

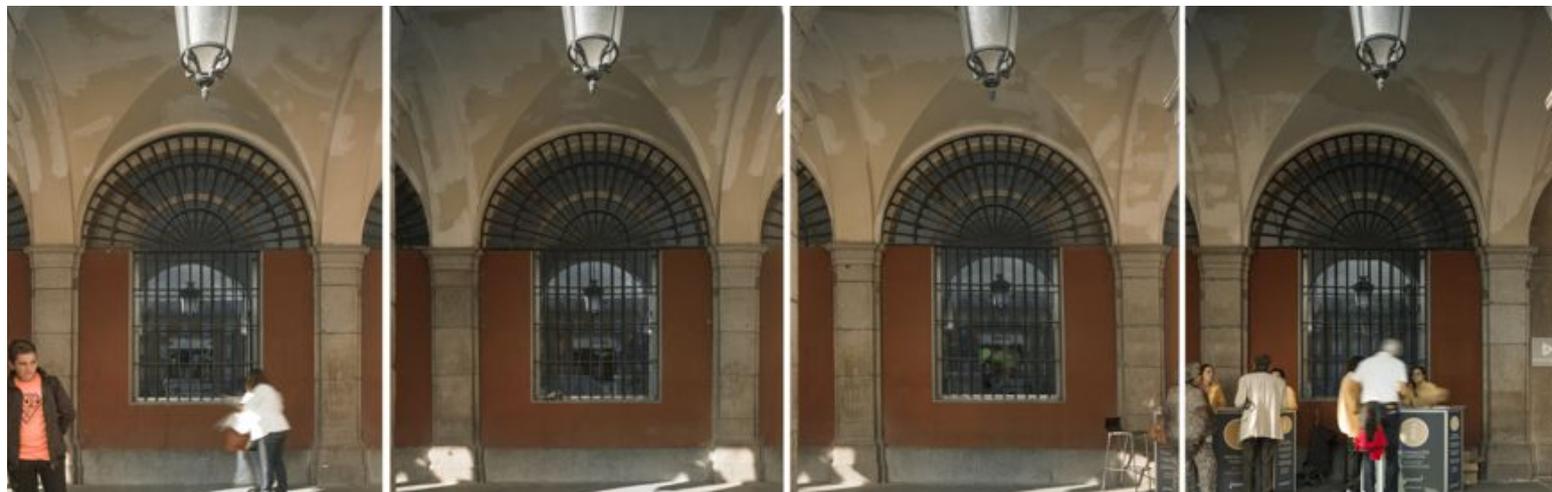


Tourism Office in Madrid Casa de la Panadería

By Jose Manuel Sanz Arquitectos

HI-MACS®: Redesign of the Tourist Office at Plaza Mayor in Madrid

*"Connecting contemporary with History", this is the premise that **Jose Manuel Sanz Arquitectos** follow when they carry out their projects. This time, they have applied their philosophy to modernizing the **Tourism Office** located in the **Casa de la Panadería at Plaza Mayor in Madrid**. The changes in spatial distribution and the use of high quality materials, such as **HI-MACS®**, have transformed these offices into the ideal place to get any kind of information about the city.*



Located in one of the most attractive and emblematic places in Madrid, the new Tourism Offices in the center of the capital will no longer just be a place for tourists to find information about the city, now it will be a place to visit in itself, thanks to the innovative design that blends seamlessly into the historical characteristics of the space.

The area transformed by the project is located on one level, occupying a part of the ground floor of the building known as the **Casa de la Panadería**. Its function is to provide information, and spread the cultural and touristic values of Madrid, as well as providing a small space for administrative support. In addition, there is also a major audiovisual component for use by visitors.

In the words of José Manuel Sanz, *"In architecture, the most important thing is what you want to transmit, using materials to realise a vision. In this case, the symbiosis between the idea and the material was very clear, which is clearly visible in the resulting project"*. This is a great example of how HI-MACS® has been put to the service of the project and has proved to be the ideal material to complete it.

With the main **goal being to recover the original configuration of the location**, Jose Manuel Sanz and his team took charge of updating the information center, bringing a modern touch and using the most current technology to inform visitors. In this way, the use of **HI-MACS®** for most of the furniture **contrasts perfectly with the existing materials**, creating a space with personality but still rooted in its historical essence.

After completing all the renovations, the building re-opened its doors to the public in October 2015, after five months of work. When redesigning the ground floor, factors such as the importance of the fluidity of the space, the distribution of the work area and customer location were taken into account.

The spaces

The challenge lay in the fact that tourism offices are information centres, used to find clarity and efficiency to serve the public. This is an aspect that has been taken into account throughout the development of the refurbishment.

The area is divided into two areas, firstly the vaulted space, where the old bakery stood and, secondly, the area that was the courtyard of the house. For Jose Manuel Sanz and his team, the main thing was to **recover the original configuration of the space**, as well as **freeing up the central space of columns, allowing it to be apparent**. Although the space is viewed as a whole, with a surface of 321 m², it has different areas: the area for attending to the general public, where people who visit the city can get answers to their questions; an area for exchanging information about restaurants, museums, etc.; and a shopping area in which visitors can purchase products, such as tour-bus and theater tickets, as well as souvenirs of the city of Madrid.



The front desk made with HI-MACS® acrylic stone is the unifying element of the entire Office of Tourism, running the length of it and providing continuity. Its function is to unite the courtyard with the vaulted space, allowing the visitor to know that they will be served at any point of the counter.

At the back of the offices, occupying the old courtyard and where the counter joins the two spaces, is the audiovisual area, where the center's technological setup is available. The goal is to attract visitors to this information, so that the whole place works as one as a service to the public.



The counter, protagonist of the project

The counter is sinuous and winds around the columns and adapts itself to the original distribution of the space, moving in both directions towards the wall to create areas at which to serve the public and thus recover the central space where visitors move about. In this way, the public can go to any point of the desk easily, establishing a friendly relationship. In addition, the use of a continuous desk greatly increases the usability, since it also presents different heights to accommodate people standing, seated or in a wheelchair.

"The possibility of making a single element that could be read as a continuous piece, is what interested us. Which is why we created a piece that is prolonged and meanders throughout the space, tying the different areas of the office of tourism together", this is how the architect José Manuel Sanz describes the usefulness of the counter.

HI-MACS®, thanks to its thermoformable properties and invisible joints, responded perfectly to their requirements. **The acrylic stone material makes it possible to produce furniture that is manufactured in various parts, however that fact is totally imperceptible once it is assembled.** In addition, its thickness **gives a remarkable translucency that** allows backlighting to make the counter an especially attractive and light element above the granite flooring. The material shows its maximum versatility in the bench that is integrated into the counter itself. Acrylic stone was also used for the **information tables** that contain computers or tablets, in some of the **display stands** and the **lean-to seats** for user comfort, among others.

Since it is a public space that is in continuous contact with visitors, the durability and strength of the material was also a key aspect. HI-MACS® has a long life as it is very resistant to wear and scratches. In addition, its non-porous surface makes it totally hygienic and very easy to clean.



Materials at the Service of the Idea

All the materials used needed to adhere to the historical nature of the space, allowing simple designs and rescuing both the vaults and the unity of the patio. **The HI-MACS® front desk**, which is responsible for providing the touch of modernity to the project, **helped bridge the contrast between the contemporary and the antique.** It should be noted, that in addition to the fact that the material offers a series of possibilities, the way it is handled is also key. In this case, the work of the carpentry Maderama was essential to obtain a flawless finish.

"Materials are the words of the speech that we want to deliver. HI-MACS® offered us the perfect qualities for what we were looking for, with it we were able to achieve exactly what we were drawing: a sinuous counter that could move both horizontally and vertically", says José Manuel Sanz.

Following the main premise for this project, practically all the original materials have been used. Granite is the plane of reference, present around the entire Plaza Mayor, and extending from the door throughout the interior. In this way, we imply that this is a public space that spreads inward, into an information space belonging to the square itself. The granite, which is located all over the floor, has an under-floor heating and cooling system (with low-temperature water), and has a contrasting LED signaling system to make the walk-ways visible. For the walls and the ceilings the existing materials have been used to respect the origins. The vaults were lined brick archways joined by vaulted plaster, with plastered walls, and so they have remained. All the elements blend in one white tone to achieve the fusion of the whole area.

The modification of the climate and lighting facilities was necessary to eliminate most of their visual influence and transfer all importance to the renovated space. In an open space, lighting is critical in creating environments. For this reason, in the patio area, the upper light filters through a louvre lattice that moderates and qualifies both natural and artificial light, which is hidden above the lattice. The artificial light is produced by several lines of LEDs in the roof that provide similar lighting at any time of the day.



"History is always present. Being faithful to our time by carrying out current architecture, while at the same time contemplating the legacy of what we have received, has been our key", summarizes José Manuel Sanz as his work philosophy. This has been abundantly demonstrated in the tourism offices project, where HI-MACS® has played a major role.

JOSÉ MANUEL SANZ ARCHITECTS TALKS ABOUT HI-MACS®



What aspects have to be taken into account when refurbishing historic buildings?

In the first place, knowledge of the building itself. Buildings have an origin, a history, and a nature of construction. Getting to know those aspects is very important, especially when the refurbishment is going to entail a change of use of the space. Buildings have souls, and you have to understand them so that, when you incorporate a different element in the space, the spirit is not lost. That always means a reinterpretation of the spaces and what the building has to offer.

What characteristics do the materials have to have in order to work on this type of buildings?

Historical buildings, when they reach us, can do so in two ways: undamaged, although in need of restoration, or having lost part of their dignity and original configuration. In the first case, what we do is to repair things that are already in good shape. In contrast, in the second, the task is more profound because the building has lost part of its greatness, but that is precisely what we want to preserve, because it still has that importance and good repute.

Any material that is involved in the rehabilitation of a building has to have the same nobility as the building, and have a capacity to be handled and worked on, so that we know we are going to offer a degree of quality in line with the project. Commonly noble wood, marble and natural stone are used. But the interesting thing is that materials such as HI-MACS® have a capacity to be treated and manipulated, and sufficient intrinsic qualities as to be able to join these refurbishing projects.

Why is HI-MACS® an ideal material use on historic buildings?

HI-MACS® acrylic stone is ideal, especially for the nobility in the final finish. It is a stable, durable and clean material, with sufficient presence that you can incorporate it in a historical space, with defined values, without it losing any of its original force.

In the Casa de la Panadería there are original elements, such as granite columns, domes, etc., and HI-MACS® has been incorporated as a modern piece that, by contrast, brings the value of the old element itself to the forefront without occupying its space. When placing modern objects alongside other valuable antique pieces there are those that are afraid and tend to incorporate false-antique items alongside the real ones. We have a different idea: if when working on a historical building, you place a piece of furniture from the period it was built, perfect, but if the furniture is new we have the opportunity to incorporate new techniques and work with materials of our times. Like HI-MACS®, for example, that when incorporated into a project with a historic element, both contrast while striking a balance and embellishing each other mutually.

What are the advantages of using HI-MACS® in these cases?

Nobility, resistance and final finishing possibilities, among many others. The possibility of working with it in a totally flexible way allows you to create any kind of object. The option to heat it and manipulate it gives you infinite possibilities. Specifically I would underline to the possibility to designing furniture with this material, a very interesting experience, since the material really lends itself to this purpose.

While designing the Casa de la Panadería, our architecture studio has not only used HI-MACS® to create the counter, but also four or five other types of furniture: to lend support to technological elements, such as places for the elderly to lean on, leaflet holders, etc. We have used many components and we could have made endless other elements too, since the material is so versatile.

From the technical point of view, its durability and stability really stands out. HI-MACS® is a material that is very easy to clean and stays stable, even if it is continually exposed to friction and continual use.

The nobler the space you are making, the more you search for furniture that is stable and will be there for a long time. The qualities of HI-MACS® which allow you to heat it, manipulate it, twist it, etc., are qualities that so few materials truly give you.

What other aspects would you recommend HI-MACS® for?

The use of HI-MACS® on facades is a very interesting field. The material provides very thin thicknesses, an aspect that is highly valued in a facade, in addition to great resistance in terms of stability. From my point of view, it is a material that lends itself to producing very high quality facades, as an alternative to natural elements.

For any material, the ability to use it outdoors is a faculty that opens up an almost infinite range of possibilities. All the conditions that the HI-MACS® acrylic stone presents are aspects that are highly valued in the construction of exterior cladding.

PROJECT REFERENCES

Project: New Tourist Information Center, Casa de la Panadería, Plaza Mayor in Madrid

Request: December 2013

Date of construction: May - October 2015

Inauguration: October 2015

Project and construction management: JOSE MANUEL SANZ Arquitectos

<http://www.josemanuel sanz.com/>

Architects: Jose Manuel Sanz, Irene Brea, Leticia Llansó, Jaime Sanz de Haro, Luisa Santamaría
(Project stage)

Collaborators: FRADE Arquitectos (Project stage)

Technical Architect on site: Juan Antonio Santuy

Property/client: MADRID DESTINO, Ayuntamiento de Madrid

Production: Maderama carpintería <http://mmaderama.com/>

Construction company: Edhonor

Materials: HI-MACS® S028 Alpine White, S302 Opal <http://www.himacs.eu>

Photo Credits: © Jesús Granada

Image of the courtyard and the vaulted room before the refurbishing:



HI-MACS® by LG Hausys

www.himacs.eu

HI-MACS® is a solid surface material that can be moulded into any shape. It is widely used for architectural and interior applications, such as sculptural and high performance wall-cladding or kitchen, bathroom and furniture surfaces, in commercial, residential and public space projects. It is composed of acrylic, natural minerals and pigments that come together to provide a smooth, non-porous and visually seamless surface which meets the highest standards for aesthetics, fabrication, functionality and hygiene – offering manifold advantages over conventional materials.

HI-MACS® provides limitless possibilities for surfacing solutions and inspires creative minds from all over the world. **Zaha Hadid, Jean Nouvel, Rafael Moneo, Karim Rashid** and **David Chipperfield**, among others, have completed fabulous projects using HI-MACS®, from kitchens to bathrooms, including decorative items, in hotels as well as in museums, shopping centres and on external façades.

LG Hausys' HI-MACS® uses a simple heating process to give three-dimensional thermoplastic forming capabilities, allows visually seamless designs, offers a virtually limitless range of colours and – for some shades - exhibits a special translucency when exposed to light. Although HI-MACS® is almost as robust as stone, it can be worked in a similar way as wood: it can be sawn, routed, drilled or sanded.

HI-MACS® is manufactured using a new generation technology, the **thermal cure**. The temperature reached during the manufacturing process sets HI-MACS® apart from other solid surfaces and creates a denser, even more homogeneous, sturdy, durable surface – with a better resistance and superior thermoforming performance.

As regards hygiene, HI-MACS® does not absorb humidity, is highly resistant to stains, and is easy to clean, maintain and repair.

Countless internationally recognized certificates attest to the quality of HI-MACS® in terms of ecological commitment, hygiene and fire resistance – being the first Solid Surface in the market to receive the official **European Technical Approval (ETA) for façades** – for Alpine White S728 colour.

HI-MACS® offers the longest warranty on the solid surface market with a 15-year warranty for products fabricated by a Quality Club Member.

HI-MACS® The New Generation

Inspired by Architecture

For more information and to stay connected, visit our [website](http://www.himacs.eu) and our [newsroom](#).

Let's connect!



* **HI-MACS®** is designed and produced by **LG HAUSYS**, a world leader in the technology sector belonging to LG Group, and distributed by **LG HAUSYS EUROPE** based in Frankfurt (Germany).