



DOT.ES EXPRESS

Opening Spain's first online casino licence, Casino Gran Madrid has built on its land-based success by establishing an online presence that mirrors its player offer in the offline environment. G3 speaks to Casino Gran Madrid about its new venture

Casino Gran Madrid was awarded Spain's first online casino license back in May 2009, and is now live via the domain name and website CasinoGranMadrid.es.

All the games have been homologated by the Madrid region and the casino utilises online gaming software by developer Playtech after they signed an agreement back in 2009 to supply the planned site with a range of online casino and poker products. The products are supplied via Playtech's iPoker Network which is currently the third ranked online poker room in terms of traffic. Other sites that use this network are Titan Poker, William Hill Poker, Bet365 Poker and Betfred Poker.

Casino Gran Madrid hosted the final of the PokerStars.com European Poker Tour earlier this year and its online offering now features games of poker, roulette, blackjack and slots.

Beta testing has been taking place on site during the last five months and the gaming software underwent more than 200 million simulated plays during the certification process to ensure the servers could handle the traffic and check for any technical problems. During the first month of operation the casino has said the results are "satisfactory".

Daniel Ledesma at Casino Gran Madrid said: "We can't give specific data right now, but we

WE WILL PROFIT FROM BEING THE ONLY ONLINE OPERATOR AUTHORISED TO OPERATE ONLINE SLOT GAMES.

are very happy in terms of the response we have got back from our customers, both regular offline customers and new customers that had never been to our land based casino before.

"Table games are the most popular games right now although slot machines are starting to grow very fast. We will incorporate the new Playtech slots in January and profit from the situation of being the only online operator authorised to operate slot machines as slots are not regulated within the national license."

The online casino has the same license and has been given the same assurance and regulatory services as the land based casino. Casino Gran Madrid will continue to operate under one brand to continue with the synergies for its customers.

Meanwhile the regulations state that:

- Only online players from Madrid are accepted over the age of 18 and anyone banned from the land based casino will also be excluded from the website.
- To register clients must include their identity, age and address then download the casino software. Once they have registered they will receive an email of activation where they then confirm their data and that the Terms and Conditions have been accepted. Even clients of Casino Gran Madrid must also register to activate their account.
- If players are outside of the Madrid city they can still access their account to play but only users can play whose tax residence is in the Madrid region.
- To play players click on the download button and install the casino software. Once that is completed they can Create New Account and enter their details
- Payment limits:
Debit and Credit cards: Min €10 & Max €500
Bank transfer: Min €10 & Max €3,000
Ukash: Min €10 & Max €500
- Table games include: Roulette and Blackjack
- There are nine slots which include: Desert Treasure, Lotto Madness, A Night Out, Dr



Lovemore and Farmer's Market (20 lines) plus Football Rules, Forest of Wonders, Alien Hunter and Greatest Odissey (25 lines)

Casino Gran Madrid was the first casino in the Madrid community and today has around 500,000 visitors per year and has 50 table games and 250 slots. The casino has operated in various locations throughout its history before the construction of its own building in 1910.

Between 1836 and 1840 the casino operated at the Café de Solito. When it began to grow in size the 56 founding members moved the casino in 1840 to a new location in Principe Street and the casino was named Principe. In 1848 it moved again to the Marques de Santiago Palace where it stayed until 1880 and then later moved to Café Suizo which today is occupied by the BBVA bank.

In 1891 the casino then moved to La Equitativa where it stayed until 1910 when there was a proposal to construct a new building to house the casino.

Father and son team The Farges were elected to choose the best ideas of all design projects submitted although Luis Esteve signed the plans for the Metropolis Building on the corner of Alcalá Street and the Gran Vía. The construction was overseen by Jose Lopez

Sallaberry, a member of the casino and a well known architect. Completed in 1910 the official opening was held on September 29th.

Several years later the Civil War caused an abrupt end to the casino's social life and the building was used as a hospital. It resumed its services in 1940.

The casino fell into disrepair years later and in 1986 an agreement was reached with a company to undertake the management of the casino. This agreement was renewed in 1994. A new era began and there have been many changes such as correspondence with foreign clubs which has been successful. The casino currently has agreements with more than 220 clubs in Spain and abroad.

The casino now produces its own magazine and has added facilities such as cafes, computerized library, photographic archive and a new television lounge. The lower level has undergone reforms with the construction of a heated pool, gymnasium, sauna and Turkish baths.

In the gaming area today there are three games rooms where clients can take part in Poker, American and French roulette, Blackjack, Baccarat. The casino employs over 750 people and since opening some 17.5 million people have visited the casino

The casino is 110,000 sq.ft in size and has 250 slots and 50 table games and poker plus one restaurant on site. The Mandalay Restaurant is renown in the area and provides around 100,000 meals each year. There are also two buffet bars The Dome and Las Vegas and international cuisine at the L'Etoile.

Slots play with a minimum of 1c and can payout up to €40,000 or €100,000 interconnected. There are video poker, video reels, electronic roulette, electronic poker and Keno and the principal area for the slots can be found in the American hall.

In October 1981 it became the first casino in Madrid when the Spanish market was legalised. Casino Gran Madrid was granted the license in 1982 for a period of 10 years. This has since been renewed on two occasions 1992 and 2002. The next review is 2012.

Daniel Ledesma added: "Following the examples of other regulated markets such as Italy and France, 2012 is going to be a very fascinating year in terms of growth and competition. Dot com operators are planning big marketing expenses and traditional land based operators will need to profit the most from all the synergies we can find between the online and offline channels such as tournaments, deposit and withdrawals in the casino for example."