couland* which is an oozy chocolate muffin-type cake), and *bizcocho* (pound or sponge cake). If you're looking for a drink, they also have a wide collection of **craft beers** (made from Madrid breweries) on tap, **wines** and **cocktails**.

In this quintessential **Malasaña café**, you've also got to try their **tortilla de patatas** (homemade Spanish omelet), it is my favourite!



my favorite tapa at La Paca

Another feature that makes **La Paca** so special is its **events**. On Wednesdays at 9pm, they have **free movie night downstairs**. They prepare the room in a way that reminds me of a **movie night** at a friend's house; sofas and people scattered about with no order whatsoever (plus the popcorn is also free!). I went last Wednesday and saw **Kill Bill I**, and the week before they had shown **Taxi Driver** (in Spanish with no subtitles).



free movie nights on Wednesdays at La Paca in Malasaña (image from [Facebook](#))

On Thursdays, **La Paca** holds **acoustic music performances**, making room for **up and coming Spanish artists**. Although Wednesday movie nights and Thursday concerts are held regularly, La Paca showcases several other events such as theater performances, **independent markets**, English classes, clown shows, and **art exhibitions**. In fact, when it comes to **art exhibits**, they're booked until 2016!



Theater performance at La Paca (image from [Facebook](#))

What I like most about **La Paca**'s events is the way they're set up. Last time I was there, I ended up sharing a few beers with **Chema** and **Vero**, and I asked them how they make money from their events. Their answer was as simple as it was nice: **they just want to help people from the neighborhood**. If you have a **creative project** and you need a place to start, you shouldn't think twice about getting in touch with them.

Shhh..... today is Wednesday night and **the movie** is about to start!

La Paca

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Address: c/ Valverde 36

Metro: Gran Vía or Tribunal