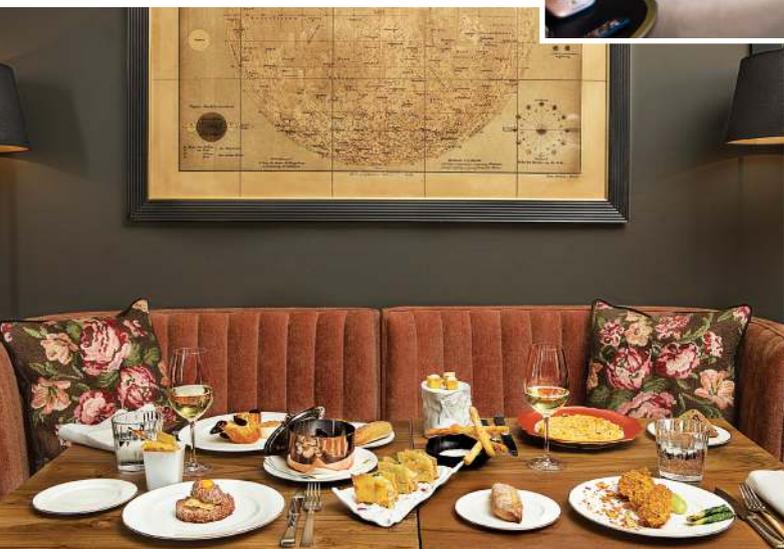
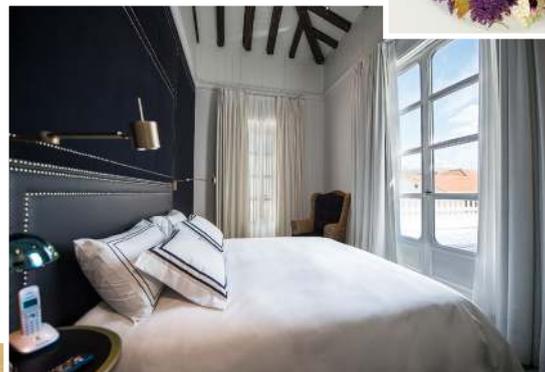




RETAIL THERAPY

Clockwise from top left: **Árbol**, one of the chic stores on Calle del Barquillo; the Principal Hotel; a Creme de la Creme dessert; the Only You Hotel & Lounge; Creme de la Creme's dining room.



HOT SPOTS

Clockwise from above left: The Principal Hotel's restaurant, **Ático**; the Palo Rosa handbag from Pinkoco, a store that doubles as a bar on Thursday evenings; the silver-and-gold-plated Orion ring from COOLOK; El Huerto de Lucas, an organic restaurant in the neighborhood.



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

CHUECA

With a recent wave of eateries, hotels and boutiques, this quaint quarter is Madrid's latest must-see destination.

BY HANNAH SELIGSON

TEN YEARS AGO, Chueca, a barrio in central Madrid, was rough around the edges. Now—thanks to an influx of restaurants, shops and galleries—it's the area where everyone wants a foothold.

Calle del Barquillo is the best street to shop in Chueca, with a spate of new stores. Start at **Árbol**, which sells a blend of wares from Spanish and Italian designers. Farther up Barquillo is **Sonámbula**, featuring designers such as Missoni and Roberto Cavalli as well as an exhibition space for rotating shows by avant-garde artists.

This past May, jewelry designer Mar Aldeguer of **COOLOK** opened her only brick-and-mortar store in the area. Her designs—featuring natural gemstones set in gold and silver—have been seen on Spanish royalty.

Just off Barquillo toward Plaza de las Salesas is **Pinkoco**, where, in April, Piero Furia began selling beauty products made at his family-run laboratory in Italy, along with a selection of home furnishings. The store also turns into a bar from 7 p.m. to midnight on Thursday evenings. Next door is **Creme de la Creme**, a popular spot for lunch or an afternoon espresso.

The culinary scene in Chueca is going organic, with the recent arrival on Calle San Lucas of **El Huerto de Lucas**, a market and restaurant that specializes in organic dishes, such as vegetarian beet burgers.

Alberto Chicote, the godfather of Spanish fusion and a *Top Chef* judge, opened his first solo venture, **Yakitoro**, last year on Calle Reina. The restaurant, which combines Japanese and Spanish flavors, is reliably packed, serving up plates such as tuna tataki with white garlic and Wagyu ribs in teriyaki sauce.

The Principal Hotel's rooftop bar, **La Terraza**, opened in May, following the launch of the 76-room boutique hotel in January, and offers 360-degree views of Madrid. The hotel's restaurant, **Ático**, bears the imprimatur of two-star Michelin chef Ramón Freixa, with floor-to-ceiling windows that overlook historic buildings. (Call at least two weeks ahead for a booking.) The nearby **Only You Hotel & Lounge**, also on Barquillo, is known to be crowded even on a Tuesday night—hardly an anomaly for one of Madrid's hottest neighborhoods.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF ÁRBOL; COURTESY OF PRINCIPAL MADRID HOTEL; COURTESY OF CREME DE LA CREME; COURTESY OF ONLY YOU HOTEL & LOUNGE; COURTESY OF PINKOCO; COURTESY OF COOLOK; COURTESY OF EL HUERTO DE LUCAS; COURTESY OF PRINCIPAL MADRID HOTEL; COURTESY OF CREME DE LA CREME