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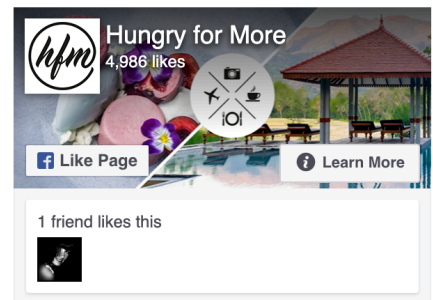


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## CHEF'S SECRET: PACO RONCERO – PACO RONCERO RESTAURANTE, MADRID



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Paco Roncero is famous for a gastronomic style that combines the best produce with great technique and creative avant-garde inspiration. His approach translates not only in his cooking method, but also in the way of presenting and understanding food as a unique sensory experience.

## Paco Roncero Restaurante

Paco Roncero Restaurante opened its doors with the name of La Terraza del Casino at the end of 1990, in one of the most special locations of the Casino de Madrid. This place is no casino in the traditional way. It's a private member's club that offers a library, a bar, meeting rooms and all manner of spa and health services. The stunning location can also be rented for events, meetings, presentations, parties and social gatherings.

Located on the top floor with a spectacular terrace, Paco Roncero Restaurante offers some of the best views of Madrid. In the summer, guests can enjoy a full menu at this outdoor paradise in the city centre.

The stunning interior is totally different from what you may expect, given that it's housed in a monumental, traditional building like the Casino de Madrid. The first thing you notice is the decoration, which has nothing to do with the classical architecture that dominates the rest of the construction. With the light and modern décor, the interior designer Jaime Hayón has perfectly interpreted the avant-garde style that Roncero presents in his dishes.





# Emotion, technology and experience at the Paco Roncero workshop

One floor down from the restaurant is the chef's workshop. Using gastronomy to provoke new sensations and communicate emotion, is a dream of Paco Roncero. The result is an interesting space full of possibilities for tastings and experimentation.

Designed and built based on criteria of integral sustainability, design for all and emotional engineering, the innovative chef creates an immersive environment that amplifies the sensory involvement of the guests.

## A winery full of wonders

The chef's creations are accompanied by the wine suggestions of the respected Maria José Huertas. After a two-year stint at El Bulli and the completion of a Sommelier Course at the Chamber of Commerce of Madrid, since 1999, she has been the sommelier of the Paco Roncero Restaurante. In her career, Maria José has received many acknowledgements, such as the Sommelier of the Year Award from the Gourmets Group in 2003; prize for the Best Sommelier in the Community of Madrid, presented at Madrid Fusión in 2004; and the Best Sommelier prize, awarded by the International Academy of Gastronomy in 2005.

## Avant-garde, innovative and creative creations, full of elegance

Paco Roncero runs several restaurants, but the Paco Roncero Restaurante reflects his style best: avant-garde, innovative and creative, yet true to the authentic taste of the top-quality products he enjoys using in his dishes.

Both tradition and the finest international cuisine are present on the menu. A collision of all gastronomic cultures comes together to give rise to dishes such as the American Prawn, the Kokotxa and the Pilpil de Curry to the Rooster and the Royal with Mole.

Features such as the bread and olive service – presented in the workshop space, with video projections of traditional olive groves and live cooking, or the staging of the dish (in the most uplifting and surprising presentation you can imagine) take centre stage in a new way of understanding the dining room service. The interaction with the guests becomes quintessential, making the restaurant experience a true gastronomic performance, offering a show that is savoured with all five senses.



## **An introduction to chef Paco Roncero's career and style**

Paco Roncero is not just a chef, he's also an entrepreneur. He's the creator of the kitchen management software Gestor de Cocina (Kitchen Manager) and is the author of several books on cooking and culinary culture. He has led various workshops on culinary research and additionally has worked as a congressman and teacher in a number of schools.

Trained at the School of Hospitality and Tourism in Madrid, Paco Roncero performed internships in Zalacaín and the Ritz Hotel until in 1991 when he joined the staff of the Casino de Madrid. Five years later, he was appointed head chef of the banquet department and in 2000, he was promoted to the Casino kitchen headquarters. There he became responsible for the banquet area and Paco Roncero Restaurante.

In January 2002, the restaurant received a Michelin star. In addition, the restaurant is distinguished with the most prestigious gastronomic awards, such as the Chef L'Avenir 2005 prize, awarded by the International Academy of Gastronomy. In 2008, the restaurant received the Best Restaurant in Spain award from the Spanish Association of Chefs and Restaurateurs.

Gastronomy, and the 2006 National Gastronomy Award of the Royal Academy of Spanish Gastronomy. In 2018, he was part of the list of The Best Chef Awards. And today, Paco Roncero Restaurante boasts two Michelin stars and three suns from the Repsol Guide.

## Meet chef Paco Roncero



**Chef's Secret (The Best Chef & Hungry for More): Can you tell us more about your career as a chef?**

**Chef Paco Roncero:** As a teenager, I was enrolled in the university to study Biological Sciences. But one day, I went visiting the School of Gastronomy, because a family member used to work there. From that day on, everything changed. I immediately fell in love with the atmosphere, all the flavours I tasted and all the aromas I smelled. So, from that moment on I was determined to become a chef.

Looking back to the past, my grandfather lived in the area of Sevilla where I went fishing, hunting and doing all kinds of things in nature as a young kid. He also had a big garden, so my passion for beautiful products and ingredients started back then. I spoke to my mother and father a million times because I really wanted to become a chef and, finally, they said to go for it. There was only one condition: I had to become the very best chef. I started at the hospitality school and I knew immediately that this was my passion, my vocation. I always had a strong feeling for taste and smell.

**Chef's Secret: How did you develop your signature style?**



**Chef Paco Roncero:** Firstly, I worked in Spain at some restaurants to gain experience. Then I went to England for a couple of months, which was an enriching experience. When I came back to Spain, our current place in Madrid was not yet the gastronomic restaurant it is today. Back then, the cuisine was rather traditional. Nevertheless, flavour and product have always been super important.

When Ferran Adria was hired as a culinary consultant here in 1998 everything changed. Thanks to this collaboration, I got the chance to learn new techniques and explore adventurous ideas. A new world opened up and we dared to be more creative. So, we came up with the combination of traditional food with good sauces as a basis, and contemporary influences. Gradually I started combining my experience in the Spanish cuisine with the experience I gained from travelling the world. Those influences are an enrichment for me as a person and as a chef. And that's how I developed the style I am known for today. We definitely use technique, but no more than what is needed in a certain dish. Products have to remain recognisable, both in taste and look. Flavour is the most important aspect of anything.

**Chef's Secret: You have other restaurants and projects besides Paco Roncero Restaurante. Can you tell us a bit more about those?**

**Chef Paco Roncero:** First I started to develop my style of gastronomy at Paco Roncero Restaurante. And we felt people really liked it, but it's very hard to expand. It's difficult to find the products we use throughout the world, and you need a lot of knowledge and experience to manage a fine dining restaurant. That's why we stepped over to tapas and created a chain of tapas bars. It was a great way to present the real Spanish flavours to our guests in a more easy and accessible form. The tapas concept has also gone over to other countries now and we have discovered it's always necessary to customise the dishes to the local preferences. People in China or Colombia, for example, tend to like other things. So, the concept is similar, but we tweak it to make it a success on a local scale.

I must say that the experience I gained in my restaurants in Spain and other countries have influenced me as a chef. I'm now applying this to Paco Roncero Restaurante as well. So, it's an exchange of inspiration from different directions.

Besides managing restaurants, I also do television performances. I like software, video, pictures and so on. That's why I felt the need for good software to manage my own restaurant. So, I started to develop my own systems, which became quite successful, and are still growing. So, although I am really focused on Paco Roncero Restaurante, I'm also involved in many other projects as it's a continuous stream of inspiration.



**Chef's Secret:** That seems like a lot of work... What's your secret to success?

**Chef Paco Roncero:** A lack of sleep and a very good team! Only in that way can you combine all the aspects of this kind of work!

**Chef's Secret:** Where do you find inspiration to come up with new ideas and dishes?

**Chef Paco Roncero:** I frequently look to previous menus and experiences from the past. And then I combine that knowledge with my current vision. One of our main ideas was to create a menu from the background we gained throughout the years, combined with influences from travelling around the world. Now we regularly combine local products and traditions, with influences from around the globe. That way, we try to provide a symbiosis of Spanish and international products and preparations. For example, on the menu there's a taco made with local pork with its typical crunch. The dish still has the Mexican influence, but I do my own thing with it.

**Chef's Secret:** When and where do you create new dishes?

**Chef Paco Roncero:** I experiment! Occasionally I write down ideas, but I just work with what's in the kitchen and that's how new things come to life. The seasons are super important in this process. Sometimes we have new concepts, but we save them for the next season when the produce is at its best.

There's more to creating a dish than just flavour, it's also about the presentation. We have tableware that is specially designed for the restaurant and the image, and the service has to go hand in hand with it. These concepts have to make sure that our guests fully enjoy the gastronomic experience.

**Chef's Secret:** Do you have signature dishes that are always on the menu?

**Chef Paco Roncero:** We change the menu four times a year, depending on the season. The 'Garden' is usually on our menu, so I guess you could call it a signature dish. Olives are also very important because we like to experiment with them a lot. In the workshop space we have no less than 216 types of olive oil, as we truly value the character of the different varieties of olives and the way they are treated by the producers.





**Chef's Secret: As you mentioned, you have a workshop space below the restaurant. What's the idea behind that?**

**Chef Paco Roncero:** We have a lab here for guests, groups and for our own experiments. In the past, we only had a very small room. But then we felt it would be good to expand it so we could work more around technology. We wanted to create a full experience surrounding a dish by integrating music, colour, flavour and atmosphere. For example, eating a prawn feels totally different when you eat it at the beach, compared to eating it here in our restaurant. That's the feeling we try to recreate by integrating projections, soft lighting, music and so on. My other restaurant in Ibiza, Sublimotion, revolves around the same concept of experience.

Recently, we've refurbished our workshop. This new space is more about sustainability. We wanted to make our clients think about the ecological footprint of food. We approach it from a positive side, emphasising the possibilities instead of only seeing the negative aspect around sustainability.

**Chef's Secret: Is a chef mostly a creative person or an entrepreneur? What's most important? You seem to have managed to combine both.**

**Chef Paco Roncero:** Indeed, I like both! But love and passion are most important. That's why we also work with people who share those same values.

**Chef's Secret: How important is it for you to get recognition by the renowned culinary guide and other lists?**

**Chef Paco Roncero:** It is very important. It's not only about the chef's ego, but also for the restaurant. The international recognition gives us a lot of guests and is also a big motivation for the team.

**Chef's Secret: What are your plans and ambitions?**

**Chef Paco Roncero:** The guest is always the most important to me. But doing everything we can to boost the success of our restaurant is also significant. Of course, we are always aiming to get the highest recognition in the world of gastronomy, so we keep on working very hard with all our team members.



## Paco Roncero's Afirmación menu

For Paco Roncero and his team, presentation needs to be perfect. So, while we get ready to shoot the dishes, Paco Roncero briefs the Chefs de Cuisine on how to get everything on point for every dish to impress us with their culinary masterpieces.

At Paco Roncero Restaurante, you can choose one of the Tasting menus, of which the Afirmación menu is the most extensive. The menu starts with a range of appetizers, accompanied by a glass of champagne.

We sample **a salmon and miso cone**, which is balanced and refined in taste. The chef really plays with the different textures of the macerated salmon, the crispy nori algae and the miso cream.





We try a **pickled mackerel millefeuille**, with super fresh, raw fish that represents the chef's love for top quality produce.



And we bite into a **'carbonara star'**, which is a creative recreation of the classic sauce in the form of a **crispy waffle topped with Parmesan, black truffle and Ibérico pork bacon**.



Coming up next: **the cochinita pibil taco**. Paco Roncero explains: “It’s a dish that represents my inspiration from travelling around the world, looking for interesting flavours which I integrate in unique creation with typical Spanish products. In this case, the traditional Mexican taco is presented in my own way, keeping the corn flavours and textures and the well-known form, but making it a local kind of pork and giving it a totally different crunch than you’d expect from a taco. So, we respect the Mexican influences, but give it our own touch.”







The next appetizer is a **canapé**, made with the base of a wafer – which is made of langoustine broth –, accompanied by a lightly cooked langoustine with an American sauce, shallot cream and tarragon pesto.

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Followed by **the ajoblanco sandwich made with a dry soft meringue** – a reinterpretation of one of the most classic cold soups of the Andalusian cuisine. Combining different kinds of textures and temperatures, the result is an exciting dish.



Time for some action, as we are invited to join the chefs at Paco Roncero's lab for the next course. Here the chef showcases his passion for **olives and olive oils**. With projections of olive gardens and atmospheric lighting, guests can enjoy a tasting with different varieties of olives, oils and breads.







The following course is **the Spanish omelette** with the inside still smooth and creamy, **served with ham, black truffle and Boletus**.



Next-up is **a powerful vegetable stew**, like those of the traditional Andalusian cuisine, **with a low-temperature cooked veal tongue, a cream of beans, sweet peas and a broth of ear with tomatoes**.







The quisquillas are followed by a dish with **hake, stuffed with crab**. This creation is **finished with dots of a black garlic Bilbao sauce, a vinegar reduction and textured chili oil**.



For dessert, we're served a pre-dessert which is **an Alaska cake with coconut ice cream, basil, coriander, some shots of fruit curry, black sesame, mango, green and purple shiso and grapefruit wedges.**





We end the meal in style with a great dose of fun, thanks to the creative 'circus' theme, presenting **a variety of nibbles with chocolate mousse, manjar de almendras, bizcocho sacher, streusel mantequilla and bizcocho de avellana**. It was the chef's intention to make use of a traditional cake trolley, but with an avant-garde touch.



## In short

Paco Roncero Restaurante delivers creative, avant-garde Spanish cuisine, combined with classic techniques, influences from all over the world and local top-quality produce. Everything is presented in a beautiful, monumental location, with a carefree and creative interior. Couple that with service which brings the best out of the food and the setting and the result is creative, passionate and chic fine dining.

## Practical information

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