

OYSTERONOMY: THINK OUTSIDE THE SHELL

The world is your oyster!

That's the very appropriate slogan of Oysteronomy, a project dreamed up by a diverse team of culinary innovators who are dedicated to making dinner more than just another meal. The concept is both uniquely complex and deceptively simple. At its heart, it's an effort to bring the very best marine delicacies (caviar, king crab, sea urchins, and—of course—oysters) from the sea to your table.

More specifically, it's a Spanish brand that operates in various forms, adapting to the needs of restaurants, events, and individuals seeking a one-of-a-kind dining opportunity. It's a collaboration between various entities, including **Pop Secret** (a brand specializing in creative culinary and artistic events) and **Pol García**, the celebrated Basque chef who's worked everywhere from London to Shanghai. But it's so much more than that.

Oysteronomy is a gastronomic experiment in combining preparation, presentation, and consumption to create a multisensory culinary experience.

So what exactly does that look like?

A few weeks ago I got to find out. I was lucky enough to attend the event that officially marked Oysteronomy's arrival in Madrid, a sold-out dinner held at the Cambridge Soho Club in Plaza de España. At the designated hour, twenty-four lucky guests were led beyond the elegant bar area to a private room decked out in marine decor and deep blue lighting, where the magic was set to take place.

The night began with wine and mingling, allowing the guests to get to know one another as they snacked on hors d'oeuvres. An expert team of bartenders and servers attended to the guests and made sure that no one's glass was ever empty.



In an interesting twist, the first oysters of the night were paired with top-quality sakes from the gourmet importer Salvioni&Alomar. Expert Pablo Alomar explained the elaboration and advantages of sake, an underappreciated but up-and-coming beverage in the Spanish gastronomic scene, and invited the guests to sample a few choice varieties.





Not long after, Chef García emerged with the second round of oysters. These were accompanied by a swirling fog of liquid nitrogen and several gourmet toppings—eggplant, caviar, and *leche de tigre*, to name a few—some of which were injected directly into the oysters with a plastic syringe. Quite a spectacle, indeed.



The guests were then seated around tables set with seashells and sprinkled with salt, primed and ready for the main event.



The first course of the night consisted of—you guessed it—an oyster, this time still hidden inside its shell. The diners were instructed to tap it with their forks, allowing them to lift the lid and discover the flavors of cucumber and spicy mustard with which it had been infused.



Next came the final oyster of the night, served on a bed of salt and swimming in a creamy and indulgent sauce. This was followed by a salad of caviar and crab, served in miniscule glass jars with tiny spoons to match.





Each course was accompanied by a detailed explanation of its composition, origin, and flavor profile, delivered to the diners by the chef along with Emma Hidalgo and Julieta Arévalo, the organizers of the event. A DJ provided mood music, varying the soundtrack as each new dish was served. The wine, of course, continued to flow.



And then, just when it seemed like the night might be winding down, the real show began. A tray of king crab legs was placed atop a podium at the front of the room. As a hush fell over the diners, Chef García produced a pan of flaming liquid, which he then poured directly onto the crab, touching it up

with a small handheld torch as needed. You heard it here first: flambéed crab legs just might be the newest—and hottest—definition of dinner and a show.







The final savory course was a surprise departure from the marine theme of the event: *carne de vaca brava de lidia*, served juicy and rare (in more ways than one). This unique variety of beef comes from free-range bulls raised for the increasingly controversial tradition of *toreo* (bullfighting). What could be more quintessentially Spanish than that?



Photo courtesy of Oysteronomy

Just in case anyone had yet to be impressed, the meal was wrapped up with a dessert that looked more like modern art than your average ice cream; an abstract spread of frozen sugary creations atop an edible tablecloth, accompanied by smoky tendrils of liquid nitrogen.



Photo courtesy of Oysteronomy



A round of masterfully prepared cocktails closed out the evening, giving the guests time to sit back, relax, and reflect on a night that was full of surprises.

From the first glass of wine to the last grain of salt, Oysteronomy's first event in Madrid was masterfully executed, beautifully designed, and altogether unique. I have little doubt that everyone in attendance will be talking about it for weeks to come. The team behind Oysteronomy has announced their presence in the capital city—and they've certainly made a splash.

Who knew oysters could be so photogenic?



Info

For more information and upcoming events, check out Oysteronomy's [Facebook page](#) and the Pop Secret [website](#).