



AVA'S MADRID CULTURAL MAP

Café Comercial
Very occasionally, Ava needed to relax and build up her strength. Hiding her green eyes and hangover behind a sophisticated pair of dark glasses, she would stare at a cup of coffee in Café Comercial. To the outside observer, it may have seemed like a film-worthy scene, but very possibly on the inside her thoughts were troubled.

San Ginés
Mascara running after endless nights of revelry, broken Spanish, hot chocolate and churros all came together at San Ginés. It was impossible to tell if the night was ending or a new day was beginning in that marvellous Madrid where Ava lived it up to the fullest.

Chicote
Ava Gardner nearly drank Chicote dry. To mention Chicote without mentioning the "world's most beautiful animal" would be like poking a hole in the bar's history, or demolishing one of its load-bearing walls. To mention Ava without mentioning Chicote would be to erase the memory of her countless wild nights in Madrid.

Loewe
No one had a bigger appetite for pleasure or for feeling alive. Ava lived her life dangerously close to the edge, indulging all of her whims, from men to the marvellous crocodile leather handbag—almost a masterpiece of structural design—she bought in 1958 in the iconic Loewe boutique in Gran Vía avenue.

Las Ventas
Constantly and almost pathologically, Ava sought thrills. At Las Ventas bullring she found a place that got her heart pumping, a place full of applause, laughter, fear and a great deal of excitement. She became a bullfighting addict, but most of all she went mad for the bullfighters, regardless of whether they were mistakes, like Mario Cabré, or conquests like Luis Miguel Dominguín.

Florida Park
The bucolic El Retiro Park was home to El Florida, which Ava frequented. She looked like an apparition of the Virgin Mary surrounded by believers. Ava partied hard at night, and then the night would turn into day, and the day would spit her back out into the bucolic park again.

Villa Rosa
Villa-Rosa was the ideal place to seek out the intense passion of Madrid's gypsies, with whom Ava often finished off the night over a drink or, so they say, between the sheets...

El Rastro
Condoms were banned in Madrid, which had quite a strict moral code, but they could be acquired in El Rastro flea market if you asked for "an umbrella cover". Ava Gardner loved El Rastro.

Corral de la Morería
A spot between the entrance and the lavatory offered a view of everyone in attendance at this flamenco club. That was Ava Gardner's spot; it witnessed her laughter, her drunkenness, her lack of flamenco rhythm, her extraordinary beauty and her wild abandon.

La Mallorquina
Swinging her incredible hips, pleasure-seeking Ava would climb the 22 steps from La Mallorquina's first floor to its Tea Room, where the get-togethers went on forever and were full of cultural figures and chocolates... many, many chocolates.

Lhardy
Azorin said that "in Lhardy's mirror, we vanish into eternity". Before Ava, that same mirror had also captured La Chelito, a couple singer whose reflection contrasted fabulously with that of the elegant ladies who would sit and enjoy a consommé and a glass of Tokay.

Hotel Castellana Hilton
There probably isn't much that the walls of Presidential Suite 716 at the Castellana Hilton haven't seen. Every time the alluring click of Ava's heels was heard on the Carrara marble floors of the lobby of what is now the Hotel InterContinental, everyone knew that the queen of Madrid's nightlife was headed out. What they didn't know was if or in what state she'd be coming back.

- FORO DE EMPRESAS POR MADRID
- Acciona
 - Bankia
 - BBVA
 - CaixaBank
 - Callao
 - Cámara Madrid
 - Clear Channel
 - Endesa
 - ingespórt
 - JCDecaux
 - Mahou San Miguel
 - Mutua Madrileña
 - PHILIPS
 - REALE SEGUROS
 - SACYR
 - Santander
 - simon
 - Telefónica
 - OHL Desarrollos

WHEN THE NIGHT AIR OF MADRID WAS INFUSED WITH THE SMELL OF AVA GARDNER

There was a time, back in the 1960s, when the night air of Madrid was infused with the smell of Ava Gardner. That smell was a medley of alcohol, Chanel and tobacco, compounded by a whiff of sweat following a night on the town in some flamenco fiesta. Everywhere she went, the actress would leave that scent in her wake. Eva was even more beautiful when she was as high as a kite, and she was beautiful indeed in those nights in Madrid when she would exercise her freedom to the utmost, accompanied by gypsies whose clapping would ring out, as if being free was a spectacle in its own right.

If you hadn't lit a cigarette for Ava Gardner in Chicote, in the Corral de la Morería or in Villa Rosa, then you were a nobody. But if you went looking for her in any of the watering holes she usually frequented, they'd tell you she hadn't arrived yet, or she'd just left, or she hadn't been there for a while. The pursuit of that elusive roe deer had marked out an itinerary in that otherwise grey and lacklustre Madrid where Hollywood artists making movies in Spain would hold white-tuxedo parties by the sides of mentholated swimming pools. Unlike them however, Ava Gardner was not a bird of passage. She had installed herself in this city where waiters, taxi drivers, valets, and beggars asking for handouts at the doors of flamenco *tablaos* would tell you that they had never seen a more beautiful woman, even with her mascara running down her face at the end of a bender.

She had arrived in Spain in 1953 to shoot the film *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman* in Tossa de Mar, on the Costa Brava. She knew right away that this was an exotic country full of colourful people who would admire and protect her. In some of her first images, we see her descending from her Iberia flight in Barajas, a bouquet of flowers in her hands, or at the barrier of the Ventas bullring wearing sunglasses and a straw hat, or at a *capea* with renowned bullfighter Luis Miguel Dominguín. She would sometimes be seen with Hemingway or Orson Welles at the Cervecería Alemana in the Plaza de Santa Ana or at the Cock Bar with Sinatra, or perhaps at Oliver or El Comercial with some journalists or people from the show business world, but she always reigned supreme and on her own at Los Gabrieles in Calle de Echegaray, at the terrace on Calle Riscal, at the Florida Park or the Pavilion in El Retiro Park, and of course at all the flamenco *tablaos*. When she first arrived in Madrid, her lair was suite 716, the presidential suite of the Castellana Hilton. In the early hours of the morning, once the party was over, besotted admirers would gather by the elevator hoping for a last glimpse of their beloved. She then moved to a chalet called *La Bruja*, The Witch, in the La Moraleja neighbourhood and finally and most famously, to her spectacular penthouse duplex at 11 Calle Doctor Arce, where on many a night the guitars and the stomping of flamenco dancers threatened to bring the house down. In the mid-sixties, her light began to fade and then one day, in 1967, she moved to London and in Madrid the scent of her perfume gradually vanished into thin air.

Manuel Vicent
(Villavieja, Castellón, 1936).
In 2020 he published his novel *Ava en la noche*. (Alfaguara)

AVA'S MADRID

1 Chicote

Gran Vía, 12 - METRO: Gran Vía

In 1931, what is now Madrid's oldest cocktail bar was founded by charismatic barman Perico Chicote. His extraordinary collection of bottles warranted the description of "museum" that appeared on the sign out front. Inside, the bar has preserved the restrained Art Deco-style interior decor by rationalist architect Luis Gutiérrez Soto. Among other buildings, the same architect designed Cine Callao, also located on Gran Vía avenue. The bar's glory days, however, were in the 1950s and 1960s, when it became a favourite haunt of Hollywood stars passing through Spain, either to film at Estudios Bronston or to promote one of their films in the capital. In addition to Ava Gardner, Frank Sinatra (her husband), Grace Kelly, Rita Hayworth, Sophia Loren, James Stewart and Gregory Peck have all sat on its stools. It was, and still is, so famous that musician Agustín Lara paid tribute to it in his song *Madrid*, singing "en Chicote un agasajo postinero con la crema de la intelectualidad" ("in Chicote, a swank fête with the crème of the intellectuals"). The intellectuals he was referring to were the likes of Severo Ochoa and José Ortega y Gasset. The artist Luis Buñuel christened Chicote "the Sistine Chapel of martinis".



2 Loewe

Gran Vía, 8 - METRO: Gran Vía

Few fashion firms are as closely tied to Madrid as Loewe, which began its life as a leather workshop in Calle del Lobo in the mid-19th century. It's named after the famous Loewe family of craftsmen of German origin, who successfully developed the concept of the European boutique in Spain for the first time. In 1939, they moved to Gran Vía avenue. During the reign of Alfonso XIII, they were approved as suppliers to the Spanish Royal Family. The iconic bags that have been displayed in their shop windows provide an overview of the history of 20th century design. Without even trying, Ava Gardner, one of Loewe's most sophisticated and cosmopolitan customers, created awareness for the Madrid brand outside of Spain. Today it has over 200 shops around the world.



3 Las Ventas

Alcalá, 237 - METRO: Ventas

Much has been written about the tempestuous love story of Ava Gardner and matador Luis Miguel Dominguín. They say that after their first night together, when he got up quickly from the bed, she asked him "Where are you going?", to which he replied, "To tell people about it!". Years later, he still remembered her as "the prettiest and the wildest", saying that he had "had a fierce she-wolf in a cage". It wasn't just bullfighters that interested Ava, she was also taken with the sport. In Las Ventas bullring, the most important in the world and the only one, along with those in Nimes and Mexico City, where junior matadors can become professionals in a ceremony called the alternativa, the starlet learnt the rules of an art that also captivated her friends Ernest Hemingway and Orson Welles. Tendido 7 (a tendido is a group of designated rows) is where the world's most knowledgeable and demanding fans are said to sit. The building, a spectacular example of Neo-Mudéjar architecture, first opened its gates in 1931. It has a museum that contains bullfighters' costumes, old posters, artworks and various objects used by the greatest bullfighters ever.



4 El Hilton

Paseo de la Castellana, 49 - METRO: Gregorio Marañón

From the time it first opened in 1953, Hotel Hilton, now the Intercontinental, was where numerous Hollywood actors looking for select but discreet lodging made their home while filming in Spain. Located on the elegant Paseo de la Castellana, slightly outside of the heart of the city centre, the hotel was a revolutionary new addition to Madrid's hospitality sector. They say the grand opening party went on for three days and three nights. Bette Davis, "Cantiflas", Charlton Heston and Romy Schneider are just some of the stars who, like Ava Gardner, chose it as their base of operations. Although our actress went on to own a number of homes in Madrid, the Hilton never forgot her.

5 Florida Park

Fernán González, 65 - METRO: Ibiza

The northeast corner of El Retiro Park was the last private area Spain's monarchs enjoyed before the park was finally ceded completely to the city. It was home to the site known as the "Reserve of Ferdinand VII", a Romantic-style garden dotted with small, whimsical architectural features like Casita del Pescador (Fisherman's Cottage) and Casa del Contrabandista (Smuggler's House). When the park became public property, the latter was converted into Florida Park, which was Madrid's most popular nightclub for decades. Its stage has hosted all the biggest names in Spanish music, from Rocío Jurado and Julio Iglesias to Isabel Pantoja and Paloma San Basilio, as well as international stars like Charles Aznavour, Raffaella Carrà and Liza Minnelli. One of the performances that was forever etched in the audience's memory, however, was during a live TVE broadcast which singer Lola Flores interrupted looking for an earring she had lost. "Pardon me, I dropped a gold earring. You're going to have to give it back, after all the trouble I went through to get it. Noooo, that's a tassel!". A few years ago, the venue reopened its doors. It is now a restaurant that also offers shows.



6 Lhardy

Carrera de San Jerónimo, 8 - METRO: Sevilla

Galdós said that Lhardy arrived in Madrid to "dress bakery goods in their Sunday best". It was the first European-style restaurant to open in the city, and that was over 175 years ago. But it is dishes as Spanish as *cocido* (chickpea stew), Madrid-style tripe and kidneys in sherry sauce that have made this establishment, now part of Spanish history in its own right, so famous. Its six dining rooms – the Isabelline, Japanese, White, Sarasate, Gayarre and Tamberlick rooms – have hosted, and continue to host, meetings between politicians from the neighbouring parliament building, as well as faithful customers like writers Azorín, Rubén Darío and Julio Camba.



7 Villa Rosa

Plaza de Santa Ana, 15 - METRO: Sol

Villa Rosa, a *tablao* (flamenco club) founded in 1911, is the oldest in the city. It has a striking exterior, thanks to an extraordinary tiled façade designed by ceramicists Alfonso Romero Mesa and Juan Ruiz de Luna, who tiled its walls with images of the monuments of Madrid and the major Andalusian cities in 1927. Imperio Argentina, Juanito Valderrama, Miguel de Molina and Antonio Mairena are some of the flamenco artists who have performed at this *tablao* in Barrio de las Letras (Literary Quarter). It became one of Ava Gardner's favourite hangouts, and was also frequented by many of the people in her circles.



8 El Rastro

Ribera de Curtidores - METRO: La Latina

At Madrid's most famous flea market, you'll find stalls selling clothing and furnishings, used bookshops, second-hand and antiques dealers, auction houses and just about anything you can imagine. Writer Ramón Gómez de la Serna said that anything you can't find in El Rastro simply doesn't exist, and that the objects in the market have been given a second chance. It has fascinated film directors such as Carlos Saura, Eloy de la Iglesia and Pedro Almodóvar, who have pictured it in their movies, as well as everyone who visits it in search of a bargain or a bit of history. Although stalls fill the streets on Sunday mornings, most shops open on the other days of the week.

9 Corral de la Morería

Morería, 17 - METRO: Ópera

The specialist press considers Corral de la Morería one of the *tablaos* that offers the very best flamenco. It was chosen by The New York Times as one of the 1,000 places in the world to see before you die. This likely wasn't due solely to the quality of its shows and its Michelin-starred restaurant's menu, but because the artists who have performed on its stage – including Antonio Gades, "La Chunga", Diego el "Cigala" and José Merce – are as fascinating as the audiences that have gathered there. In addition to Ava Gardner, the list includes Rudolf Nureyev, John Lennon, the Shah of Iran, Ché Guevara, who attended incognito, and Salvador Dalí, who tried to enter with a panther.



10 La Mallorquina

Puerta del Sol, 8 - METRO: Sol

With over 125 years of history, La Mallorquina is one of Madrid's oldest patisseries. Its windows, which face Puerta del Sol, have witnessed some of the most crucial moments in Spanish history, such as the Proclamation of the Second Republic and the protest camp set up on 15 March 2011. The shop started out by selling traditional goods from Mallorca, but over time its menu expanded to include goods of foreign origin. *Napolitanas*, filled with custard or chocolate, and palmiers are some of the popular treats that always grace its display cases. One of its biggest attractions is that its pastries have won over customers from all walks of life: labourers, aristocrats and Hollywood stars alike.



11 San Ginés

Pasadizo de Sn Ginés, 5 - METRO: Sol

Many a night out finishes off at dawn in Chocollateria de San Ginés, which is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. In *Bohemian Lights*, Valle-Inclán was already calling it a "modernist doughnut shop", a meeting place for all those who wander the city in the hazy hours of the morning. There were nights when nobody saw Ava Gardner come home. Where was she? What was she up to? This establishment is one of those exceptional places which, in its over 125 years of history, has hardly changed and to this day continues to serve delicious, world-famous *churros* and hot chocolate.



12 Café Comercial

Glorieta de Bilbao, 7 - METRO: Bilbao

Café Comercial is one of the few literary cafés left in Madrid. Regular customers have included Edgar Neville, Ignacio Aldecoa, Enrique Jardiel Poncela, Rafael Azcona and Gloria Fuertes, among many others. In the 1950s, there weren't many cultural figures who hadn't sat down at its marble pedestal tables at one time or another. Today, in addition to being a restaurant, it still offers a jam-packed cultural programme which includes book presentations and concerts. It's one of the places that best evokes the Madrid of Ava's era, the Madrid that she knew and loved.

