

THE MADRID METROPOLITAN



VOL. 1, ISSUE 1

YOUR CITY. YOUR LANGUAGE. YOUR NEWSPAPER.

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DECEMBER 2016



WHAT'S ON IN DECEMBER

RAFA NADAL
INTERVIEW

MADRID LIVE
RADIO IN ENGLISH

2016 BUSINESS & FINANCE ROUNDUP

CHRISTMAS RECIPES

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"If the sun were to lose its light

And we lived an endless night

And there was nothing left, that you could feel

That's how it would be

What my life would seem to me

If I didn't have your love, to make it real"

Leonard Cohen 1934 - 2016

Welcome to the first edition of the Madrid Metropolitan – Madrid's only English language printed and online newspaper.

A paper for old hands, newbies as well as visitors to our city.

Our aim is very simple - to be relevant. To provide news, features and articles as well as the occasional insight into the joy that is living in this magnificent city.

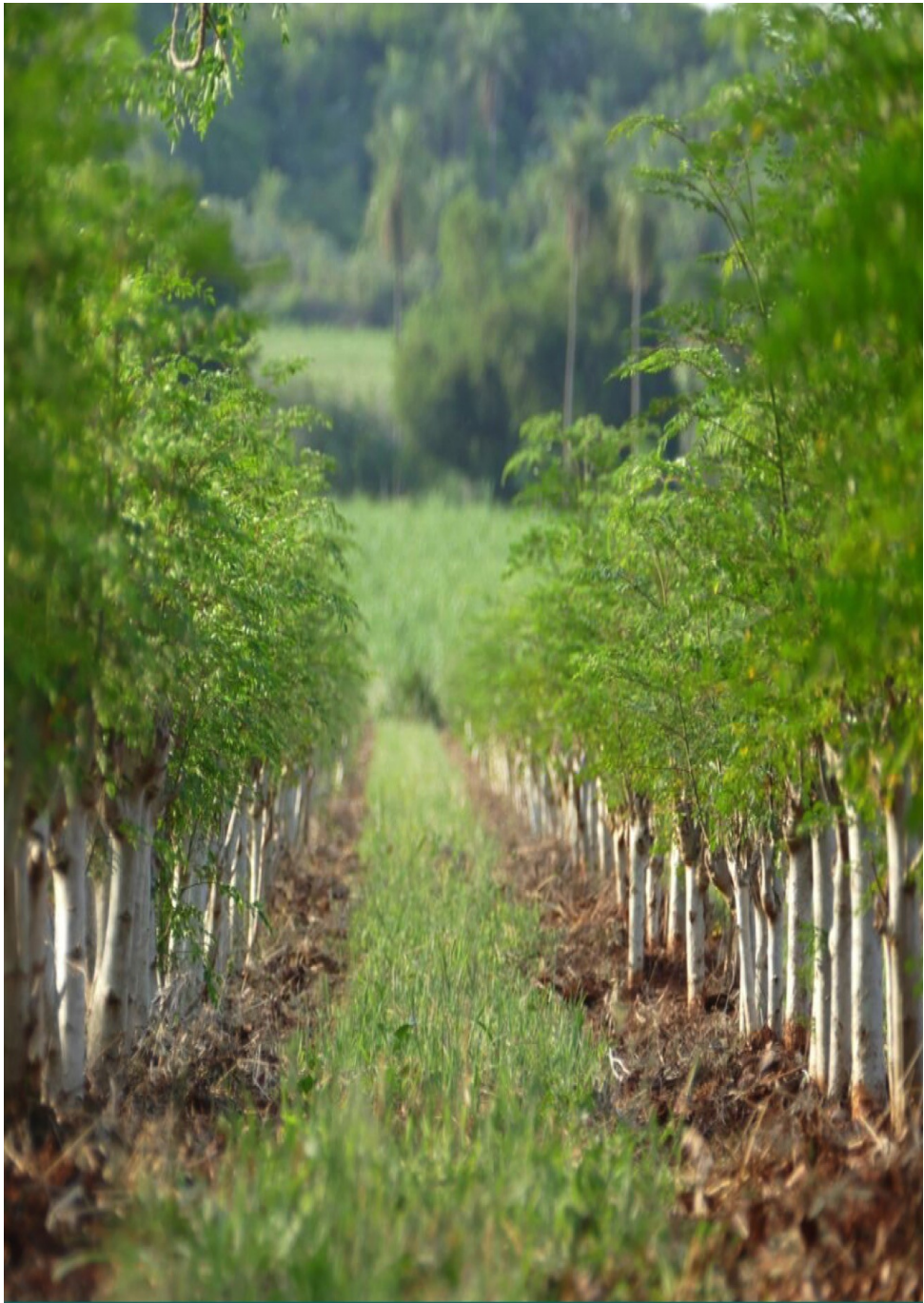
The paper is an English language one. That common language encompasses many different communities and many different traditions in the region as elsewhere.

We aim to be able to provide a platform for residents, businesses as well as sports and community groups who will learn of each other and from each other.

Hence our philosophy - **Your** city. **Your** language. **Your** newspaper.

We hope you enjoy reading.

The Madrid Metropolitan team



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Madrid Treasure Hunt

A 12 bottle case of finest Castilian wine is to be found at the end of our hunt that explores the many secrets of Madrid's sometime dark and mysterious past. Every month for 12 months we publish a clue or a challenge for those daring readers who wish to discover the hidden side of Madrid.

December Challenge

"One you missed"

Despite all efforts of our Carmena to root out all vestiges of the old caudillo having ever existed, he seemingly won't be moved. Within a stone's throw of her office, find him proudly defiant at number 13, take a selfie together and email it to us at: editor@madridmetropolitan.com.

Brought to you by **Madrid Adventures** - teambuilding events with a Castilian twist.

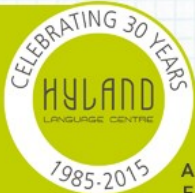


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CHRISTMAS IN MADRID 2016

2016 is no exception when talking about the variety of events on offer in Madrid over the festive holidays.

Maja Jakic offers a few suggestions on where to go and what to do this holiday season:



MERCADILLO NAVIDENO AT PLAZA DE MAYOR - ENJOY THE CHRISTMAS FAIRYTALE!

The jolliest time of the year brings a Christmas fairy-tale to the city, thanks to the colourful Christmas lights, trees and the most popular Christmas markets. Locally known as the Mercadillo de Navidad, Madrid's Christmas market is situated at the very heart of the city in the Plaza de Mayor where it has maintained the tradition since 1960. 104 log cabins will be selling everything from sweets to tree ornaments as well as an even mix of antiques, artwork and collectibles totalling more than 12,000 items from the 1960s to the 1980s. A carousel will serve to entertain little ones, and food and beverages are also available to help keep you warm and refreshed. The official program lasts more than a month, so there's enough time to see and do everything.

Apart from the market at Plaza de Mayor, don't miss the other mercadillos at Plaza de España or Plaza de Santa Cruz.

Plaza de Mayor. 25th of November to 6th of January. Monday to Friday 10:00-21:00 & Saturday and Sunday 10:00- 22:00. Free entry.

REVOLUTION ICE

RevolutiOn Ice is *THE* event aimed at all those who are passionate about skating and music. For the first time in Spain, the world stars of skating will fuse their talent on the ice rink to the live music of first class musicians. Visitors will have a chance to see one of the top figures of the skating world - double world champion and four-time champion of Europe, Javier Fernandez. David Moreno, a professional with a great experience in the world of television, music and radio, will be in charge as the master of ceremonies.

Palacio Vistalegre Arena, Calle Utebo 1. 29th of December, 20:00. Metro: Vista Alegre (L5). €25-€190.

CHRISTMAS CAROL AT TEATRO FIGARO

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens arrives on stage at the Teatro Figaro this December. Audiences of all ages will be able to enjoy Face2Face's adaptation of one of the world's most popular and most loved Christmas classics. The plot follows the story of the cynical Ebenezer Scrooge who is visited by the three spirits of Christmas past, present and future. Although primarily aimed at an English speaking audience, the production's unique style of acting which includes physical theatre and mime, makes it accessible to those who even have the most basic knowledge of English. Expect a new, comical version of the story with a lots of improvisation, evocative songs and magical stagecraft.

Teatro Figaro, Calle Doctor Cortezo 5. 3rd to 18th of December. Metro: Banco de España (L2), Chueca (L5), Tirso de Molina (L1). €14.

INTERNATIONAL FAIR OF CULTURES

A special event organised in collaboration with 75 embassies and various institutions will showcase the many different ways of celebrating Christmas around the world. The program includes more than 75 stands and over 250 activities, many of which are aimed for all ages which not only includes dancing, singing and playing, but also the opportunity to taste a variety international Christmas dishes.

Matadero Madrid, Paseo de la Chopera. 15th of December to 23rd of December. Metro: Legazpi (L3, L6). Free entry.

THE DESIGN MARKET - XMAS FUN EVENT

Lovers of art, music, design and food are treated to a unique experience combining all of the above at the Mercado de Diseño's Xmas Fun event. The Design Market is a platform aimed at increasing the visibility and commercialisation of Spanish design. Here, you can encounter everything from fashion, beauty products, art illustrations, decorations and much more. In addition, visitors can enjoy seven live music concerts and on Saturday night, a big party with the best of Spanish electronic music.

Circulo de Bellas Artes, Calle de Alcalá, 42. 17th & 18th of December, 11:00-22:00. Metro: Banco de España (L2), Sevilla (L2). €3. www.mercadodedisenio.es



MAIN SQUARE NYE CELEBRATION



The traditional celebration of New Year's Eve at the very centre of a capital city is surely one of the "must-do" things to do in any country, and Spain is no exception. On the eve of every new year, the Puerta del Sol fills with thousands of people from all over the world joining in the tradition of eating 12 grapes synchronised to the 12 bells that ring in the coming year. However, tradition aside, the real celebration takes place after midnight when Europe's loudest city makes its own contribution to the world's biggest party in true Spanish style. Expect, noise, alcohol and more noise.

Puerta del Sol. 31st of December, 23:59. Metro: Sol (L1, L2, L3). Free.

LA CABALGATA DE REYES

Or in other words, "Spanish Christmas". The Three King's Day or Epiphany, is the Christian feast day that celebrates the visit of the Regents of the Orient to the baby Jesus. This particular holiday has a unique way of being celebrated in Madrid in the form of a grand parade welcoming his majesties: Gaspar, Melchor and Baltasar to the centre of the city to bring the message of peace and solidarity. The route will start at in the afternoon at Plaza de San Juan de la Cruz, passing by the Paseo de Castellana before finalising at the Plaza de Cibeles. The event still remains the longest standing parade in Spain which makes it worth seeing.

Plaza de Cibeles. 5th of January, 18:30. Free.

THE MADRID LIVE RADIO SHOW

Madrid Live is Madrid’s premier English radio programme. It is also the only radio programme to feature the original voices of celebrated English-speaking actors, directors and artists who promote their work in the Spanish capital.

The Madrid Metropolitan caught up with the show’s presenter, Ann Bateson to talk about Madrid, media and music.



MM: Hi Ann, thank you for joining us. Firstly, how long have you been living and working in Spain?

AB: Over 35 years.

MM: Why did you choose Spain and Madrid over England and any other Spanish city?

AB: My degree was in Spanish and like many Hispanics, I am passionate about Spain and wanted to live here. I spent my year abroad in Seville and taught in Barcelona for a year. Several years later, I was offered a teaching job in Madrid. Although I had always felt a personal affinity to Barcelona, I find Madrid a very easy city to live in. I feel I fit in here. Madrid is all-embracing. I love it.

MM: What professional experience in Spain led to your success with ‘Madrid Live’ and how did you get this experience?

AB: Initially I worked for the British Council organising literary and arts events, mainly touring British theatre companies to Spain. I worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company and Royal National Theatre and the experience was amazing. In the early 90’s, I worked for Radio Exterior de España, mostly translating the news, but also broadcasting, and I covered some major news stories at the time. I later produced features for the BBC about events taking place in Spain. These focused on the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992, the Expo in Seville, and New Flamenco (to name but a few).

MM: Why the media and why radio?

AB: Part of my job as Arts Projects Officer at the British Council entailed the promotion of British arts events to the Spanish press. Also, a friend of mine was a BBC correspondent and he inspired me. I thought to myself, “I can do that”, and I instantly became determined. Why radio? Because it’s intimate and accessible. I find it totally rewarding – producing the show and then presenting it. When I present Madrid Live from the 5th floor of the Círculo de Bellas Artes with its spectacular view of the Madrid rooftops, my intention is not to broadcast to the masses, I want to connect with the individual, with the lady doing her ironing at home, with the man driving home, with the teenager listening to his iPod.

MM: What sort of people do you interview on Madrid Live? How do you even get in contact with them?

AB: English-speaking film and theatre directors, actors, musicians, authors, comedians, photographers - whose work is being presented in Madrid. I feel after having worked in the arts for a number of years, I do have my finger on the pulse of the Madrid arts scene, and know a lot of the key players. I also receive dozens of press releases each day related to new events which are taking place in the city, and request interviews with the artists in question.

MM: Who’s the most interesting person you’ve interviewed?

AB: That’s a tricky question, as they’re all interesting! It’s so exhilarating being able to establish an affinity with someone you’ve met just seconds before and I feel that is probably one of my strong points. You read or hear about famous people in the press, and then you meet them and realise they’re just ordinary people. Christopher Lambert of Highlander and Greystoke fame would be a good example of this. He was really charming and down to earth. Beforehand I felt a little daunted about interviewing such a big name. Then, when he entered, he asked me which seat he should sit in and therefore I knew I shouldn’t be daunted. It was such an exciting feeling.

MM: What sort of audience does Madrid Live have? Why do these people tune in?

AB: Listeners are split between Spaniards who want to hear natural English and expats who want to feel at home. People want to hear the real voices of famous artists in their native tongue, and as far as I know, Madrid Live is the only radio programme in Madrid to broadcast the voices of English-speaking celebrities like Tim Burton and Christopher Lambert, without dubbing or translation.

MM: How do you pick the songs?

AB: They’re usually related to the week in question in Madrid. For example, I may play a song by a band which is about to play in Madrid. Otherwise, I play songs that have just been or are about to be released in Spain. Another case is when a world-famous musician/singer is in the news.

MM: What plans do you have for the future? Will you stay in Madrid indefinitely?

AB: I’ll always leave the door open to Yorkshire. A lot of expats who live in Spain say they’re glad to escape from their home country. For me that’s not the case. I love England, and I go home regularly. I feel blessed to be able to live in two places.



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TO BOLDLY GO...

WHERE NO SPANIARD HAS GONE BEFORE

Where do you see yourself in five to ten years' time? A normal question you might be asked in a job interview, but ask it to Dr Pablo Martínez and ninety-nine other individuals around the world and you might be surprised by their answer.

Dr Martínez and the rest of Mars One's hundred Round Three candidates imagine themselves on another world. For anyone living in a galaxy far, far away, who might not have heard of Mars One, let me explain the lofty plan. They want to establish a colony on Mars, not a colony of ants, but a colony of men and women with the plan of sending 24 people in total to the red planet. From the one hundred selected candidates, two are from Spain, one of whom is madrileño Dr Martínez, whilst the other Spanish contender, Angel Jané, comes from Barcelona.

A little further away than the moon, Dr Martínez is not exactly excited about the six to eight-month journey to Mars, which is the second-closest planet after Venus. Martínez would probably prefer a trip to the Moon, which is roughly 400,000 kilometres away, whilst Mars on the other hand, at its farthest, is closer to 400 million kilometres. This may be nothing in light years, or with a warp drive from science fiction, or in cryogenic sleep, but none of these are likely to be available for Mars One. Expect to hear several months of "Are we there yet?"

According to Dr Martínez, advances in technology could mean the difference between several months and only one month if, for example, we can increase thrust and propulsion in the next generation of rockets being designed.

Mars One is a small company trying to figure out the big space puzzle of what we have now, so let's imagine for the sake of the space candidates that Mars is not the kind of journey you do over Semana Santa. The good news is, if selected and the project gets off the ground, literally, Dr Martínez will only have to make the several month journey once, because Mars One are trying to send a colony to inhabit the planet for the rest of their natural life.

It is believed that the technology exists whereby we can send people to Mars, but we currently lack the know-how for them to make the return journey, due to the difficulty of sending sufficient fuels and launch platforms. The prospect of travelling for months in space might convince many against the trip but this is, after all, the next big step in space exploration.

Almost fifty years have passed since the moon landings and it is time to take the next leap for mankind, not just setting foot on another planet but colonising it too. No black and white cameras, but rather everything the digital age can offer.

The past wasn't all about success. We cannot forget the disastrous failure of Apollo One. Any venture where you require having to bring your own oxygen is dangerous, as anyone who has tried diving to the Lusitania wreck or climbing Mount Everest will confirm. Houston has inevitably had a few problems.

From Apollo One to the space shuttles Challenger and Columbia, people have watched in horror at the consequences of what happens when little things go wrong. Mars One has a lot to overcome, not least financial backing and sceptics, but once a spacecraft eventually takes off, candidates such as Pablo Martínez will have to adapt to a whole new world.

Most parents are happy to see their children fleeing the nest, but Pablo's and all the other Round Three candidates' friends and family will have to be supportive and proud about participation in a very difficult concept. Ultimately a team of four will be chosen.



In a vacuum, no one can hear you scream, but inside the candidates confined quarters, people can probably hear you snore. Any group has to work together perfectly. Getting to know future possible team mates, Dr Martínez keeps in touch with Round Three candidates via e-mail groups and Facebook. Rounds Four and Five of the process lie ahead, if he is successful. Our imagination has been ignited, and in October 2016, even President Obama spoke of sending humans to Mars by the 2030s.

Thanks to Mars One we are no longer talking about the possibility of going to Mars but rather when and who will get there first.

We are not going to Mars today, tomorrow or even next year, but rather like growing an apple tree, you have to be patient, wait, and see what shoots; but first you have to select the right seeds.

One thing doesn't change, however. Since the start of space travel, it's been about selecting the right people with the right stuff.

37-year-old Pablo Martínez is a physicist with a PHD in Electrochemistry, Science and Technology. He has published several papers and last year he studied Solar Energy Systems.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MORGAN FAGG

IMAGES COURTESY OF NASA & MARS ONE



EXPLAINING SPAIN

BY DAN BEERS MORENO

Spanish Hospitality

Whether you are a recent arrival or a long-term expat in Spain, you'll never cease to be amazed by how extraordinarily hospitable Spanish people can be. If you walk in a bar or a grocery store, it's easy to strike up a conversation with a stranger. If a neighbour has a problem, many neighbors jump in to help. It's likely that any expat will take no time in finding a circle of Spanish friends, as hospitality is intertwined with family closeness, the food-sharing ritual of going out for tapas, good weather and a homogenous social behavior. With these factors representing the tip of the iceberg, this column is dedicated to understanding Spanish culture, starting with why Spanish people are so majos, or friendly.

To begin, let's look at an important point in Spanish history that marked our DNA. 'Seven hundred years of Moorish occupation' is a term my North American father learned from my Spanish grandfather, and he used it to express why Spanish people are so hospitable and differ in punctuality or formalities compared to Anglo-Saxons. Some Spanish people describe the time when Moors lived in Spain as an occupation, but as this residency extended to seven centuries, I feel settlement is more appropriate, and very positive too. The Moors brought innovations such as new sciences, the concept of universities, and food diversity, and many of their introductions have influenced Spanish hospitality and character.

Spanish society needs that hospitable human closeness. I call it the honeycomb warmth effect. In Spain, people often live bunched together, as opposed to the ample space in North American suburban neighbourhoods or British townhouse residential areas, although closeness can have its drawbacks. I used to teach English in Madrid, and will never forget a married student commenting about how he made the mistake of buying an apartment in the same building as his in-laws. "My mother-in-law comes in without knocking, and she tells my wife how to raise our children", he complained, before adding that they also had to have lunch together every Sunday. However, he never complained about having the convenience and comfort of placing the kids with grandma while he and his wife went for a night out.

A Scandinavian sociology professor once said "the more south in Europe you go, the more people bunch together", which he supported with the example of public buses. When Swedes hop on a bus, they tend to sit as far away as possible from any other passenger. In Spain, I have sometimes experienced just the opposite, when with plenty of empty seats to fill, someone gets on and sits next to me as if it's the most natural thing in the world.

Another amazing aspect of Spanish tradition is the family. Family unity is strong, and once any individual joins a Spanish family they are accepted and treated equally with other members. The importance of the mother is also interesting. When there's a problem, she's the first point of call. I have some close American and British friends married to Spanish women, and they all say the same things as my father used to say in the 1980s: "I visit my in-laws just about every Sunday for lunch, and you won't believe how well and how much we eat." Family gatherings and food go hand in hand in Spain, and no one should leave the table hungry. There is a TV programme called Españoles en el Mundo on TVE1, during which Spanish expats are interviewed while living abroad. When asked what they miss the most about Spain, the answer is always 'their family' and 'going out for beers and tapas with friends'.

Tapas, Spain's global cuisine craze, definitely has Moorish roots, with everyone sharing all plates on the table, although I couldn't imagine going out for tapas without a cold beer or a nice red Ribera or Rioja wine. The traditional Anglo-Saxon dinner ritual, however, is one plate per person, and never put your fork or spoon in any common dish in the centre of the table.

The Moors introduced a variety of spices, along with rice, sugar, and a lot of the fruit and vegetables that we take for granted today. Thanks to that historical settlement, Spanish food has such a wide variety of dishes and ingredients. The tapas concept has travelled the world because it's fun to choose from and enjoy a variety of dishes at the same time. As my Spanish friend says, going out for tapas is like doing a pre-wedding food tasting.

The excellent Mediterranean climate in the south and along the coast is another key hospitality factor, although seasons in Madrid vary from extremely hot to very cold. Fortunately, hot normally covers more months than cold, with plenty of sunny days throughout the year. I have fond memories of spending Saturday lunches in the city centre with my family, watching my dad grab a terrace table for lunch, and then enjoying a warm March sun shining on our faces. Terraces are packed and lively when the weather is good, so if you're ever looking for an apartment to rent in Madrid, and want to sleep at night, make sure your bedroom window doesn't face a busy street. As an example of bar popularity, urban legend has it that there are more bars in Madrid's working-class Vallecas neighbourhood than in all of Sweden.

Spain is a homogenous society and quite conservative in many ways. We don't like changes and frequently follow the option 'if it isn't broken, don't fix it'. A good example of this behaviour is summer holidays, which are still usually taken in July or August, with many families or friends repeating the same plan year after year. A Spanish saying perfectly describes this repetitious ritual: más vale lo malo conocido que lo bueno por conocer, meaning 'a known evil is better than an unknown good'.

Customs and traditions flow from history. Spanish hospitality has a profound deep Arab influence and plays a key role in our social habits and the way we interact with family, friends and strangers. If you have recently moved to Spain, you have probably felt that hospitality, and if you have been here for a while, it's probably one of the reasons that you haven't moved elsewhere.



ABOUT DAN

Half Spanish and half Anglo-Saxon entrepreneur operating in Spain's bustling tourism sector, I have lived both cultures and can honestly reflect upon the differences between them through their traditions, customs, habits, food, clichés etc...

www.nativespanishtapas.com

Enough cocktails to drown a fish

By Cat Powell

Bars in Madrid tend to generally fall into one of two distinct camps; the ones with the unmissable glow of strip lighting and scattered napkins, that generally tend to be frequented by a more aging population, and those that cater to fans of an exposed brick interior, shabby chic furniture and a drink served in a jam jar. This is what makes 1862 Dry Bar so unique. It falls into neither category and I’m all the more pleased for it. A staggeringly chic cocktail bar perched on the perennially popular Calle Pez, it may look discreet from the roadside, but upon stepping inside, you could quite easily be transported into the prohibition-era bars that are more likely to be found stateside, than in Spain.

The affable owner, Alberto, is a fountain of knowledge on the cocktail front, in other words, what he doesn’t know about all things shaken or stirred isn’t worth knowing. The building (an old hardware store I believe) manages to effortlessly straddle being airy and cosy simultaneously. The downstairs is particularly sumptuous, with plenty of nooks for a clandestine date or an intimate chat, whilst sipping on your expertly made pisco sour.

What I particularly loved about 1862 Dry Bar, was the clearly knowledgeable and creative bar staff. The menu has all the classics in place, but also offers up some truly unique cocktails made by guest mixologists ranging from Trailer Happiness (hailing from Hoxton), with another one being from The Ritz in Madrid.

The furniture, the staff and ultimately the delectable drinks, make Dry Bar 1862 the perfect watering hole for a date night or a glamorous venue for a gaggle of friends. The cocktails are potent and pack a punch, however, the jewel in the crown is Alberto, whose passion for a decent drink prevails in a city that is often lacking.

1862 DRY BAR. Calle del Pez, 27. Metro: Noviciado. Phone: 609 53 11 51.



Buñuelos de Queso y Anís



These light airy crispy balls are perfect for a special treat, and can be dipped in some thick hot chocolate, or consumed with some coffee and a chupito or anís to keep out the winter chill.

Recipe for 15 buñuelos.

- * 1 egg
- * 1 pot requesón (125gs – curd/cottage cheese)
- * 3 rounded tbls flour
- * 4 tsp baking powder
- * 2 tsp anís
- * 1 tsp sugar
- * 1 tsp each of grated orange and lemon zest
- * Sunflower oil, for frying
- * Icing sugar, to serve

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DIRECTIONS

1. Empty the pot of requesón into a bowl and add the egg. Beat together until smooth.
2. Add the flour, baking powder, anís , sugar, grated lemon and orange zest. Beat the mixture again to make a smooth batter.
3. Pour oil into a frying pan, and heat until a small piece of bread sizzles and quickly browns when you drop it into the pan.
4. Gently drop rounded teaspoons of the batter into the pan; not too many at a time. The little balls will puff up slightly and turn golden underneath. Gently turn them over carefully to cook the other side.
5. Once they are golden all over, lift them out with a perforated spoon and place them on a plate covered with a kitchen towel to soak up any excess oil. Continue to use up the batter. Once the buñuelos have cooled a bit, dust with icing sugar .
6. To keep warm until serving, you can keep the cooked buñuelos in a 150° oven for up to one hour.

Best served with a shot of anís and a café solo.

The world’s a kitchen

So you’ve been in Madrid for a while and can now decipher menus. Your days of pointing and timidly saying “uno por favor” are long gone and you’ve finally joined the local food scene. And why wouldn’t you? The food on offer in even a bog-standard bar in Madrid beats hands down a bag of crisps in a pub in London.

We can all agree that the Spanish know how to make tasty food, but it’s also true that there’s something missing here. For a city of its size, Madrid is a bit short on good Asian options. If we add to this the problematic “I’d love a good chicken tikka masala or some fish and chips” moment that we’ve all had, then Madrid can at times disappoint. When the urge to have Asian food strikes, nothing works until you get it.

The solution to this dilemma is Mi Kitxen Restaurante, which you’ll find hidden down a small side street in Chamberí.

The interior is light and stylish with some funky, quirky touches. The crowd is a good mix - everything from hipsters to young families. You might end up sitting next to locals, ex-pats or visitors.

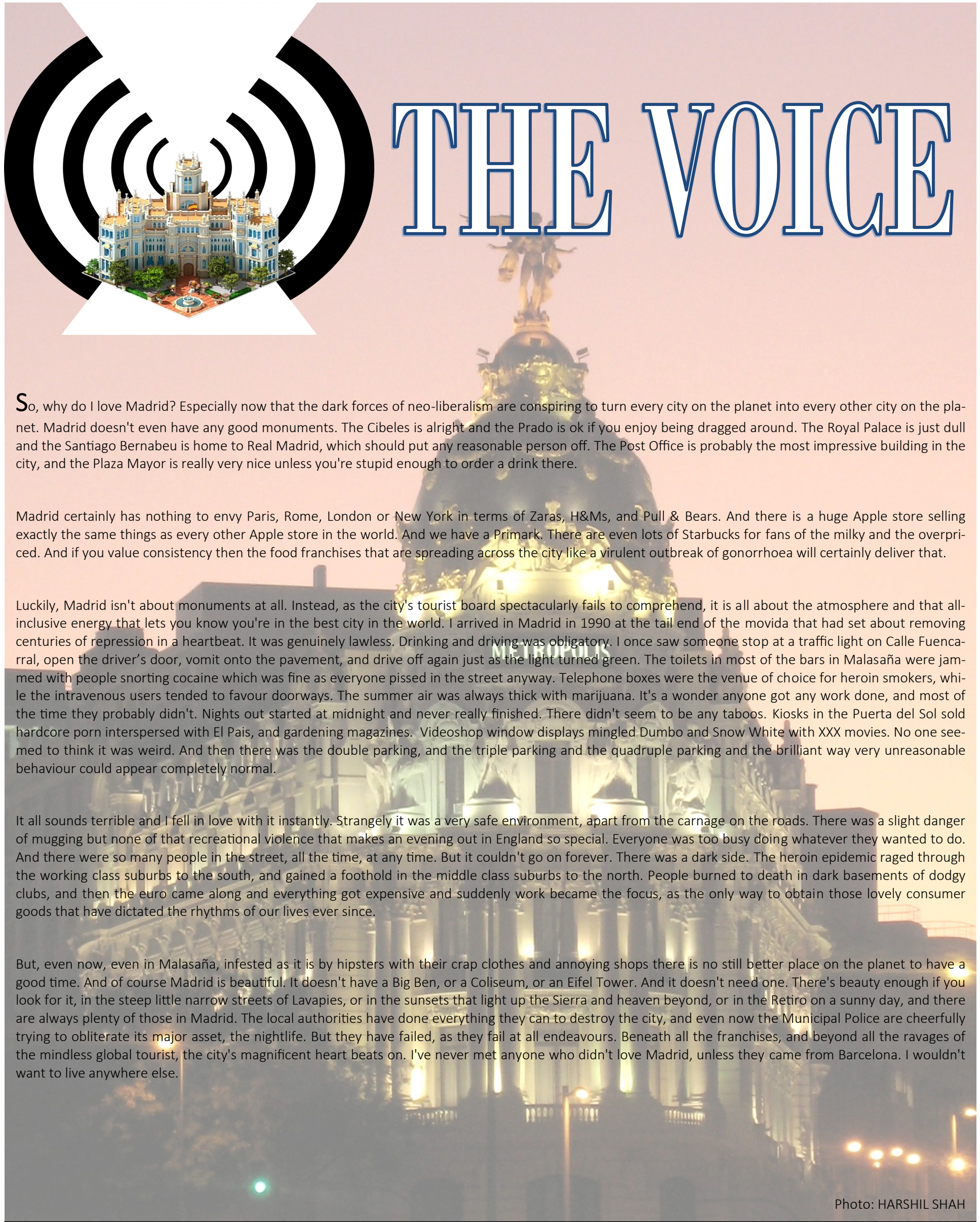
Mi Kitxen is the sort of place you could go to on a date, take your visiting parents to or just go to for a catch up and gossip with friends. And that’s the point. There’s something here for everyone.

The eclectic menu skilfully combines flavours of Asia and includes tasty dishes from Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and The Philippines. Peruvian and Mexican options are thrown in to give a Latin American kick which will sizzle your tongue and homesick ex-pats can find comfort with dishes they miss from their pre-Madrid life. To start, I decided to go to the Philippines with Kwek Kwek which are quail eggs in coloured tempura on a stick. The colourful lollypop look meant that my starter was as instagrammable as it was flavourful. Then a quick hop over to Thailand for my main dish of Chicken Pad Thai which was carefully spiced and impeccably prepared. My “if I can’t pronounce it, I’m not eating it” friend played safe and enjoyed an old classic of fish and chips. The flaky and tender fish beneath crispy batter didn’t disappoint.

If you want to give your sweet tooth a delicious treat, then the scrumptious desserts are worth indulging in. The sweet, creamy pastéis de nata are the best I’ve had outside of Portugal and the mojito sorbet with its subtle flavour got me in the party mood for later that night.

The food at Mi Kitxen is delicious and the service friendly and efficient. There was an English menu and our waiter was happy to explain the dishes to us in English. Mi Kitxen is a place you’ll visit and want to go back to and if you’re looking to impress (affordably), it’s a must. **J.R.**

Mi Kitxen. Calle de Hardenbusch, 8. Metro: Bilbao. Tel: 91 827 75 14



THE VOICE

So, why do I love Madrid? Especially now that the dark forces of neo-liberalism are conspiring to turn every city on the planet into every other city on the planet. Madrid doesn't even have any good monuments. The Cibeles is alright and the Prado is ok if you enjoy being dragged around. The Royal Palace is just dull and the Santiago Bernabeu is home to Real Madrid, which should put any reasonable person off. The Post Office is probably the most impressive building in the city, and the Plaza Mayor is really very nice unless you're stupid enough to order a drink there.

Madrid certainly has nothing to envy Paris, Rome, London or New York in terms of Zaras, H&Ms, and Pull & Bears. And there is a huge Apple store selling exactly the same things as every other Apple store in the world. And we have a Primark. There are even lots of Starbucks for fans of the milky and the overpriced. And if you value consistency then the food franchises that are spreading across the city like a virulent outbreak of gonorrhoea will certainly deliver that.

Luckily, Madrid isn't about monuments at all. Instead, as the city's tourist board spectacularly fails to comprehend, it is all about the atmosphere and that all-inclusive energy that lets you know you're in the best city in the world. I arrived in Madrid in 1990 at the tail end of the movida that had set about removing centuries of repression in a heartbeat. It was genuinely lawless. Drinking and driving was obligatory. I once saw someone stop at a traffic light on Calle Fuencarral, open the driver's door, vomit onto the pavement, and drive off again just as the light turned green. The toilets in most of the bars in Malasaña were jammed with people snorting cocaine which was fine as everyone pissed in the street anyway. Telephone boxes were the venue of choice for heroin smokers, while the intravenous users tended to favour doorways. The summer air was always thick with marijuana. It's a wonder anyone got any work done, and most of the time they probably didn't. Nights out started at midnight and never really finished. There didn't seem to be any taboos. Kiosks in the Puerta del Sol sold hardcore porn interspersed with El Pais, and gardening magazines. Videoshop window displays mingled Dumbo and Snow White with XXX movies. No one seemed to think it was weird. And then there was the double parking, and the triple parking and the quadruple parking and the brilliant way very unreasonable behaviour could appear completely normal.

It all sounds terrible and I fell in love with it instantly. Strangely it was a very safe environment, apart from the carnage on the roads. There was a slight danger of mugging but none of that recreational violence that makes an evening out in England so special. Everyone was too busy doing whatever they wanted to do. And there were so many people in the street, all the time, at any time. But it couldn't go on forever. There was a dark side. The heroin epidemic raged through the working class suburbs to the south, and gained a foothold in the middle class suburbs to the north. People burned to death in dark basements of dodgy clubs, and then the euro came along and everything got expensive and suddenly work became the focus, as the only way to obtain those lovely consumer goods that have dictated the rhythms of our lives ever since.

But, even now, even in Malasaña, infested as it is by hipsters with their crap clothes and annoying shops there is no still better place on the planet to have a good time. And of course Madrid is beautiful. It doesn't have a Big Ben, or a Coliseum, or an Eiffel Tower. And it doesn't need one. There's beauty enough if you look for it, in the steep little narrow streets of Lavapies, or in the sunsets that light up the Sierra and heaven beyond, or in the Retiro on a sunny day, and there are always plenty of those in Madrid. The local authorities have done everything they can to destroy the city, and even now the Municipal Police are cheerfully trying to obliterate its major asset, the nightlife. But they have failed, as they fail at all endeavours. Beneath all the franchises, and beyond all the ravages of the mindless global tourist, the city's magnificent heart beats on. I've never met anyone who didn't love Madrid, unless they came from Barcelona. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

Photo: HARSHIL SHAH



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Meet **Chris Haworth**,
Chris is from sunny Preston in the UK but, after
12 years in Madrid, he's more of a madrileño than
anything else. When he's not making exciting plans
for AIL Madrid he can be found playing poker or
eating Indian food, sometimes at the same time. And
he loves running marathons! This Christmas he will
be relaxing with his wife and 4 year old daughter
and, surprisingly enough, eating and drinking
along with the rest of us. Chris is warm,
approachable, and passionate about Spanish
language and culture, so please drop by
AIL and say hello.



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2016 BUSINESS ROUND UP

2016 will probably not go down as a year to remember. The feeling that nothing much has happened was heightened by having a lame-duck caretaker Government for most of the year. Yet fears that having no one in charge would derail the economy proved largely unfounded as Spain grew at over 3%, faster than its Euro peers. Although unemployment continued to edge downwards to below 18%, it is still painfully high, and with wages subdued, any feel-good factor is proving elusive. Madrid fared better than most - already the richest region in terms of GDP per inhabitant, it may soon overtake Cataluña as the largest regional economy.

The stock exchange has certainly not been in celebratory mood. Ending 2015 on 9,544, the IBEX35 index lost 230 points on the first day of business, setting the tone for the year. Despite recovering from its low of 7,645, it remains well below last year's close.

Little progress was made in reducing the stubbornly high budget deficit, and Spain received a slap on the wrist from the EU. Brussels accepted that the caretaker government had its hands tied and balked from carrying out its threat of big fines. But the newly formed minority Government now needs to keep Brussels happy, and is making noises about tax hikes. With Corporation Tax receipts expected to be down 25% in 2016, companies are likely to be the first to feel the pain.

Inheritance tax is another possible target, with hints of a new national minimum to smooth over big regional differences. Close to zero in Madrid, the rumours have reportedly fuelled a spate of donations to pre-empt changes.

The Brexit vote livened things up in June, shocking one of the countries most in favour of the UK remaining in the union. The Madrid Government was quick to put out a welcome mat for any businesses looking to relocate from the UK, especially from the City.

For businesses, the picture was mixed. Banks have had a tough 12 months, and were usually in the news for the wrong reasons. Several announced job losses and branch closures - abandoned bank branches have become a common sight around Madrid. Fraud and corruption cases involving Bankia and its taxpayer-financed rescue rumbled on. Meanwhile shareholders of the engineering and construction group Abengoa won't have fond memories of 2016 after asset write-downs led to losses of €5.4 billion. A restructuring plan was agreed which hands ownership over to banks and creditors, thus avoiding what would have been the largest insolvency of 2016.

Spain's biggest industry - tourism - was also its star performer, on course for a record 74 million visitors. Exporters also did their bit despite weakness in many markets, and with the help of the tourists the trade balance swung into the black. Inditex Group, owner of the Zara brand, continued to show the world how to retail clothes, with half year sales up 11% to 10.5bn. Its founder Amancio Ortega was once again crowned the world's richest man by Forbes. Not bad for someone who left school at 14.

ROGER PIKE

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RONALDO HAT-TRICK SPOILS ATLETI PARTY IN FINAL LEAGUE DERBY AT CALDERÓN

By Tom Hankin

The final league derby between the two Madrid giants at Atlético’s Vicente Calderón Stadium did not go as planned for the home side as they were convincingly beaten 3-0. It was undoubtedly the performance of the season so far from Real Madrid talisman Cristiano Ronaldo, as time and time again he tormented the Atlético defence. A deflected free-kick that caught Atlético keeper Jan Oblak out of position provided Ronaldo’s first goal, and his second came from the penalty spot after a clumsy challenge on him by Stefan Savic. His third, added in the 77th minute, followed a swift counterattack and cross from Welshman Gareth Bale. It was the first league victory for Real against Atlético since April 2013.

Ronaldo’s performance delighted Real fans and his hat-trick saw him surpass the Madrid derbies goalscoring record of Real legend Alfredo Di Stefano by one goal, bringing his derby total to seventeen. The excellent showing comes after Ronaldo’s recent signing of a new contract, which will see him remain at the Bernabéu until June 2021. He also recently claimed that he could continue to play at his extraordinarily high level until he was 40 years old. At the moment it seems difficult to argue with him, and fans around LaLiga, whether they love him or hate him, will have to live with him for a good while yet.

The result leaves Real Madrid at the top of LaLiga with 30 points, four points clear of

MS Dhoni Visit

On Sunday the 6th of November, on a glorious sunny day, India's limited overs captain and cricketing legend Mahendra Singh Dhoni paid a visit to our club in San Fernando de Henares, Madrid, along with over 300 fans as part of a corporate event for a large Indian company.

To avoid unwanted attention, the visit was kept secret by the club committee until the morning of the event, when it was revealed to club members they would be playing cricket with none other than MS Dhoni.

At 9am Madrid CC started preparing the ground, laying out the pitch and stocking the bar. At 11:30 the coaches arrived bringing the guests to the ground where they patiently awaited Dhoni's arrival. Kwik Cricket sets were brought out to entertain the families while drinks and snacks were served.



At 12:30 Dhoni arrived and played for around an hour, batting and bowling with both Madrid CC and the Indian visitors before signing autographs and chatting with enthusiastic fans. "

"It was a great experience for all involved and our heartfelt thanks to the man himself for coming to our humble cricket club." said Jon Woodward, Madrid CC President. "We've moved heaven and earth in the last few days to stage this event, but meeting Dhoni and seeing the happiness on our guests' faces has made it all worthwhile".

Madrid CC is the major cricket club in central Spain, originally formed in 1975 and relaunched in 2001. After 15 years of playing all its league matches away from home, with long trips to the coast each weekend, Madrid CC now has a great venue in Madrid. During the forthcoming seasons, plans are in place to improve the facilities, building nets and extending its schools cricket program.

great rivals Barcelona who, ahead of the December Clásico between the two sides, slipped up by drawing 0-0 against Málaga. Real’s focus will now turn the Club World Cup in mid-December in Japan as they bid to become the Club World Champions for the second time in their history. Meanwhile, Atlético fall to 5th place, 9 points behind their city rivals and will look to regroup before the LaLiga Christmas break from 18 December to 8 January. It is already an uphill struggle for Atleti to climb and win the league this season and perhaps their focus will turn to the Copa del Rey or to their elusive first Champions League title, having begun their European campaign with a perfect four wins from four games.

In contrast to the two Madrid giants, the other Madrid side, Leganés have had a poor month losing four consecutive games, including a 3-0 defeat in their first ever match at the Santiago Bernabéu. Leganés will need an improved performance during the next month to really kick-start their survival campaign.

England and Spain provided an additional footballing spectacle this month as they played out an entertaining 2-2 draw at Wembley Stadium. England had been leading 2-0 thanks to goals from Adam Lallana and Jamie Vardy until the team imploded in the 89th minute in a manner that has become all too common to England fans. First Iago Aspas struck with a superbly taken goal, and to the delight of the Spanish fans Real Madrid’s Isco then equalised in the 95th minute with virtually the last kick of the game. Both teams are continuing to rebuild after their poor European Championship campaigns and after this game it was clear that both sides still have much to improve.

Real Madrid and Barcelona met in the Basketball EuroLeague. Real Madrid manhandled their rivals in Barcelona. Led by 20 points from Sergio Llull and 19 points from Jaycee Carroll, Real Madrid pulverised Barcelona 102-63 to avenge a Spanish league defeat to their opponents earlier in the month. Real Madrid remain in second position with a 6 -2 record on the season and will be looking ahead to a massive game against the reigning EuroLeague Champions and current standing leaders, CSKA Moscow on 6th January as they continue their bid to regain the EuroLeague Championship they last won in 2015.

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FROM COURT TO CORTE

Former world tennis champion Rafael Nadal was in Madrid last month to showcase Tommy Hilfiger’s new collection and meet a few of his die-hard fans.

The Madrid Metropolitan’s Maja Jakic was there to witness the action...

The overcrowded gourmet department of El Corte Ingles brims with excited fans and admirers hoping to grab a glimpse and even spend a moment with their favourite tennis player.

Rafael Nadal, the 30-year-old tennis icon from Mallorca, has come to promote Tommy Hilfiger's autumn campaign and the limited-edition tailor's collection 'THFLEX Rafael Nadal Edition' in celebration of his second year as the brand’s ambassador. Announced as the “man with his own style on and off the court”, “Rafa” proved it to be true.

Approachable, and without a sign of arrogance, he was ready to face his audience and have an afternoon chat about sport and life itself.

Anyone who is familiar with the world of professional tennis is aware of his greatness, with fourteen Grand Slam titles and eleven consecutive years of being in the top ten of the world's ranking, he regularly faced his unavoidable opponent, Roger Federer. This year, however, for the first time, neither one of the two players have reached the top 5 of the ATP list after a 10 years of mastering the tennis courts. For Nadal, this has come perfectly timed to allow him to reflect on his career and his hard-working way to success.

Nothing but sport

When asked about the possible alternatives for his dedication and what he would have chosen instead of tennis, Nadal was pretty clear. Considering that from an early age he was always interested in sport, he is sure that it would have still been something related to it. “Professional sport would be a part of my life”. “It is connected to a healthy lifestyle, travel and getting to know new cultures, which is the most important thing for me.”, he says.



His dedication and passion toward sport never comes to question, but what does, is that of his favourite TV series. What one might consider as an everyday casual pleasure, such as obsessing over a Netflix series, for Nadal it becomes a different perspective. “When you are an athlete and traveling a lot, there is only time to train, and on few occasions when you are given some free time, you can probably catch-up on a random movie or listen to music, but never keep up with it. By the time another free moment comes along, a show can be on an entirely different season.”, he says.

The family guy

Nadal is known as a man who likes to express his love of family, his girlfriend and friends at home. “Sport is my first passion”, but points out that “the most enjoyable moments and pleasures are those spent with family and friends”. On his home island of Mallorca, he states that he has a “strong relationship with the sea and everything connected to it”, “I try to take advantage of it whenever I get the opportunity”, he says.

The payoff of ambition and sacrifice

Nadal's philosophy for great success revolves around a lot of sacrifices. Even now, if he were to go back to being the 10-year-old boy, the age he was when he first entered the tennis world, he would have given himself the advice to keep on making sacrifices for what he loves the most. “I have no regrets of not having a typical childhood.”, he confirms. Nadal says that there is always time for fun, relaxation and doing the things you like, but the priority is to be happy, which for him was the sport and healthy living. “Sacrifices are followed by ambition”, says Rafa. “It is the only key to success”.

“When I won my first Roland Garros, I sat in my hotel room and thought ‘Wow, now there is nothing more important than this’ that I can do more. But you keep on with the next ambition.”

However, he emphasises that it is necessary to not get carried away with obsessiveness. “The goal is always to improve”, he says, “but not if it requires going to extremes and developing unhealthy ambitions.”

Nadal didn't miss a chance, as a fair player and humble sportsman, to congratulate Argentina for winning the Davis cup recently saying that it is a country with the great tradition in tennis.

He concluded by expressing his desire and hopes to return to top level tennis in 2017 after a rough season due to the injury in 2016. “I’ll be back”, he says with a wry smile.

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