

# A brief encounter, Latin-style

You can book your passion by the hour at the Brazilian motels where kitsch meets convenience. **Sue Chester** and boyfriend check in

The cab driver didn't bat an eyelid when we told him our destination. Meanwhile the boyfriend was in high spirits, humming 'feeling hot, hot, hot' as we sped along the Avenida Niemeyer past the glittering, turquoise ocean on a baking Rio day.

There was a queue of people at the entrance to the hotel, waiting patiently in the afternoon heat. At last it was our turn and after some awkward Portuguese we picked our suite; or should I say the boyfriend did, seduced by the name High Tech.

After paying the cabbie (who I could have sworn was now smirking) we scampered up our own, private stairwell bursting with curiosity.

Rushing past the cosy dining area we scurried out onto the terrace, where there was a small swimming pool complete with waterfall and sunloungers with a spectacular view of the Cagarras Islands. A king-sized bed faced the sea ostentatiously. The sheets were decorated with a pattern showing couples in various positions romping across the stretch-cotton.

To the British, motels may conjure images of anonymous low-rise buildings overlooking the motorway, where truck-drivers and travelling salesmen feast on all-day breakfasts in the adjacent Little Chef. But the Brazilian motel is another proposition entirely. Frequented mainly by couples in search of some privacy, they are kitsch temples to Latino passion, where rooms are usually booked by the hour. Or, in the case of the Vips motel, where we had just checked in, by the eight-hour stint - leading my boyfriend to ask dryly whether Viagra and glucose tablets were provided in the mini-bar.

So instead of a dirty weekend, you can have an action-packed, highly accessorised dirty few hours. And all without pretence, guilt or hassle. The receptionist at the drive-in booth knows what you're there for. You leave your passport, call the waiter to leave the bill in the anteroom when you're done (none of the staff ever see you), collect your passport on exit and Bob's your uncle.

Our suite had a glut of mostly hot and wet equipment; jacuzzi, steam room, sauna, black-tiled shower... and a chrome and black leather chair that looked worryingly like something you might see in a gynaecologist's surgery.

True to its 'high-tech' label, there were also four small TV screens plus one enormous one with a video camera, which got the boyfriend highly animated. I don't know which was more horrifying: the thought of my cellulite being zoomed in on, or that I might be upstaged by Brazilian footy broadcast across multiple screens.

So why is it that these handy institutions have become so popular in Brazil? Sergio Lino, managing director of the Lumini Motel in Sao Paulo, says: 'Motels started in the mid-1970s, when Brazil was a very closed society in this respect. You had to present your



Guilt-free pleasures in Brazil's motels, above. Right, from top: Vip's, Lumini and Le Baron.

marriage certificate if you checked into a hotel and, if in any doubt, the "sex police" were called in. So a lot of people ended up doing it in cars or on the street, which was not very safe.'

Over the past three decades motels have become an accepted part of Brazilian society, with something on offer for all budgets, ranging from get-the-job-done one-stars to five-star luxury love nests. Naturally, they are the perfect location for clandestine liaisons, but they are equally popular with girlfriends and boyfriends who want some privacy (unmarried Brazilians tend to stay in the parental home well into their 20s or 30s), or married couples who go to escape the daily routine or to celebrate an anniversary.

Consequently, motel owners have had to change their style to appeal to long-term couples; especially at the top of the range, where the decor is deliberately understated and sophisticated: 'We wanted a design and concept that wasn't like the old, nightclub-style motels,' says Lino. 'It's all much more stylish, not screaming "motel" with red flashing lights, gilt and mirrors everywhere.' Mainstream enough for some of George Bush Senior's delegation to stay at the Maxim motel for the 1992 Earth Summit, when Rio's hotels were booked out (I wonder what they thought the sex chairs were for), as will various athletes coming for this year's Pan Am Games.

## Instead of a dirty weekend, you have an action-packed dirty few hours

Some of the top-end motel suites lend themselves to show-biz parties; Lenny Kravitz booked Vip's two-storey Millennium suite (complete with two pools and BBQ) for a 400-guest launch party for one of his CDs. Ronaldo has also hosted a big shindig there.

Meanwhile, back in the High Tech suite, we shimmied on the dancefloor (it



Getty, Sue Chester

## LOVE IN THE AFTERNOON

### RIO DE JANEIRO

■ **Vip's Motel**  
All suites have a spectacular sea view. Try High Tech, New Vip's 15, Sol or Millennium. From R\$85 to R\$550 (£20-£132). Av Niemeyer, 418, Leblon (00 55 213322 5868; www.vipsmotel.com.br)

■ **Maxim**  
Run amok in the Maxim suite, overlooking a pool with waterfall. R\$60-R\$400. Av Nuta James, 877, Barra da Tijuca (00 55 21 2494 2323; www.guiademoteis.com.br and type 'Maxim' in the search box)

### SAO PAULO

■ **Lumini Motel**  
Extremely classy decor with fabulous service. R\$120-R\$390. Rua Dr Rubens Meireles, 477, Barra Funda (00 55 11 2197 0666; www.luminimotel.com.br)

■ **Vip's Motel**  
Romp around Brazil's biggest motel bed (3m x 3m). R\$49-R\$498. Rua Maria Olinda 70, Jordanopolis (00 55 11 4332 6088; www.vips.com.br)

### SALVADOR

■ **Motel Del Rey**  
Spread out in the immense mansion suites Apollo, Aphrodite or Venus, or play Fred and Wilma in the Blue Cave. R\$59-R\$288. Rua Catarina Fogaca 998, Jardim Armacao (00 55 71 3461 9220; www.moteldelrey.com.br)

### FLORIANOPOLIS

■ **Nantai Motel**  
Attempt the sex machine in Sexy or wallow in Ocidente's ofuro bath. R\$65-R\$250. Rodovia SC 405, Campeche, Florianopolis (on the island) (00 55 48 3337 6320; www.nantaimotel.com.br)

### SAO LUIS

■ **Motel Le Baron**  
Includes wacky themed rooms; Pit Stop is complete with vintage car or chase your prince/princess round your own palace in the Taj Mahal. R\$42-R\$220. Av General Artur Carvalho, 61, Turu (00 55 98 3248 03268; www.meulebaron.com.br)

Prices are for varying amounts of time, from three hours to 12 hours. You can also stay overnight.



238-4194

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT?  
**exodus**  
experience a different holiday

Trek to Everest Base Camp, cycle through the vineyards in the Dordogne, track game on the plains of Africa, dogsled across frozen Lapland or simply relax with a glass of vino in Tuscany.

With over 500 small group, independent and family adventure holidays to choose from, why not try something different this year?

EST. 1974

Call 020 8772 3804 or visit [exodus.co.uk](http://exodus.co.uk)

**TheObserver** reader offer

**Explore Europe's Cities**

3 nights from only £130pp

**Price includes:**

- Two nights' accommodation with breakfast
- FREE 3rd night offer - selected dates and cities
- Return low-cost flights
- Airport taxes and security charges

**Namibian Reflections**

9 night tour including desert, dunes, coast and wildlife

Set between the Kalahari and the South Atlantic, Namibia offers an enticing mix of wildlife, culture and spectacular scenery. Our holiday introduces you to this vast country taking you to the sand dunes of Sossusvlei, laid-back Swakopmund on the Atlantic coast and to a typical Namibian game ranch.

Day 1-2 Windhoek: Overnight flight to Namibia's capital, Windhoek. On arrival you will be met and transferred to the Safari Hotel for 1 night. Sundowner drinks and a barbecue dinner.

Day 3-4 Sossusvlei: Drive south from Windhoek to the Hammerstein Lodge and Camp. The following morning we leave early for Sossusvlei, a huge clay pan enclosed by mighty sand dunes in the Namib-Nakuluf National Park. Arriving at dawn, the red sands shift colour as the sun rises.

Day 5-8 Swakopmund: Continue to the coast and the town of Swakopmund. Stay 4 nights at the Schweizerhaus Hotel in the heart of Swakopmund, from where you can enjoy the town's relaxed charm, take walks along the beach, sample the excellent dining options or one of our optional tours.

Day 9-10 Oropoko Game Lodge: Your final 2 nights are spent at Oropoko Lodge, a typical Namibian game ranch, set on a hilltop overlooking the savannah below.

**CAPE TOWN EXTENSION:** Set against the stunning backdrop of Table Mountain, Cape Town is a vibrant and cosmopolitan city. 3 nights from £245 extra

FROM **£995**

**DATES AND PRICES**

07 March 2007	£1345
25 April	£1175
30 May	£995
11 July	£1495
01 August	£1525
12 September	£1245
10 October	£1395

Prices per person based on 2 sharing. Further dates available on request. Prices subject to availability. Fuel supplements may apply. Booking conditions apply.

**WHAT'S INCLUDED:** Return flights from London. 9 nights' accommodation, with breakfast. 1 dinner. Transfers and transport. Sightseeing as detailed. Pre-paid government departure taxes.

**NOT INCLUDED:** Optional insurance.

CALL US NOW TO BOOK **01306 871 133** OR VISIT [www.travelcollection.co.uk](http://www.travelcollection.co.uk)

Americas • Caribbean • Europe • Africa • Middle East • India & Indian Ocean • Far East • Australasia

Travel between 01 February - 31 March 2007

Prices per person from	2 nights	3rd night
<b>KRAKOW</b>		
3* Wyspianski	£124	£22
3* Bronowice	£130	FREE
4* Novotel Centrum	£158	FREE
5* Holiday Inn	£160	FREE
<b>BARCELONA</b>		
3* Astoria	£154	£37
3* Atenas	£154	£37
5* Majestic	£278	FREE
<b>AMSTERDAM</b>		
2* Acro	£148	FREE
3* Tulip Inn Art	£154	£37
<b>VIENNA</b>		
4* Park	£198	FREE
3* Graben	£134	£27
3* Austria	£160	FREE
4* Maria Theresia	£178	FREE
<b>ROME</b>		
3* Donatello	£144	FREE
2* Giotto Flavia	£148	£34
4* Gran Beverly Hills	£168	£44
4* Celio	£224	FREE

Call **0870 836 0819**

Calls provided by BT will be charged at up to 8 pence per minute at all times. A call set-up fee of 3 pence per call applies to calls from residential lines. Mobile and other providers' costs may vary. Prices are per person for two nights including Mon-Thur return flight, departing from London and regional airports. Based on 2 sharing twin/double ensuite room including breakfast. Weekend (Fri-Sun) travel supplements apply. Flights are based on low cost carriers on selected classes, days, dates, times and subject to limited availability. Hotel supplements may apply on other selected dates. Free nights apply to selected days and dates only. All holidays are subject to availability and travel must be completed by 31 March 2007. This offer is operated by Leisure Direction Ltd. Image House, Station Rd, London N17 9LR. ABTA V473X