

THE A-LIST: AUSTRALIA'S NEW DESIGN GENERATION

AUSTRALIA

NATE
& BERKUS
SHARES HIS
FAVOURITE
THINGS

50+
page
KITCHEN &
BATHROOM
SPECIAL

ICONS
tributes to
OSCAR
NIEMEYER
& ANDREE
PUTMAN

BIBA GLAM!
THE LEGENDARY
BARBARA
HULANICKI

DIVINE DECADENCE

FROM SYDNEY TO SÃO PAULO,
DECORATION TAKES CENTRE STAGE

OPPOSITES ATTRACT

Known for its flamboyant flavour, Brazil also has impeccable design credentials, nowhere more evident than its luxury hotels in two contrasting destinations: frenetic São Paulo and peaceful Paraty.

PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD POWERS WORDS DOMINIC BRADBURY



PASSENGER



CASA TURQUESA, PARATY

The contrast between the epic sprawl of São Paulo and the gentle romance of Paraty could hardly be greater. This is a perfect retreat when you tire of the pace in the big city – a small colonial backwater that feels almost lost in time. Paraty was a thriving port in the 18th and 19th centuries, where ships loaded up with gold, then coffee beans and sugarcane. But it was almost forgotten for much of the 20th century until tourism finally started taking hold in the 70s and 80s.

The interlude meant that Paraty remained preserved and unspoilt, especially the old town, with its cobbled streets, stone buildings and patchwork of brightly coloured shutters and doorways. Now the town draws in visitors from both São Paulo and Rio, further up the coast. No cars are allowed in the historic quarter, lending it a real sense of calm.

We picked up our hire car at Guarulhos Airport just outside São Paulo, so avoiding the nightmare traffic in the city itself, and took a four-hour drive over the Tropic of Capricorn, through the mountains and rainforest of the Serra do Mar National Park (a drive best done in daylight hours) and then along the coast to Paraty itself.

Arriving at the Casa Turquesa was a delight. This boutique hotel of just nine rooms is located in the old town, by the picturesque Capela de Santa Rita church, dating from the 1720s. The hotel sits on a cobbled street right by the sea and at high tide the ocean wanders lazily up the street and pedestrians use little wooden bridges to pass from one elevated pavement to another.

As you step inside, guests are issued with complimentary Havaianas thongs – a custom dating back to a time when few wore shoes in Paraty. The hotel's design is a collaboration between owner Tete Etrusco and architect Renato Tavolaro, who converted an 18th-century home into a beautifully conceived boutique hotel, which opened in 2008.

The design brilliantly combines old and new, with interiors that blend the turquoise colour theme with crisp whites and warm timber finishes, as well as vintage pieces and contemporary furniture. There is a romantic flavour to this homey retreat, full of perfectly executed personal touches, down to the bespoke Casa Turquesa napkins and breakfast plates. A plunge pool in the central courtyard is welcome after a hot day drinking in the sights.

For more go to casaturquesa.com.br



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The hotel is a perfect blend of old and new. Each guestroom has a view of the bay of Paraty. Colourful furnishings in the lounge area. The Capela de Santa Rita dates from the 1720s and is a landmark in the town. Guestrooms have a romantic flavour. Turquoise details appear throughout.

