

PRESS INFORMATION

Gran Hotel Inglés: Rockwell Group Restores Madrid's Oldest Hotel To Its Former Splendor



Gran Hotel Inglés has been a landmark since it was built in 1853. The first hotel to have a restaurant, and on the first street to receive electric lights in Madrid, it became a cultural icon as well. Politicians, artists, writers, and intellectuals made it their gathering place. After years of neglect and disrepair, the derelict hotel has been renovated and redesigned for today's sophisticated traveler by Rockwell Group's studio in Madrid.

The Madrid Studio of Rockwell Group has brought back the glamour, elegance, and innovation of Gran Hotel Inglés, drawing inspiration from the hotel's 165-year-old history. The design concept celebrates the hotel's history as a gathering place for the avant-garde and intellectuals, weaving original imagery and salvaged historic items into the design of the public spaces, gym, spa, meeting rooms, and guestrooms. The hotel is located in the cultural and historical center of Madrid, within walking distance to the Puerta del Sol and various monuments and tourist attractions.

The design team, headed up by Eva Longoria and Elisa Rodriguez, introduced elegance and sophistication to the lobby, celebrating its 20' ceilings with circular chandeliers and inspired by a class English manor. Some of the hotel's original chandeliers and columns are restored and featured. A central lobby bar is surrounded by a cocktail lounge with clusters of area rugs and a range of seating provide a gathering spots for hotel guests and visitors.



Mirrors, rich, gem-toned upholstery, and metal details nod to the hotel's heritage. A library with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves and a fireplace is a return to the hotel's intellectual past. The coffee bar/lounge to the west of the bar has mirrors with faded historic images of famous hotel visitors.





The restaurant is inspired by the dining room and open kitchen of a grand British country estate, with a mix of classic structures, such as oak columns painted blue, and a mix of modern and classic lighting. Booth seating is reminiscent of a sophisticated and intimate members'-only club.



The hallways leading to the guestroom feature small framed photographs and are dedicated to the hotel's illustrious past guests, from bullfighters and writers to politicians.



In the white-painted guestrooms, Rockwell Group played with the classic geometry of the molding by deconstructing it and extending it across the ceiling. The upholstery of the bedframes is mimicked around the leather and upholstery-clad monolithic TV wall. Luxurious bathrooms have marble standalone bathtubs and a stand that holds a drink and accessories.





Guestroom closets are lined with wallpaper that features vintage copies of hotel postcards. Custom valets feature a shelf that holds new postcards for guests, allowing them to continue the tradition.

NOTES TO EDITORS

History of Gran Hotel Inglés

Gran Hotel Inglés is one of the oldest remaining hotels in Spain. It was built in 1853 before being officially inaugurated in December 1886. Founded on the Calle Lobo which, according to local history, owes its name to a well-known hunter who lived on the street and displayed a bearskin on the door of his house. It was the first street to have electric lighting in Madrid and the first hotel to have a restaurant in all of Spain. In 1888 the name of the street was changed to Echegaray Street.

Members of the European aristocracy would typically frequent the hotel during hunting season and the hotel restaurant served as an illustrious meeting place in the capital where the best cultural, social, and political events occurred. Celebrated guests included bullfighters such as Salvador Sanchez Povedano (Frascuero) and Rafael Gomez Ortega (El Gallo) and Pastora, his wife. In the 1920s, literary giants such as Virginia Woolf, Clarín, Valle-Inclán and Galdós and painters, Henri Matisse and Rusiñol stayed at the hotel.

During the 1900s, the hotel was configured in a circular layout with two toilets on each floor, which were shared by guests. At the beginning of the twentieth century the staff of the hotel lived in the attics of the building. The hotel's payroll included cabinetmakers, painters, and bricklayers.

During the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) Gran Hotel Inglés served as a hospital and during Second World War the hotel was called the Hotel Imperio in order to remain sympathetic to the Axis and take advantage of the initials of silverware and matching silver cutlery (HI). In 2008, the city of Madrid paid tribute to the hotel.



Rockwell Group, Madrid

Based in New York, Rockwell Group is an interdisciplinary architecture and design firm that emphasizes innovation and thought leadership in every project. Founded by David Rockwell, FAIA, the 250-person firm uses theater, technology, and finely-wrought craft to create extraordinary experiences and built environments across the globe. Rockwell Group established its Madrid office in 2005 to bring creative vision and extraordinary resources closer to clients in Europe. Led by Eva Longoria and Elisa Rodriguez, projects include Nobu Downtown and Nobu restaurants and hotels worldwide; W Hotels (New York, Paris, Madrid, Suzhou, Singapore and Vieques); The New York EDITION; Hotel Ingles (Madrid); Virgin Hotels Chicago; the Prince Gallery Tokyo Kioicho; The Shed in New York in collaboration with Diller Scofidio + Renfro; NeueHouse (New York and Hollywood); and set designs for Public Theater's Shakespeare in the Park, *She Loves Me*, and *Kinky Boots*. For more information, please visit www.rockwellgroup.com.

Address: Calle Echegaray, 8, Madrid, Spain

Photography: Images by Eric Laignel

PRESS INFORMATION

For further information and hi-res images or to speak to Eva Longoria or Elisa Rodriguez of Rockwell Group's Madrid studio on this project, please contact Tomorrow PR:

Grainne Byrne grainne@tomorrowpr.co.uk or Chu Goldmann chu@tomorrowpr.co.uk

Tel: +44 (0) 207 249 7409