



MADRID AS A MOVIE SET

PRESS KIT

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1. The Gran Vía

The **Gran Vía** is the main communications, transit, and cultural artery of the City of Madrid. Inaugurated in 1910 by King Alfonso XIII, the Gran Vía has been, remains, and will continue to be an important emblem of the city of Madrid from the perspectives of commerce, tourism, and leisure. In this latter category, the Gran Vía is famous for its cinemas, which have always been home to the Seventh Art's most prominent film premieres to the people of Madrid.



In recent years, some of the Gran Vía's cinemas have been remodeled to host their own versions of musical productions for the stage, to such an extent that the stretch between the Plaza de Callao to the Plaza de España has become known as "*the Broadway of Madrid*". However, the Gran Vía will continue to be a cinematographic hub in Madrid, being the symbolic protagonist for film premieres and the exceptional filming location it has always been for both Spanish and international productions.



2. The Cinemas on the Gran Vía

Cine Torre de Madrid (Sala Heineken)

The *Torre de Madrid*, one of the city's tallest buildings, was constructed between 1954 and 1957, reaching a height of 142 meters. Architectural work was charged to the Otamendi Machimbarrena brothers, a project given to them shortly after their having constructed the *Edificio España*, caddy corner from the *Torre de Madrid*, and also with a façade onto the Plaza de España. Originally, the latter project of the Otamendi Brothers envisioned a building housing approximately 500 shops with spacious galleries, a hotel, and the Cine Torre de Madrid. In the 1990s, the cinema was converted into a record shop and, currently, after various transformations, is now a disco and popular concert hall. The Closing Night Cocktail for the “Madrid de Cine” festival will take place here.

Cine Coliseum

Located at number 28 on the Gran Vía, the old Cine Coliseum, now a stage theatre for musical productions, was considered the Madrid cinema with the best acoustics. Housed in the façade of a glassy edifice, with clear influences from New York designs, the cinema's interior features a domed ceiling with an enormous skylight.

Since its construction in 1932, it was initially a stage theatre from 1933 to 1940, going on to become a cinema between 1940 and 2000. In the past decade, it has been presenting a wide variety of musicals.



Cine Azul

At Gran Vía number 76, the Cine Azul was inaugurated in the 1940s with the name Cine Belusia. In 1973, it was remodeled, coming to be considered by many to be Madrid's most comfortable cinema, due to its plush, roomy seats. Prior to its final closing in 2005, the Cine Azul reinvented itself, becoming the first cinema in Madrid for showing gay-oriented films. At present, the old Cine Azul houses a well-known American franchise restaurant.

Cine Pompeya

Located at number 70 on the Gran Vía, the one-time Cine Pompeya was, until its remodelling into a show club café early in the past decade, another example, along with the Cine Lope de Vega and the Cine Coliseum, of the development of cinema theatres in the 1940s.

Cine Lope de Vega

Inaugurated in 1949, the old Cine Lope de Vega is located in a building which houses a hotel and leisure space. In the second half of the 20th century the Lope de Vega was the established reference point for premieres, such that it wasn't uncommon for the passer-by to run into some of the best-known celebrities in the performance world. At the beginning of the 21st century, the entire theatre was renovated to its present function as one of Madrid's most emblematic and well-known theatres for musicals.



Cine Rex

The old Cine Rex, at Gran Vía number 43, was designed in 1943 by architect Luis Gutiérrez Soto with seating for 500 spectators. This theatre is currently undergoing a restructuring process to make it into a multi-purpose show venue.

Cine Rialto

Construction of the former Cine Rialto, today the *Teatro Movistar*, was completed in 1930. The Rialto was erected to house rental housing units and a cinema theatre. With interior decoration in the neo-baroque style, in the past decade, the Cine Rialto has been converted into one of the Madrid theatres posting top-ranked musicals.

Cine Actualidades

At no. 48 on the Gran Vía, we find a building site that was once occupied by the Cine Novedades. In 1931, Manuel Muñoz Casayús did a project for a modern eight-floor building made of reinforced concrete designed to be a hotel and housing a cinema on its ground floor.

The Cine Actualidades was a true rationalist jewel in which the curve was the protagonist of this Art Deco style cinema. In the center of its small façade was a tiny porch which extended over the box office. And, there was also a showcase for posters of the film being shown.

In the interior, there was seating for 308 persons, with a very small balcony.



In the 1960s, the building was razed to build the central offices of the Banco Atlántico. Then, at the end of this past decade, the new building was once again torn down and, at the moment, there is a construction site on which has been designed a building similar to the original edifice.

Cine Capitol

The Cine Capitol is located in the *Edificio Carrión*, also known as the *Edificio Capitol*, one of the best-known edifices on Madrid's Gran Vía. This building is located on the corner of the Gran Vía with Calle de Jacometrezo, at the point at which both enter into the Plaza del Callao. The 14-story building was designed by architects Luis Martínez-Feduchi Ruiz and Vicente Eced y Eced and was built from 1931 to 1933. In the Art Deco style, it uses materials such as marble and granite, with decoration and furnishings by the Rolaco-Mac company. But, the most outstanding features of this building in its day were the advanced technology it incorporated, such as the use of Vierendeel-type reinforced concrete beams, use of fire resistant cloths, and its refrigeration system, the first centralized one in Madrid and which took up an entire floor. Special mention should also be given to the huge neon sign for "Schweppes" refreshment beverages, an icon of the city of Madrid and a source of inspiration for filmmakers, as we shall see in the following pages.

Cines Callao

While not strictly on the Gran Vía, this building does stand at the intersection of the Plaza de Callao with Calle de Jacometrezo, and no one today would separate the Cines Callao in their minds from the Gran Vía itself. Originally, it was constructed as a combination cinema theatre and small office building. In charge of the project was architect Luis Gutierrez Soto, who sought the most neutral



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AÑOS
GRAN VÍA



façade design possible to incorporate large central panels for displaying advertising signs for the films being shown. At one of the corners of the building, a tower was included in the design for a lighted sign for the cinema itself.

Lately, for the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Gran Vía, the Cines Callao has been reshowing Spanish and American film classics from the history of cinema. In the months of April, May and June, Madrid film goers have been able to enjoy grand classics on the big screen, like *Casablanca*, *Agustina de Aragón*, *Gone with the Wind*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *¡Bienvenido Mr. Marshall!*, *Mogambo*, *Tarde de Toros*, *Ben-Hur*, *La Violetera* and *Gilda*. In addition to these titles, four short films produced by Promoción Madrid have been shown to pay tribute to the Gran Vía's first century of life. These four A/V pieces – presented together as one feature film and directed by Max Lemcke, Chus Gutiérrez, Juana Macías and Sergio Candel – are tied by the thread of a metaphor in common to them all – the “Great Way’s” different ages – and reflect stories, personalities, images and sounds which best represent the essence of the Gran Vía.

Cine Palacio de la Prensa

The Palacio de la Prensa was inaugurated on July 11, 1925. Three and a half years later, on January 2, 1929, it began to serve as a cinema theatre with the projection of the film *The Way of All Flesh*. Conceived as a multi-purpose building, it houses a café theatre, cinema theatres, apartments, and offices.

With seating for 1,840 persons, the Cine Palacio de la Prensa served as a stage theatre with a small stage. In 1941, architect Enrique López-Izquierdo remodelled the building, giving it its current function as a cinema theatre. Then, in 1991, with another renovation, it became a multi-theatre cinema.



Cine Avenida

The Cine Avenida, at number 37 on the Gran Vía, is a neo-classical style structure built in 1926 according to the design by José María de la Cuadra Salcedo and Arrieta Mascarúa. The unique elements of this building's interior and exterior design are protected in spite of undergoing a renovation in recent years to become a shop for a well-known textile company.

Cines El Palacio de la Música

Located at number 35 on the Gran Vía, the Palacio de la Música was designed by architect Secundino Zuazo Ugalde in 1926, who was working for SGAE (the Spanish Society of Authors and Publishers).

The Palacio de la Música was built as a concert hall, but in 1928 it began to be used as a cinema theatre for the showing of films like *Gone with the Wind*. After 80 years, this well-known cinema ceased its activity as such in 2008. At present, the Caja Madrid Foundation wants to recover the Palacio's original function and remodel it to increase its seating and convert it into a first-class auditorium for quality musical productions.

Cine Imperial

At Gran Vía number 32, in what is today a clothing store, was once located the Cine Imperial, inaugurated with the completion of the building in 1924.

Originally, the Cine Imperial wasn't so-called, but rather, was known as the *Cine Madrid-París*, alluding to the large department store which occupied the rest of this large building on the Gran Vía. The Madrid-París department store was the first of its kind to open in the Spanish capital city.

In 1933, an economic downturn forced the closing of the shopping center, although the cinema continued its activity with the final name of Cine Imperial.

Finally, the Cine Imperial closed its doors in 2002.



Cine Fontalba

The Fontalba Theatre was inaugurated in 1924 with a performance of a theatre play by Jacinto Benavente, and it wasn't until 1933 that it became a cinema. Located at number 30 on the Gran Vía, the Cine Fontalba was perhaps one of the grandest cinemas in Madrid, due to its glamorous past as a theatre for stage performances.

There was seating for 1400 persons, divided into sections as follows: 416 floor seats and 10 stall boxes, 21 mezzanine boxes, 10 boxes on the first or main floor, 112 box seats, 10 second-floor boxes, 156 amphitheatre seats, 10 upper-level boxes, and 268 upper gallery seats.

Nowadays, the Fontalba Theatre has gone on to become a shopping center.



3. The Gran Vía as a Movie Set

El Último Caballo [The Last Horse]



Year Released: 1950

Director: Edgar Neville

Starring: Fernando Fernán Gómez, Conchita Montes,

José Luis Ozores

Produced by: Edgar Neville

Genre: Comedy

Synopsis:



Fernando has just finished his mandatory military service, spent in the Cavalry Corps. He decides to buy *Bucéfalo*, the horse who has been his constant companion these many months and returns to Madrid, bringing the horse with him. When he arrives, he finds that everything has changed, and that the automobile has taken over the city.

The Gran Vía is one of the sets chosen by Edgar Neville to portray, with a comic touch, the inexorable industrial transformation of Spanish cities in the mid-twentieth century.



Aeropuerto



Year Released: 1953

Director: Luis Lucia

Starring: Fernando Fernán Gómez and Margarita Andrey

Producer: Cifesa

Genre: Comedy

Synopsis:

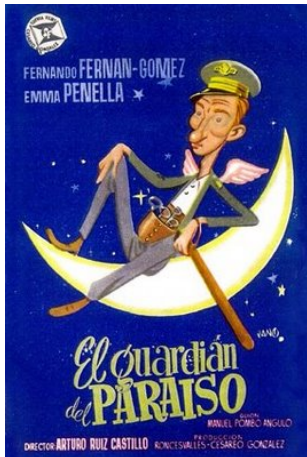


A comedy showcasing a magnificent cast in a series of situations related to a flight between Mexico City and Madrid.

The film is of interest for its locations, as well as its humorous outbursts. Some featured places appearing in the film are Madrid's Barajas Airport (under construction at the time), Retiro Park, and the Gran Vía.



El Guardián del Paraíso



Year Released: 1955

Director: Arturo Ruiz Castillo

Starring: Fernando Fernán Gómez, Rafael Bardem

Produced by: Roncesvalles P.C. / Suevia Films

Genre: Comedy

Synopsis:

A night watchman recounts some of his experiences to an acquaintance in a café, including the story of a poet he once gave shelter to, a nun in plain clothes looking for medicine on the black market, and a few of his own stories – the time he witnessed an armed robbery, and when he fell in love.

The Gran Vía plays a vital role in this 1955 production, as the setting for the many human tales it tell.





Manolo, Guardia Urbano



Year Released: 1956

Director: Rafael J. Salvia

Starring: Manolo Morán, Tony Leblanc

Produced by: C.B. Films S.A. / Producciones Cinematográficas Ariel

Genre: Comedy

Synopsis:



Manolo, a jolly, kind-hearted city policeman, is happily awaiting the birth of his first child, after twenty years of marriage. However, his adopted daughter Paloma, who works in a café, is uneasy about this turn of events, afraid that she will lose her parents' affections, freely given all her life.

In this Spanish structuralistic classic, the Gran Vía is not just another location but becomes an intrinsic part of the film, providing the setting for many key scenes in this entertaining comedy.



Las Chicas de la Cruz Roja [Red Cross Girls]



Year Released: 1958

Director: Rafael J. Salvia

Starring: Tony Leblanc, Concha Velasco, Mabel Karr

Productora: Asturias Films

Genre: Comedy

Synopsis:



Paloma, Isabel, Marion and Julia are three Madrilenian girls from different social backgrounds, who decide to help the Red Cross by collecting donations in the streets of Madrid.

Naturally, Madrid's Gran Vía is once again the most obvious setting for many sequences in this romantic comedy, which rapidly became a Spanish film classic.



Aventura para Dos [Spanish Affair]



Year Released: 1958

Director: Don Siegel

Produced by: United States-Spain co-production

Starring: Richard Kiley, Carmen Sevilla

Genre: Romantic Drama

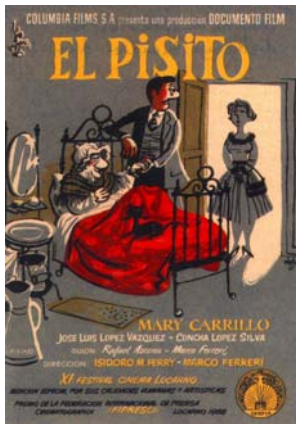
Synopsis:

Merritt Blake is an American architect on a trip round Spain who employs the services of a beautiful interpreter, Mari Zarubia. Her fiancé, Antonio, distrusts them and suspects that their relationship is more than strictly professional.

American filmmaker Don Siegel chose the streets of Madrid to shoot some of the sequences of this romantic road movie. Of particular interest is the scene where the couple, played by Carmen Sevilla and Richard Kiley, has a spectacular accident in the Plaza del Callao.



El Pisito [The Little Apartment]



Year Released: 1958

Director: Marco Ferreri and Isidoro Martínez Ferry

Producer: Video Mercury Films S.A.

Starring: José Luis López Vázquez and Mary Carrillo

Genre: Drama

Synopsis:



In the late 1950s, finding housing was one of the main difficulties facing Spanish society. Under these circumstances, Petrita (Mary Carrillo) and Rodolfo (José Luis López Vázquez) after twelve years of going out together, find it impossible to get a home of their own. *El Pisito* is a drama with touches of black humour, filmed in the area of the Plaza de España, Calle San Bernardo, and the Gran Vía.



Armas contra la Ley



Year Released: 1961

Director: Ricardo Blasco

Producer: María Ángel Coma Borrás, ARTEC, Italia Produzione Film

Starring: Renato Baldini, María Luisa Merlo and Manuel Zarzo

Genre: Crime / Mystery

Synopsis:

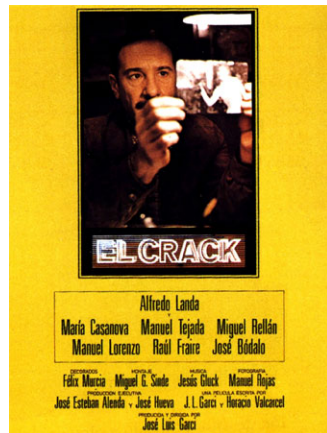


An internationally famous Italian thief, played by Renato Baldini, is hired to rob a high quality jewelers' shop in Madrid. To achieve this feat, he recruits a band of Spanish accomplices: a loner, a desperate student, a champion marksman, engaged to a nurse who knows nothing about his criminal life, and a talented, typically Madrilenian pickpocket.

The Gran Vía was chosen by the director to feature significantly in this sixties thriller; in fact, the jewelers' shop the group intend to rob is located right on this famous avenue.



El Crack [The Crack]



Year Released: 1983

Director: José Luis Garcí

Starring: Alfredo Landa, María Casanova

Produced by: Nikel Odeón Dos / Lolafilms / Lima

Genre: Crime / Mystery

Synopsis:



Filmed in both Madrid and New York, *El Crack [The Crack]* tells the story of a private detective called *Germán Areta*, played by Alfredo Landa. In some scenes the film shows Madrid's Gran Vía in the seventies and eighties, and compares it to The Big Apple. The film begins with a tribute to Dashiell Hammett. The film was so successful that Garcí went on to make a sequel: *El Crack II*.

El Crack is a Spanish film directed by José Luis Garcí, an acclaimed Spanish filmmaker, whose previous film, *Volver a Empezar [Begin the Beguine]* won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in 1982.



El Sol del Membrillo [The Quince Tree Sun]



Year Released: 1992

Director: Víctor Erice

Starring: Antonio López

Produced by: Igeldo P.C. / María Moreno P.C.

Genre: Documentary

Synopsis:



A documentary which explores the creative process of an artist by portraying painter Antonio López painting a quince tree. A master work in astonishing simplicity and slow tempo filming, which attempts to follow the evolution of a work of art in creation.

In this film, Víctor Erice captures the essence of Antonio López's creative powers on celluloid. The foremost Spanish exponent of pictorial hyperrealism, López dedicated one of his most memorable works to the Gran Vía.



La Flor de mi Secreto [The Flower of My Secret]



Year Released: 1995

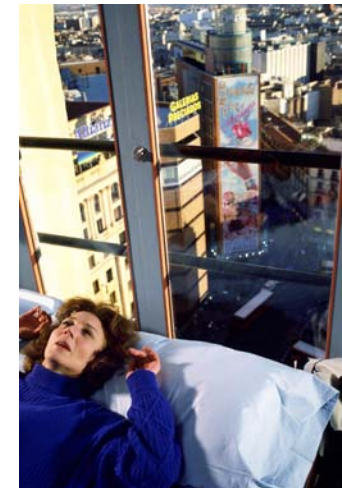
Director: Pedro Almodóvar

Starring: Marisa Paredes, Imanol Arias

Produced by: El Deseo S.A.

Genre: Drama

Synopsis:



Leo Macías is a writer of romantic novels who hides behind the pseudonym of Amanda Gris. Obligated under contract to produce three novels per year, Leo has been falling behind for months; instead of light romantic fiction, she can only seem to write grim tearjerkers. And all because Paco, her husband, is absent. Paco is a soldier on a peace mission in Bosnia. In the months before his departure, the couple went through one of their worst crises. The postponement of resolving her matrimonial problems makes Leo feel particularly vulnerable, and uncertainty seems to invade all the aspects of her life. Despite being one of the Spanish directors most identified with Madrid, this is the only film by Pedro Almodóvar to show exterior shots of the Gran Vía, to be precise the Telefónica Building, located at no. 28. Built in 1926, this was the first skyscraper to be erected on the Gran Vía and happens to be where the director from Spain's La Mancha region first started work – as an administrative employee for the telecommunications company.



El Día de la Bestia [The Day of the Beast]



Year Released: 1995

Director: Alex de la Iglesia

Starring: Alex Angulo, Santiago Segura

Produced by: Iberoamericana / Sogetel

Genre: Action

Synopsis:

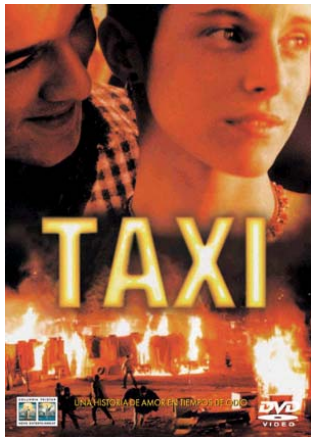


A priest believes he has deciphered the secret message of the Apocalypse according to St John: the Antichrist will be born on Christmas Day 1995, in Madrid. To stop the satanic birth, the priest joins forces with a young death metal fan in this diabolical adventure, in which they try desperately to find out where in Madrid the apocalyptic event will take place.

El día de la bestia [The Day of the Beast] earned considerable recognition for director Alex de la Iglesia and one of his leading actors, Santiago Segura. De la Iglesia used the giant neon “Schweppes” sign at the top of the Carrión Building as a backdrop for the film’s most gripping scene. The Gran Vía is also featured in several other scenes, and more of Madrid’s architectural landmarks can be seen too, such as the leaning Kio Towers in the Plaza de Castilla.



Taxi



Year Released: 1996

Director: Carlos Saura

Starring: Ingrid Rubio, Carlos Fuentes

Produced by: PC Filmart S.L.

Genre: Drama

Synopsis:

After failing her exams, Paz's father, a taxi driver, makes her learn his own profession. What she doesn't realize at first is that her father is a member of a group of racists who scour the Madrid streets nightly in search of homosexuals and people of other races to harass and attack.

Carlos Saura (*Furtivos [Poachers]*), an acclaimed Spanish film director, haunts the streets of Madrid and especially the Gran Vía in the filming of this disturbing drama which reveals the intolerance and irrational hatred which certain political tendencies try to instill in society.



Abre los Ojos [Open Your Eyes]



Year Released: 1997

Director: Alejandro Amenábar

Starring: Eduardo Noriega, Penélope Cruz, Fele Martínez

Produced by: Las producciones del Escorpión S.L. /

Sogetel / Les films Alain Sarde / Lucky Red

Genre: Science Fiction

Synopsis:

César is a handsome, dashing young man, an orphan who inherited a fortune from his parents. He lives in his own luxurious home where he throws extravagant parties. One night, his friend Pelayo introduces him to the beautiful Sofía, but his previous girlfriend, Nuria, is violently jealous of her. The next day she attempts to commit suicide in her car, with César beside her.

In *Abre los Ojos [Open Your Eyes]*, filmmaker Alejandro Amenábar creates one of the most memorable shots of this avenue: the camera pans back to reveal Eduardo Noriega running down a totally deserted, silent Gran Vía.





Piedras [Stones]



Year Released: 2002

Director: Ramón Salazar

Starring: Antonia San Juan, Najwa Nimri, Vicky Peña, Ángela Molina

Produced by: Alquimia Cinema / Ensueño Films

Genre: Drama

Synopsis:



Five women roam the streets of Madrid, looking for their Mr. Right, shoe in hand: one woman with flat feet who runs a club, and her daughter who wears trainers; a rich woman with tiny feet, in love with her chiropodist; an ex-designer who always wears high heels and a taxi-driver, in slippers.

In this production, the streets of Madrid, and particularly the Gran Vía, also become spectators, watching the sentimental and emotional adventures of this group of women.



20 Centímetros [20 Centimeters]



Year Released: 2005

Director: Ramón Salazar

Starring: Mónica Cervera, Pablo Puyol, Rossy de Palma

Produced by: Aligator Producciones / Estudios Picasso / Jet Films

Genre: Musical Comedy

Synopsis:



Marieta doesn't want to be called Adolfo any more. Having the same name as her father and an "extra" 20 centimeters like him disgusts her. She wants to be called Marieta and be a respected woman, with all the necessary attributes. She also suffers from narcolepsy and falls asleep at the worst possible moments. But in her fits of drowsiness, in which she dreams of performing hits from musicals, Marieta sings beautifully and speaks several languages. Marieta is all woman.

Filmmaker Ramón Salazar too has been inspired by the Gran Vía while filming this unusual musical, full of color and amusing choreography, set on the Gran Vía and the streets nearby.



The Bourne Ultimatum



Year Released: 2007

Director: Paul Greengrass

Starring: Matt Damon, Julia Stiles

Produced by: Universal Pictures

Genre: Action

Synopsis:

Third part of the adventures of agent Jason Bourne, still investigating his own identity and what really lies behind the secret CIA program known as *Treadstone*. This time, a British journalist from "The Guardian" sets him on a new trail in an attempt to fit the last pieces of his forgotten past together.

Committed Irish filmmaker Paul Greengrass, who has brought us films like *Bloody Sunday* and *United 93*, unleashes his most intrepid side in this saga of spy stories, in which the hero travels incessantly, from one corner of the globe to another. In this third part, "Bourne" arrives in Madrid. The shooting of the Madrid part of this box office hit took place in Atocha station, the La Latina neighborhood and Calle Virgen de los Peligros, which runs between the Calle Alcalá and the Gran Vía.



Mataharis



Year Released: 2007

Director: Iciar Bollain

Starring: Iciar Bollain, Najwa Nimri, Nuria González

Produced by: La Iguana / Sogecine

Genre: Drama

Synopsis:



Carmen, Inés and Eva are private detectives, but don't wear hats or carry guns; they change nappies, do the shopping and try to keep their marriages going. While they work hard to discover other people's secrets, all three will discover that they have been blind to some of their own deceptions, and that some truths are best kept hidden.

The Gran Vía is also a recurring location in this production, an unusual detective drama from filmmaker Iciar Bollain (*Te Doy mis Ojos* [*Take My Eyes*]).



Los Abrazos Rotos [Broken Embraces]



Year Released: 2009

Director: Pedro Almodóvar

Starring: Penélope Cruz, Lluís Homar, Blanca Portillo

Produced by: El Deseo, S.A.

Genre: Drama

Synopsis:



A man writes lives, and loves in darkness. Fourteen years earlier, with the love of his life, Lena, he suffered a terrible car accident on the island of Lanzarote, which left him sightless. This man has two names: Harry Caine, a playful pseudonym under which he writes his literary works, stories and screenplays, and Mateo Blanco, his real name, used in his everyday life and for the films he directs. At the moment, Harry Caine earns a living writing scripts and thanks to the help of his faithful old production director and her son, his secretary, typist and guide for the blind.

Pedro Almodóvar returns to the Gran Vía for *Los Abrazos Rotos [Broken Embraces]*. One of the most moving scenes in this film was shot in the Gran Vía's famous cocktail bar, the Museo Chicote.



4. Chicote: a Living History of Cinema on the Gran Vía

Perico Chicote founded this reference point for Madrid night life in 1931. Soon, his bottle collection and magnificent cocktails charmed Madrid high society, which never doubted making the Museo Chicote a trendy locale for many years to come.

European and American cinema were especially generous to this Art Deco jewel on the Gran Vía. Thanks to American producer Samuel Bronston, who revitalised the Spanish film industry in the 1950s and '60s with the filming of now-legendary super-productions (*The Fall of the Roman Empire*, *El Cid*, etc.) in Spain, Madrid became a gathering place for leading actors and actresses from the Golden Age of Hollywood.

Chicote's bar has hosted actresses the likes of Liz Taylor, Ava Gardner, Joan Crawford, Rita Hayworth, María Félix, Sofía Loren, Gina Lollobrigida, Bette Davis, Lana Turner, Merle Oberón and Giulietta Masina, among others.

As for actors, Laurence Olivier, Errol Flynn, Alec Guinness, Vittorio de Sica, Gary Cooper, Mario Moreno "Cantinflas", Orson Wells, Jorge Negrete, Tyrone Power, James Stewart, Yul Brynner and Gregory Peck are some of the great ones who have passed through Chicote's doors.

These days, Chicote has recaptured the magic of its origins and once again, actors, actresses, writers, and other cultural celebrities from Madrid and around the world enliven the ambience of this Gran Vía landmark.





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