

ON LOCATION

Rio Refurbished

Brazil's second city is upping the ante with a raft of creative hotels, as **JULIANA A SAAD** explains



A room at the avant-garde Mama Shelter; *right*: the soaring Gran Meliá on the aquamarine Atlantic coastline



Rio's sexy beaches, verdant landscapes and vibrant people are deservedly feted, but the unsung attraction of Brazil's former capital is its ability to adapt and grow organically – much like the lush canopy of tropical rainforest that embraces the city. The bustling vibe that swept across the metropolis during the 2016 Olympic Games brought a collection of new venues of all types. Take Santiago Calatrava's signature **Museum of Tomorrow** (museudoamanha.org.br), devoted to science and technology, located at the tip of the Atlantic's Porto Maravilha, and conveniently across from the fluid **Art Museum of Rio** (museudeartedorio.org.br), or

witness Michelin-starred eatery **Lasai** (lasai.com.br), where the seasonal menus are infused with ingredients grown in the restaurant's own organic garden.

But it may be hotels that best embody the city's penchant for adaptation and exude true Brazilian coolness. A handful of innovative hoteliers are redefining a guest's experience of comfort and beauty in the aptly named Marvellous City. The **Emiliano Rio** (emiliano.com.br), the carioca version of the boutique hotel brand overlooking Copacabana Beach and Fort, opened in March. It's a stunning project by architect Arthur Casas, with a cobogó-style white façade standing tall against Rio's renowned zigzag boardwalk. Its

pure modernist style, rooftop pool and suites featuring wares by homegrown designers make the stay singular and unforgettable.

Those who wish to experience a more bohemian atmosphere can stay at **Mama Shelter** by Accor (mamashelter.com). Nestled uphill among the post-colonial houses of Santa Teresa, the hotel brings refreshing suites and hot lounges to this traditional neighbourhood that is bursting with tiny samba bars and live music. For postcard views and a happening terrace, head to **YOO2 Rio de Janeiro** (yoo2.com). The Brazilian iteration of the hotel chain designed by the duo Starck and John Hitchcox opened last year at Botafogo

FROM LEFT: © MAMA SHELTER, © GRAN MELIA

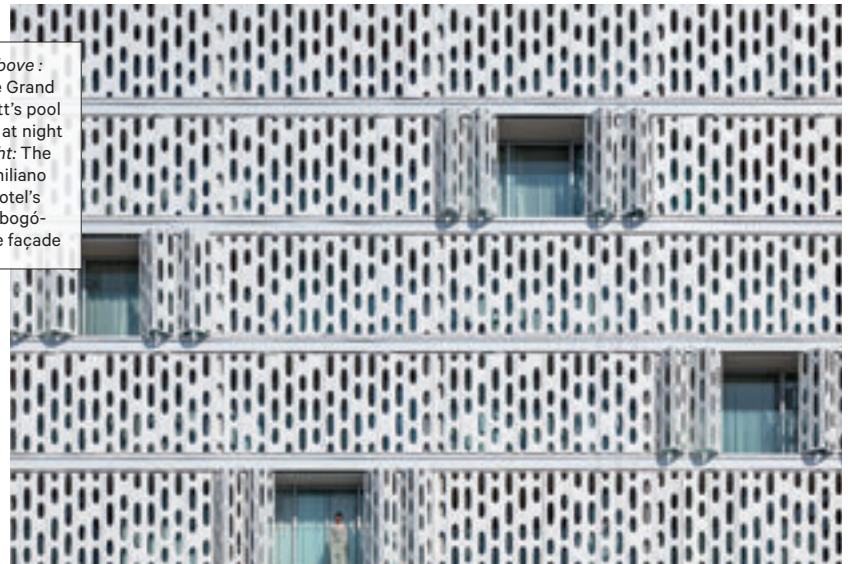


landscaped by Roberto Burle Marx accord an air of quiet sophistication, while the retro interior design and breathtaking panoramas at the pool bar are quite simply unbeatable.

For a combination of urban glamour and seductively indulgent beach resort, head to the **Grand Hyatt Rio** (grand.hyatt.com), a testament to simplicity and ingenuity that is all about its natural setting. The Barra da Tijuca is the perfect location for this urban escape overlooking the Atlantic Ocean's white-sand beach and the Marapendi Lagoon. Local touches such as special treatments at Atiaia Spa and Granado Apothecary amenities add to the understated comfort of its balconied guest rooms and generously large baths. Like its peers, it offers a fresh take on a city that is constantly reinventing itself. ♦

Panoramic windows reveal endless VIEWS CAPTURING RIO'S UNIQUE LIFE

Above : The Grand Hyatt's pool area at night
right: The Emiliano Hotel's cobogó-style façade



From left: banana crêpe brûlée at YOO2; breakfast with a view at YOO2



Beach with jaw-dropping suites and captivating vistas of Rio's charming Guanabara Bay, Sugarloaf Mountain and the iconic Christ the Redeemer statue.

Architecture buffs, meanwhile, are excited by the December opening of **Gran Meliá Nacional Rio de Janeiro** (melia.com) in a rounded, avant-garde building created by the legendary architect Oscar Niemeyer in front of São Conrado Beach. The edifice was restored to its heyday glory, as its towering 34 floors with panoramic windows reveal endless views, capturing Rio's unique life and drawing your eyes all the way to the Atlantic. Brazilian artworks such as Alfredo Ceschiatti's *Mermaid* sculpture, Carybé's mural and the gardens

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: TADEU BRUNELLI, LEONARDO FINOTTI, © YOO2, TOMAS RANGEL