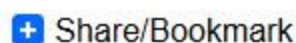


Cocktails and Colour Palettes: Paint Nite Argentina

by Annie Bacher, 23 March 2015.



During a night out in Buenos Aires, you generally don't have to worry about accidentally dipping a paint-covered brush in your glass of beer, or mistaking murky paint water for a cup of Malbec. But at Paint Nite events in Buenos Aires, participants are provided with an apron, canvas, painting materials, and expert artistic guidance while buying drinks and creating a masterpiece.



At Simone Bar about to start the Paint Nite event (Photo: Lucía Hernández)

This is not your typical high school art class. "What we do is play," says Monica de Gregorio, one of Paint Nite Buenos Aires' artists.

I attended a Paint Nite event on a Wednesday night in Simone, an elegant restaurant and bar along the water in Puerto Madero. After the first 15 minutes of chatting, mingling, drinking, and wondering what we had signed up for, the artistic work began. Monica, our artist and teacher for the night, immediately broke the tension: "This is an event to enjoy yourself, to have a good time. If you know how to paint, great! And if you don't know how to paint, it's even more fun."



The paintings even matched the cocktails (photo: Lucía Hernández)

Using the painting 'Circles and Stems' as a model, Monica guided our group of 25 budding artists through the process of mixing of primary colours, creating the illusion of a lighted a background, and ensuring continuity on our canvases. She circulated throughout the room, guiding us with her knowledge and experience, but also gave us the freedom to interpret for ourselves. "Those colourful balls can be flowers, joyful spirits of the night, or if you want to think outside of the box, go for it!" Some of our painting mates had different ideas: "sperm!" shouted one enthusiastic participant.

Many of us initially agonised over our execution of the shaded background according to Monica's instructions—did I have enough green in the "greenish grey" border? Had I left enough white toward the middle of the canvas to make sure it looked "illuminated"? Everyone looked around the room, silently evaluating each other's painting skills and looking for validation.

After a while, however, the atmosphere changed. Whether it was the beer or the blossoming artists inside of us, the room became a centre of calm. Without realising it, each painter became focused inward on their canvas, brushes, and colour palate for the final hour of creating colourful circles to complement our stems.

Monica has been teaching painting in schools for over 25 years, and loves "to be able to do this in a non-academic environment. This is not like a painting class in school," she emphasised. The top 40 music playing in the background, drinks alongside the paintbrush water, and the range in talent and experience of the students are certainly unique from your 7th grade art class.

How are the adults of Paint Nite different from Monica's school-age students? "Adults have more fear. When they know they can do something, they can paint freely, but they must be awakened."

People's reasons for coming to the event varied: "My friend told me there was going to be art and alcohol, so I said yeah," said one attendee. Others attend each week "as a form of therapy. You spend two hours with your mind blank," commented Paint Nite's Argentina Licensee, Genoveva Aguirre.

Genoveva, who originally worked as a travel agent, discovered Paint Nite on a trip to Boston. "Painting is my hobby, and I always liked to paint with my friends." She turned her hobby into an occupation in May 2014, when Paint Nite Argentina was first introduced in Buenos Aires. Unlike franchises that must maintain everything identical to original brand, Paint Nite operates under a licensing model. This means that Genoveva is allowed a certain degree freedom in her execution of the events in Argentina. "Everything is exactly the same as the events in the US, but we add something a little *porteño*. The New York events are much calmer."



The end of Paint Nite (photo: Lucía Hernández)

Francisco, Genoveva's son and assistant, commented on the beginnings of the event: "First it was mostly friends of our friends, until word of mouth took over and the event grew." Paint Nite currently operates in three different bars in Palermo, Puerto Madero, and Martínez, and is looking to expand in the future.

"The objective is to have a different night out," says Genoveva. I left my first Paint Nite feeling relaxed, and with some great conversations from *porteños* and foreigners alike, great photos of my artistic prowess in action, and a beautiful canvas painting to decorate my apartment and show off my newfound talent.



Paint Nite attendees enjoying themselves while painting. (Photo: Lucía Hernández)

*Awaken your inner artist: check out the [Paint Nite Argentina website](#) to find out about upcoming events and locations. Photos of past events can be found on their [Facebook page](#). Events are \$350 and include all painting materials and artistic instruction, drinks are extra. Take advantage of the exclusive discount for Indy readers: enter the code **INDY** when you sign up online and receive 30% off!*