



## One hotel, one story

02/18/2013

# Mercure Madrid Santo Domingo: the hotel devoted to art

Located in Madrid's old city center, the four-star Hotel Mercure Santo Domingo is an establishment dedicated to artistic creation. It boasts wall paintings in its car park, a private art collection on its walls and a light show on its façade. In short, the building is remarkable for its originality.

From its vaulted 16th century cellars to its terrace overlooking the city and its uniquely decorated rooms, General Manager Antonio Núñez gives us a guided tour of this address dedicated to imagination and well-being.

At night, the Hotel Santo Domingo in Madrid's façade is like no other and the building glitters with red, green, blue and yellow lights. "Thanks to this lighting system, which creates extraordinary atmospheres, the hotel is magnetic and literally attracts everyone's attention," comments **Antonio Núñez**, the General Manager. As soon as they enter the lobby, guests realize they are in a very different hotel. The five-meter high ceiling features two vaults with gold leaf inlay that reflect the light, while the floor and staircase are made from traditional Boñar stone. In another artistic reference, the balustrades and banisters are reminiscent of **Salvador Dali's** heyday.

### A museum-hotel

The establishment, which is located right in the center of Spain's capital city, occupies two buildings, one contemporary building and one **16th century building** whose vaulted cellars once housed the Inquisition's archives. It is a work of art in itself. "The Mercure Santo Domingo is a cultural hotel because the owner, an art collector, uses it to exhibit his **most beautiful works of art**. The lobby, corridors and five dining rooms showcase a myriad pictures, furniture and antiques. The hotel's car park was also transformed into an exhibition area featuring 1000m<sup>2</sup> frescoes painted by local artists. These graffiti and pictures on all four parking levels represent gorillas in the savannah, roller-coasters and even a heavenly blue sky.

### Fantastically decorated rooms

The hotel, which was built in 1994 and enlarged in 2010, has 200 rooms that were entirely refurbished last year. Thirty of them are exceptional. "These theme-based rooms have all been decorated by up-and-coming **Spanish artists**. They each feature a unique wall painting designed to encourage reverie through depictions of New York, a beach, an aquarium, Don Quixote, etc." continues the General Manager. The attention to detail extends to the bathrooms which guarantee a real chromatherapy experience. The shower booths include a system of rainbow colored LED lamps that incite relaxation, self-confidence, good humor and serenity. "The most sought-after rooms are the corner rooms," says Antonio Núñez. These five rooms are located behind the building's glass façade and boast an incredible view of the Plaza Santo Domingo and the "**Madrid of the Austrians**", which is the nickname given to the old center in honor of the Habsburg dynasty that once reigned over Spain."



### An exceptional setting

As well as its great location, the Hotel Mercure Madrid Santo Domingo boasts its own inner courtyard and **the world's largest hanging garden**: an immense 844 m<sup>2</sup> wall of greenery made up of 200 species of trees, shrubs, climbing plants and herbs and an impressive 20 meter high waterfall. This feature inspired by the hanging gardens of Babylon, is one of the hotel's masterpieces. 70 rooms look directly out onto the hanging garden and its night lighting. On the building's top floor, an elegant terrace overlooks Madrid's rooftops. "It's very popular in the summer with the 10m swimming pool, solarium and cocktail bar." This space is often hired for receptions, weddings and photo shoots. Another of the hotel's assets is its "**Unique Suite**". This **60m<sup>2</sup> suite** has its own private salon with a view of Madrid, a 200x200 bed and the best facilities. There are two suites more with timeless charm of antique furnishings.

### Devoted to well-being

This decidedly different hotel is a haven of peace. "Our business and leisure guests really appreciate the building's peace and tranquility," says the General Manager. The special glass partitions in the rooms guarantee maximum sound-proofing. Sandó, the hotel restaurant, combines tranquility with creativity. Arzak Instructions, **team consulted by Juan Mari Arzak** prepare high quality cuisine based on traditional recipes with an avant-garde touch. In addition to the four dining rooms, the hotel features the glass cube. "This exclusive, entirely glass-walled area for 15 guests is located in the middle of the central room with a view of both the street and the restaurant." It is a bubble-like setting for a gourmet experience. The establishment also accounts for **sustainable development** issues. Its vast hanging garden alone absorbs 25,000kg of CO2 a year and reduces the temperature by 6°C to 8°C on very hot days. Lastly, the shower and washbasin water is filtered and reused to flush the toilets.



### The joy of working here

"There's a very special, joyful dimension to our team," comments Antonio Núñez. "Some staff members have worked here for 19 years. We are like a big family and for many of us, the hotel is a second home. Working in such an unusual building generates a lot of enthusiasm." The employees welcome many travelers and their constant priority is guest satisfaction. The hotel's **14 reception rooms** are hired for private events, weddings, corporate meetings, etc. One of them, the Belvédère Room, boasts a view of Madrid's Royal Palace, while the Museo Room showcases some of the **most beautiful works of art** in the owner's collection.

### Unique, 16th century cellars

The guided tour of the premises wouldn't be complete without a visit of this museum-hotel's basement. The vaulted cellars, which date back to the Inquisition, now house a cocktail bar with a distinctive atmosphere where guests can either start or prolong their evening. The brick and stone walls are lit up by multicolored lights embedded in the floor. These cellars are one of Madrid's famous nightlife haunts, offering after work drinks from 6pm, cocktail lessons on Wednesdays, concerts, **DJ performances**, etc. "People who come here for the first time are always surprised," laughs the General Manager. "Then, they taste our Strawberry Daiquiri or our Mojito with edible flowers and their faces light up!" It's the **art of cocktail-making** in an artistic venue, but it's nothing unusual in this unique establishment.

[Book a stay in this hotel on Accorhotels](#)