



photo by Nicolas Ortiz

cuba ABSOLUTELY With a Passion for Cuba

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Cover picture by Alex Mene,
Playa Santa Maria, July 2014

EDITORIAL

'In all the beaches in Cuba the sand was made of grated silver, though in Varadero it was also mixed with diamond dust.'

A character in Roberto Fernández's Raining Backwards

August in Cuba is a steaming month of long hot summer days full of humidity and with the off afternoon shower thrown in for good measure. It is also the month when Cubans finally admit that it is warm enough for the beach and they decamp from Havana to the beaches known as Playas del Este. Following the Boy Scouts motto, they come prepared with picnic hampers, tents and enough paraphernalia to sink a small ship.

In this issue we pack our bucket and spade and take you to the best beaches in Cuba, lingering in Cuba's most famous resort town of Varadero to see what a million tourists a year see in this idyllic peninsula. If you have the energy, then maybe you should kit up with the Caribbean Kite School in Varadero or head up into the skies over Jibacoa with Reynaldo Prendes's paragliding club.

Back in Havana, August offers a music smorgasbord with everything from the Timbalaye Rumba Festival (Aug 17-24), to the Havana Carnival (Aug 8-17 – weekends only) and Brutal Fest's 2014 Cuba Festival (Aug 15-24). Personally I can't wait to see the charming French band Dead Cowboy's Sluts. Raúl Paz plays at month end, August 30 in Teatro Karl Marx.

If you like theatre, this month offers two treats. Bent, produced by the brilliant and enigmatic Stephen Bayly (showing all month at Bertolt Brecht), and Hamlet by Shakespeare's Globe Theater (Aug 7).

Do check out our expanded Havana Guide, which is growing to accommodate the new bars, restaurants and casas particulares that continue to spring forth adding vitality and energy to Havana's entertainment and hospitality scene.

August 2014 Highlights (Havana, unless stated)

- Aug 5-7, Festival Verano en Jibacoa
- Aug 7, Hamlet by Shakespeare's Globe Theater
- Aug 1-10, Circuba 2014
- Aug 8-17, Havana Carnival
- Aug 17-24, Timbalaye Rumba Festival
- Aug 15-24, Brutal Fest's 2014 Cuba Festival
- Aug 30, Raúl Paz in Concert

Thanks to all of our contributors, sponsors, partners and readers. Do please keep providing us with your feedback, comments and suggestions. All enquiries should be directed to Sophia Beckman at CubaAbsolutely@gmail.com. All the best. Viva Cuba!



Playa Pilar
photo by Ana Lorena

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HAVANA GUIDE

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Mon	4	11	18	25	Mon
	What's On Havana is out – make a plan for the rest of the month	El Micha & Sur Caribe @ Casa de la Música de Miramar, 5 pm & 11pm	Monday night–go traditional bar hopping: Bodeguita del Medio, Floridita, Sloppy Joe's.	Go down to Jibacoa for some paragliding	
Tue	5	12	19	26	Tue
	Aug 5-7, Festival Verano en Jibacoa Aug 10-10, Circuba 2014	Dinner at Mr Miglis's Swedish-Cuban fusion oasis of good food and style in Centro Habana	Girl's night out – El Cocinero, Up & Down, Sangri-La	Get a beer or six at Havana's best new brewery: Cervecería Antiguo Almacén de la Madera y el Tabaco	
Wed	6	13	20	27	Wed
	Feria de Arte en La Rampa July 1-August 31, 2014	Dinner at El Litoral, one of Havana's best new restaurants– watch life pass by on Malecón.	Qva Libre @ Café Cantante, Teatro Nacional, 5pm	José Luis Cortés y NG La Banda @ Casa de la Música Habana, 11pm	
Thu	7	14	21	28	Thu
	Hamlet by Shakespeare's Globe Theater @ Teatro Mella, 7pm	Bobby Carcassés @ UNEAC, 2pm	Dinner at La Guarida Havana's legendary restaurant located in Old Havana.	Humor con cierto aire, Aug 28-30, 7pm @ Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes	
Fri	8	15	22	29	Fri
	Bent, directed by Stephen Bayly @ Bertolt Brecht. 8:30pm, Fri & Sat	Eso que anda. Solo show of Iván Soca as a tribute to Juan Formell @ Centro Hispano Americano de Cultura. Opens Aug 15	Aug 15-24, Brutal Fest's 2014 Cuba Festival	Dinner at Santy, Jaimanitas's off the beaten track world class sushi restaurant	
Sat	9	16	23	30	Sat
	Aug 8-17, Havana Carnival Ballet Español de Holguín @ Centro Hispano Americano de Cultura, 5pm	¡Cenicientaaaaa!!!! Teatro La Proa Fri, Sat & Suun, 3pm @ Teatro de títeres El Arca	Los Van Van @ El Sauce, 11pm	Raúl Paz in Concert @ Teatro Karl Marx, 9pm	
Sum	10	17	24	31	Sum
	The Phantom of the Opera, Opens Aug 9, Sat & Sun, 9pm Anfiteatro de La Habana Vieja	Aug 17-24, Timbalaye Rumba Festival	Beach day – Playas del Este to build sandcastles followed by pizza at Piccolo in Guanabo	La Máquina de la Melancolía, with Frank Delgado and Luis Alberto García @ El Sauce, 5pm	

WITH A PASSION FOR CUBA

Long hot summer days

by Nicolás de Camors

Every year as the final days of June are coming into view, we always say the same thing: "If it's like this now, imagine what it will be like in August." When what we call winter in Cuba has finally disappeared and the fresh showers of April and May are a distant memory, that burning body heat takes over. No hand fans, electric fans or air-conditioning systems, lemonades or cold beers can fight it off.



Mar Azul
photos by Alex Mene



imitation fried rice. The number one preference is a tie between congri and tamales, two foods which I think really don't go together. Everything else can vary but there should always be something fried, croquettes made of some unidentified ingredients and maybe something for dessert.

All these food elements are in the realm of the females in the family; the men are in charge of refreshment: bottles and coolers with ice water, lots of ice cubes and soft drinks—only a few lean towards the natural fruit juices, perhaps scared away by the odious task of peeling, chopping, blending and straining. If the budget allows, a stash of beers or Havana Club rum (or both) and something to snack on. And among these masculine preparations, the set of dominos will always be there.

After the first summer season blast, we begin to dream about water, whether in pools, rivers or pond. But as a rule, what comes to mind is the beach. Then we have to make the decision about whether we are going to rent a cabin, a house or an air-conditioned room in a hotel. It depends on the budget which in almost all cases is meager. Most of us opt for daily treks to the beach, complete with huge parasols or tiny camping tents.

And so the preparations begin. First, what food to take? Let's hope nobody suggests rice and vegetables with fish or even buying a plate of



The ladies add their bulky bags of large and small towels, hats and kerchiefs, pareos, sandals for the sand and others for the pavement, a big bottle of drinking water to rinse your feet before putting on the second sandals, sunglasses, soap, shampoo, hair conditioner, eau de toilette, several kinds of lotions (sunblock and moisturizer for after the swim), two kinds of brushes, a large comb and a small comb, cosmetics, a book or a magazine and a bunch of those enigmatic objects that reside in the depths of a woman's purse.

And if there are kids, they need their life-savers, flotation devices and rafts, shovels, rakes and pails, plastic beach toys, clothes, shoes and just about everything else. Our women-folk tend to have the gift of being the memory of the family. Just when we are there with water up to our armpits, feeling cool, free and without a care in the world, suddenly somebody (usually a man!) can be heard to complain: "Jeez, woman! You forgot the can opener!"



[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)



Photo Ana Lorena





Cuba's best beach

by Juliet Barclay

Urban travel sophisticates may try and persuade you that to find the real authentic Cuba, you need to get away from the beach. While this may be true, you will be missing out on crystal-clear waters, fine golden sand whether in a virgin backwater in Isla de la Juventud or in mecca-to-decadent tourism in an all-inclusive in Varadero. Let's be honest: they all have their virtues! In this piece, Juliet Barclay sets out to find the best beach in Cuba...it's a tough assignment, but someone has to do it!

However does one find the best beach in Cuba? There are an awful lot to choose from and most of them are fabulous. The longest and most famous is Varadero on the north coast, where you would be hard put to it to walk the length of the beach in a day, especially after all the cocktails that you somehow find yourself drinking en route. A brisk early morning walk soon becomes a late morning saunter, then a wander lunchwards, then a yawny shuffle out onto the beach, then a very stationary session under a shady palm tree. Varadero has white sand, blue sea, masses of good hotels, lots of things to do and even more people to talk to. It's particularly good for families with small children and the staff of the larger hotels can be relied upon to keep them amused whilst their parents chill out.

Cuba is surrounded by around nine hundred cays (pronounced keys), small islands of the sort that pirates used for burying their treasure. One of the smaller ones off the northwest coast is Cayo Santa María, which is the proud host to Playa Ensenachos. Its beach is extraordinary: a long curve of soft white sand, almost deserted, leading down to a

huge expanse of shallow aquamarine water as warm and as clear as air, which gradually deepens to dark blue in the distance. Ensenachos is not only one of the best beaches in Cuba but probably one of the best in the whole Caribbean. The sand has a texture similar to talcum powder and it feels like double cream between your toes when you stroll through the shallows. There's only one place to stay there: the luxury Iberostar Ensenachos Hotel. Not many people know about Ensenachos... yet. Go soon, while your only companions will still be pelicans.

But it is the final beach, Playa Pilar on Cayo Guillermo that is really the star of the show. When you're shivering in the bus queue in mid-January, this is the kind of tropical fantasy you longingly conjure up. It is a perfect bliss of rolling sand



Cayo Santa María

Varadero beach
photo by Ana Lorena



Varadero beach
photo by Alex Mene



dunes, a beautiful bay, warm turquoise water and authentic rustic charm unspoiled by deckchairs and morning cocktails. The Meliá hotels on Cayo Coco are the best places to stay (www.solmelia.com) and from there, when you tire of your morning daiquiri, you can easily visit this very special beach which is the stuff that dreams are made of. Go on, close your eyes for a moment and imagine you're already there, floating in the shimmering shallows, sucking a mango and knowing that stretching ahead of you is day after day of utter and unmitigated idleness on what is without a shadow of a doubt the best beach in Cuba.

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Cayo Guillermo
photos by Ana Lorena

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Paragliding in Jibacoa

by Ricardo Alberto Pérez

photos Y. Monte





it runs in their families and they have been immersed in it all their lives straight from childhood.

On this trip, we were going to see some experienced men along with the debuts of some who have just undergone months of training and preparation at the hands of Luis Garcia and David Cala.

At the foot of the hill, the instructors were testing the knowledge of their students before they embarked on their first solo flight. They especially emphasized the landings because they require a lot of concentration and calm.

A few minutes later were climbing the hill from whence they would take off. Once at the summit, we chatted with Gilberto Piñero, an active skydiver and the president of the Paragliding Club in the province of Pinar del Rio. He explained to us about the functioning and structure of the Aviation Club of Cuba which includes skydiving, model plane flying and sports aviation besides paragliding.

There on location we were able to observe all the details and preparations that precede the flights; teamwork is important since that is one of the greatest guarantees of a successful flight. One of the most experienced



A few kilometers away from the picturesque town of Santa Cruz del Norte, home of Havana Club rum, some 50 kilometers from Havana, we were in store for an extraordinary adventure. On a bright, hot July Sunday we were taking part in a fascinating pastime that is growing in popularity very quickly on the Island: paragliding. The site chosen on this opportunity were the areas known as El Fraile and Canasi.

In Cuba, paragliding started being practiced in the mid-1990s when a group of Cuban parachutists returned to Cuba after being trained in Spain by a Spanish expert; they immediately took on the sport on a regular basis.

Travelling to the chosen locations was useful to get to know some of the protagonists of these aerial maneuvers and the reasons for their passion and dedication to the sport. In the case of Cuba, it is interesting to point out that most paragliders have or have had certain connections with flying. Some of them were or still are skydivers. Almost all of them admit that flying is a passion that is in their genes,



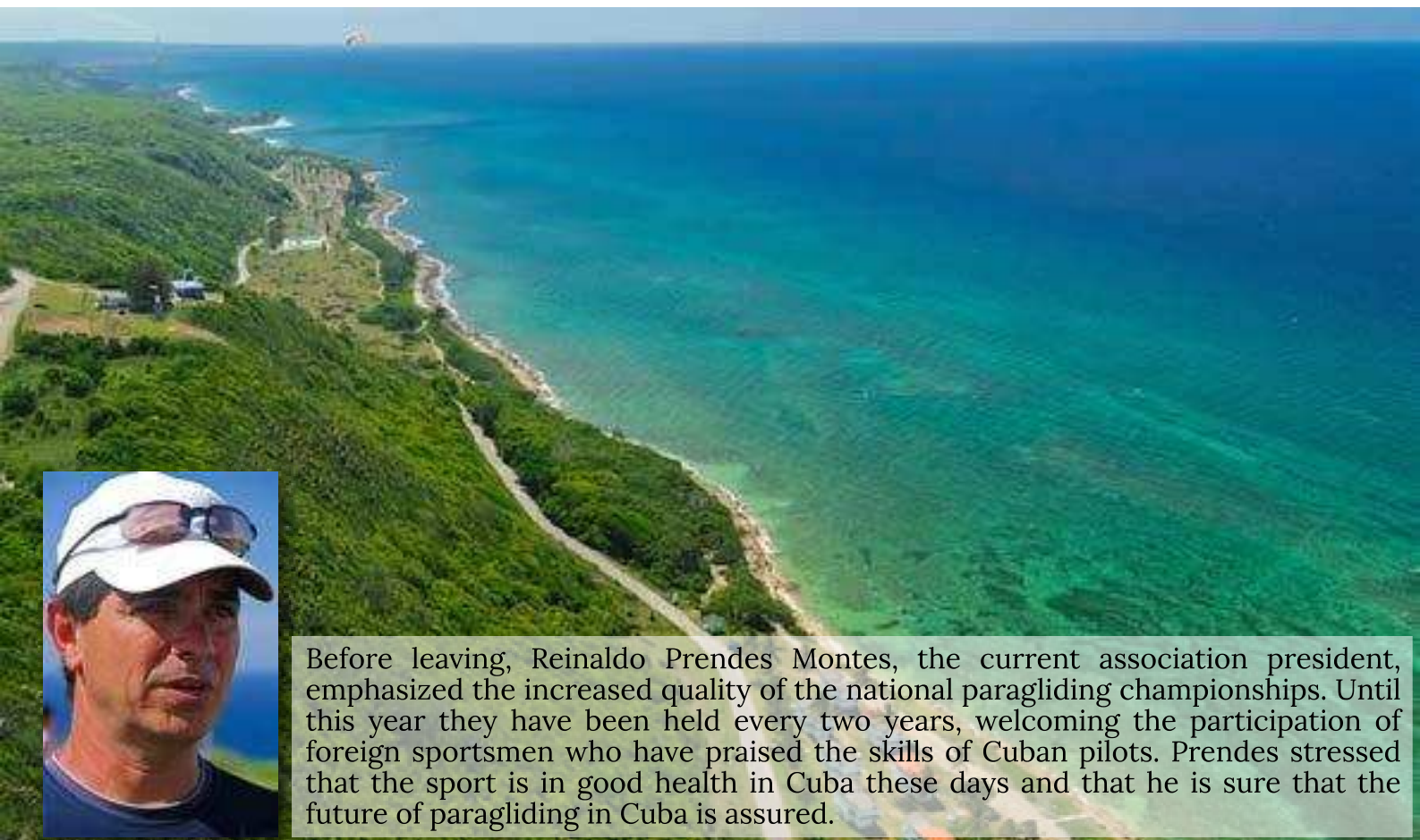
paragliders, Roberto Urribarre, with 15 years behind him, told us his intentions of writing a book in the near future about the history of paragliding in Cuba.

Luis Garcia, who until recently was the president of the Cuban Paragliding Association, added that the best locations for the sport of paragliding are on the Isle of Youth, the provinces of Santiago de Cuba, Granma, Villa Clara and the area of Canasi in the province of Mayabeque where this encounter took place.

After take-off, in the air, we were treated to a surprising show. The pilots stabilized their flight and started to glide and execute maneuvers. That air space becomes magical because of the array of colors in the sails, appearing to be giant multi-colored birds. This air show goes on quite near the beaches and so almost all the beach-goers automatically become spectators. Our cameraman and photographer flew in tandem with two experienced pilots. When they landed after their first flight, they admitted to us that they now understood the passion felt by these sportsmen for their activity and for flying. They told us that once you are up so high in free flight, the feeling is indescribable; you feel incredible peace and tranquility, something that is almost impossible to attain on terra firma.



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Before leaving, Reinaldo Prendes Montes, the current association president, emphasized the increased quality of the national paragliding championships. Until this year they have been held every two years, welcoming the participation of foreign sportsmen who have praised the skills of Cuban pilots. Prendes stressed that the sport is in good health in Cuba these days and that he is sure that the future of paragliding in Cuba is assured.

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Malecón, from calle 19 to calle Marina,
and neighborhoods
9pm-2am
August 2014
Fri 8 & 15, Sat 9 & 16, Sun 10 & 17,



The 2014 Havana Carnival

by Ricardo Alberto Pérez

The 2014 carnival will open on August 8 with the traditional parade of colorful comparsas and floats down Malecón Avenue. More than 20 popular bands will perform during the festivity, including Pupy y Los que son son, Adalberto Álvarez y su Son, Manolito Simonet y su Trabuco, Cándido Fabré, Maykel Blanco y su Salsa Mayor, Las Anacaonas, Aragón and Azúcar Negra, just to name a few. From Monday to Thursday, the comparsas will travel with their shows to the neighborhoods. The Kid's Carnival is back this year and will be held at the Ciudad Deportiva on August 13 with the participation of several children's comparsas as well as popular musicians.

Today, the Havana carnival provokes mixed feelings from Habaneros. On one hand, the complaints that locals voice are numerous: too much reggaeton, too much drinking and, of course, too high a possibility of rain. 'I'm definitely going to avoid it this year,' seems to be a reoccurring sentiment. Yet, on the other hand, thousands and thousands of people still spend the week of August partying down the Malecón. It is true that in times gone past, the Havana carnival has been more glamorous—the election of a Carnival Queen until 1970 was a real highlight while the floats of the 1980s were simply spectacular, but the current state of the Havana carnival is a clear reflection of the evolving nature of the country. Indeed, with such a long and storied history, the Havana carnival highlights the changing demographic and political landscape of the island over the last five centuries. In what follows, Ricardo Alberto Pérez, a well-known Cuban writer and

poet, explores the history and background of this erotic feast of the flesh.



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From Italy, where the carnival of Venice still holds a place of importance, the carnival tradition spread throughout Catholic Europe before leap frogging across the Atlantic in the wake of Iberian explorers and colonizers. Within a century of Christopher Columbus' historic journey, carnivals were held in Cape Verde and the Canary Islands, as well as in South America and the Caribbean.

In colonial Havana, where carnival festivities date back to 1573, a mixture of social classes paraded down the streets in carriages, on horseback, and on foot dressed in elaborate masks and costumes. Fireworks, streamers, decorated floats, huge figures called muñecons, and the dancing men known as faroleros were all part of the carnival scenery.

The introduction of African slavery in Cuba added another dimension to the festival as new African musical instruments and dance forms were incorporated into the celebration. A seventeenth-century Italian visitor, Giovanni

The roots of the Havana carnival can be traced back to medieval Italy where the original carnival was probably tied to ancient Roman Bacchanalia or Greek Dionysia festivals. Held shortly before the onset of Lent in February when Catholics were forbidden to eat rich foods in preparation for Easter, the carnival became an integral part of the Christian calendar celebrated with parades and masquerade balls.



Francesco Giamelli Careri, remarked: “On Sunday, February 9, 1698 in Havana, before Easter, blacks and mulattos, in picturesque costumes, formed a congregation to revel in the carnival.”

The first Havana carnival of the twentieth century was held in 1902, the inaugural year of Cuba’s first president. During the era of Cuban republican history, the carnival flourished with new features including the selection of a queen who reigned over the celebration with her ladies-in-waiting. A few years later, in 1908, two large groups of dancers, who in a uniform manner, danced a rhythmic step in time with accompanying instruments, entered the carnival scene: *Los Componedores de la Batea* and *El Alacrán*. These groups, known as *comparsas*, were born in marginal neighborhoods in Havana and became emblematic expressions of both the Havana carnival and Cuban culture in general. These *comparsas* told stories, such as a brawl between the women of a tenement house or a religious narrative from the Abakuá society, through their dance and choreographies. Successive decades witnessed the addition of other *comparsas*, including *Las Boyeras*, *Los Guaracheros*, *Los Mambises*, *Los Marqueses de Atarés* and *La Sultana*. The carnival ball was also born in this era. Held in designated neighborhoods and Spanish regional clubs,

Habaneros hid their faces behind masks as an expression of unrestrained freedom.

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 once again altered the political landscape of Cuba and also had an effect on Havana carnival. In 1970, the last carnival queen was elected in a televised national event that attracted millions of viewers. The ever popular carnival ball was also replaced by open air dances in large public spaces while the long-standing February festivities were moved to the summer months to coincide with the celebration of historic events. Although they are a far cry from the glory days of their predecessors, floats, *comparsas* and *muñeques* still parade down the Malecón from La Punta to the Hotel Nacional every August to the delight of the thousands of revelers who gather on the streets to watch the parade.

The Havana carnival may not attract the hordes of tourists that its cousins in Venice and Rio de Janeiro do, but its history is richer and reflective of the abrupt changes that have rocked this island. Whether you interpret the carnival as a feast of the flesh or believe that it is used to reinforce a cultural and ethnological tradition, if you find yourself in Cuba in the summer, the Havana carnival is not to be missed.

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The 2014 World Cup: As seen from Cuba

by Nicolás de Camors

What is a Cuban doing writing and having opinions about football? One of the national teams at the lower levels that doesn't do too well is the Cuban football team, lacking the prominence of other sports thanks to our uncontrolled passion, absence of planning and lack of strategy. But I am convinced that we Cubans constitute one of the most passionate and analytical audiences; our opinions have been honed at baseball "esquinas calientes" (street hot corners) and fed by statistics that are handled with expertise.

At this year's World Cup in Brazil progressed we've become immersed in every play and gesture of the coaches, we dissect analyses of the tactical possibilities, we see faces filled with dejection or joy, the contagious euphoria or bitter tears of players, coaches and fans. There have been some unforgettable games, spectacular kicks, moments of tension and scenarios that will end up as statistics. I have put my personal life and work duties on hold for a month. I've been indifferent event to the News.

Football is passion and nerve, enthusiasm and vigor but it is also meditation and tactical planning in order to get into the area and score that wished-for goal, to cause the opponent to commit fouls, to avoid fouls with intelligence and create dangerous situations using artfully managed passes or by



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driving the ball into potentially productive zones. The effectiveness of what has been established as game strategy starts with a rigorous study of the adversary and the selection of players to open the action and to continue with it on the field, making changes for the sake of offensive or defensive balance as the circumstances require and concluding with knowing about the possibilities and strengths, limitations and merits of every man. Everything contributes to the final victory in a combination of personal and group skills. But that is not enough: on the pitch moments, and opportunities present themselves as do the counterattacks. Players have to be aware at all times of where both their team mates and their adversaries are, and be ready to improvise.

Referee intervention regulates sudden emotions that lead to excesses. Their quota of subjectivity reveals unfortunate prejudices and gives rise to some doubts about the impartiality of these men who are charged with delivering justice, when punishments can be overly excessive and when sometimes the refs turn a blind eye to evident fouls or they exaggerate something that is considered to be merely part of the game. For that reason, football functions much as life does—aggressive actions occur naturally, justice errs and at times one suspects that everything becomes subtly confusing. There are clear and murky arrangements among the players, disagreements and encounters with the opposing team, a settling of scores under a myriad of disguises and trickery,

with performances worthy of the Actors' Studio enacting falls and pains in order to affect the outcome.

My neighborhood these days has been remarkably silent, something that is achieved only while the soap opera is being broadcast. The body language is always the same for both men and women: hands grabbing the head when there is a failed attempt by the favorite team or arms extended with clenched fists as the goal is scored...

The World Cup also brings wearing the colors and attributes symbolizing the cultures of the countries one is cheering for. For the first time ever, my block had fluttering German flags challenging the colors of Brazil. The quiet is interrupted only by the goals scored by any Latin American country and ends only when they have qualified. When the festivities begin, I wonder if I am really in Havana or in Bahia or Cartagena de Indias or in Veracruz. Unexpectedly, the Costa Rican team made it into the semi-finals and some of the favorites left the event far too early—Spain bidding adios, England saying good-bye and the Italians, ciao, ciao bambini. All of this accompanied by the shouting of my neighbors who were just as passionately green-and-yellow Brazilians as they are blue Industriales. Cuba joins the party in the midst of high summer temperatures, celebrating every moment of the World Cup with cold beer.

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Memorias del Surrealismo

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes.
Edificio de Arte Universal

Throughout August

Memories of Surrealism is the name of the exhibition of 95 lithographs pertaining to five different series of prints made by Salvador Dalí using different printing techniques: “Les Chants de Maldoror,” “Divine Comedy,” “Memories of Surrealism,” “The Twelve Tribes of Israel” and “Dalí Interprets Currier and Ives.” The pieces belong to the the private collection of Dr. Alex Rosenberg and others.



Miradas

Factoría Habana, Throughout August

In Miradas artists from different generations and trends combine efforts to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Havana Art Biennale: Juan Carlos Alom, Lidzie Alvisa, Belkis Ayón, Luis Enrique Camejo, Felipe Dulzaides, Antonio Eligio (Tonel), Roberto Fabelo, José Manuel Fors, Aimée García, Ernesto Leal, Jorge López Pardo, Ibrahim Miranda, Carlos Montes de Oca, Pedro Pablo Oliva, Sandra Ramos, Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal, Eduardo Ponjuán and José Ángel Toirac.



Cundo Bermúdez: pasión y lucidez

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Edificio de Arte Cubano, Opens August 8

With this selection of 25 pieces from 1940 and 1964, the National Museum of Fine Arts has organized, for the first time, a solo exhibition of one of the leading artists of the so-called School of Havana and of the second Cuban artistic avant-garde, who, according to Roberto Cobas Amate, curator of the exhibition, “deserves that both critics and the public recognize the validity and strength of his art.”

THROUGHOUT AUGUST	Bellas japonesas. Anthological exhibition of the artistic career of Seichi Hayashi, important Japanese artist whose work, which was developed mainly in the 1960s and early 1970s, mixes traditional aesthetics of his culture with pop sensibility. On August 12, at Casa Victor Hugo, the public will be able to exchange impressions with the artist who will talk about illustration techniques.
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Casa del Benemérito de las Américas Benito Juárez

THROUGHOUT AUGUST	Gorrión features works by the young artist Miguel Alejandro Machado, who assumes creation as a network of interferences between painting and literary narrative.
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Casa Oswaldo Guayasamín

OPENS AUG 22	Crónicas de una existencia. Paintings by Dimas Bencomo in which—through irony, parody and suggestions—different objects are witnesses to the material scarcity of some sectors of Cuban society.
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Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam

THROUGH AUG 23	Múltiples infinitos. This exhibition presents almost 100 works by the great Argentine artist León Ferrari under the concept of “multiple infinity” through which the unlimited reproduction of photocopies, offset printing and other, dynamited the “exclusiveness” of the artwork. Seven series, including Electronicartes, Nunca más, Nosotros no sabíamos, Relecturas de la Biblia and L'Osservatore romano, among other pieces and documents, show Ferrari's iconoclastic and irreverent intvention, who with derision, eroticism and even eschatology, reaffirmed his trust in the mobilizing and transforming role of art.
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THROUGHOUT AUGUST	A ambos lados del Atlántico. Exhibition of 25 illustrations and drawings made by 20th-century Spanish, Mexican and Cuban artists, such as Picasso, Miró and Saura; Rivera, Orozco, López Loza and Eloy Tarcisio; and: Amelia Peláez, Arístides Fernández, Carlos Enríquez and Fidelio Ponce, respectively.
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Galería El Reino de este Mundo (Biblioteca Nacional José Martí)

THROUGH AUG 25	Nada personal. An exhibition of large paintings recently made by artist Javier Guerra, in which instances of national history and heroic deeds, passages from the painter's personal life and the public and media memory, create a unique fusion of symbols.
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Galería Collage Habana

THROUGHOUT AUGUST	Ciudad sugerida. José Omar Torres. Explorations in the city “the container of our hopes,” according to the artist, whether through verifiable elements of reality, or through suggestions that sometimes end in abstraction. For the critic Virginia Alberdi, “In his paintings, José Omar has achieved a balanced and sober use of color. He is a painter of atmospheres rather than landscapes. That is his poetic reason.”
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Galería Galiano

THROUGH AUG 22	Tierra de nadie. For the critic Hamlet Fernández, the works of Gabriel Sánchez Toledo “are ambivalent landscapes that flirt with abstraction but still remain within the scope of configuration... which arises from the canvas as expressivity that is outlined in the shapes, without being an expressionist.”
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Galería Habana

THROUGH AUG 11	Mis dos islas. Solo exhibition of Carlos García de la Nuez, who lives in Mexico, one of the highest figures of Cuban abstraction. Regarding abstract art, the artist has said that “it reveals my feelings about what is happening. The characteristic of abstract art is the artist's denunciation against the injustices and tragedies in society; it is the more humanistic side of art, while it experiments in techniques, shapes and color.”
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Galería Servando Cabrera Moreno (Playa)

THROUGH AUG 18	Todas mis pinchas Vol I. Solo exhibition by José Carlos Imperatori.
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Galería Villa Manuela

▶ THROUGHOUT
AUGUST

10 años...95 exposiciones. Group exhibition of important Cuban visual artists, celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Villa Manuela art gallery, which has established itself as a leading gallery thanks to its important exhibitions.

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes.
Edificio de Arte Universal

▶ THROUGHOUT
AUGUST

Artistas afronorteamericanos y abstracción. Thirty-eight works by nine artists make up this selection, which was curated by Nanette Carter, Melvin Edwards and Ben Jones.

Memorial José Martí

▶ THROUGH
AUG 17

19th- and 20th-century avant-garde art. Large selection of works donated to the Cuban people by the collector Gilbert Brownstone of 19th- and 20th-century avant-garde artists Josef Albers, Pierre Alechinsky, Hans Arp, Alexander Calder, Dado, Sonia Delaunay, Jean Dewasne, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernest, Erró, Gottfried Honegger, Donald Judd, Ellsworth Kelly, Edward Kienholz, Joseph Kosuth, Sol Lewitt, Roy Lichtenstein, Richard Lindner, André Masson, Roberto Matta, Joan Miró, Bruce Nauman, Louise Nevelson, Pablo Picasso, Camille Pissarro, Robert Rauschenberg, George Roualt, Peter Saul, Antonio Seguí, Antoni Tapies, Edouard Vuillard and Andy Warhol

Galería Amelia. Hotel Habana Libre

▶ THROUGH
AUG 10

Abstracción in memoriam. Works by the painter and sculptor Armando Recamán, which are a personal tribute to the Cuban abstract movement of the 1950s. For this artist, abstraction “is a way of releasing anger, sadness, or of expressing joy or fear. It is the way I communicate my feelings. It is also the threshold between the real and the fantastic. It’s like a trampoline you jump, and the fall may sometimes take a long time. That’s the reality. But in the end, we all have a few seconds of abstraction, the moment when you dived into the water, and you achieve that inaudible peace.”

PHOTOGRAPHY



Año fotográfico 2014.

Casa de las Américas, Throughout August

Permanent exhibition of 80 photographs, basically of Latin America, that are part of the Haydée Santamaría Art of Our America collection.



Centro Hispano Americano de Cultura

Opens Aug 15

Eso que anda. Solo show of photographer Iván Soca as a tribute to Juan Formell and his popular orchestra Van Van. The photographer has accompanied the band on tours and concerts over the last ten years.



Spectrums

Pabellón Cuba, Throughout August

Epopeya. Exhibition of photographs by Alberto Korda, Liborio Noval, Osvaldo Salas, Perfecto Romero, Enrique Meneses and other outstanding Cuban photographers.

MUSIC

CONTEMPORARY FUSION



Los Desiguales, 2014 , International Hotel, Varadero
Photo Alex Mene

The contemporary fusion and electronic music scene has expanded recently as new bars and clubs have opened party promoters have organized events in parks and public spaces. Good live music venues include Bertolt Brecht (Wed: Interactivo, Sunday: Déjà-vu) and El Sauce (check out the Sunday afternoon Máquina de la Melancolía) as well as the newly opened Fábrica de Arte Cubano which has concerts most nights Thursday through Sunday as well as impromptu smaller performances inside.

In Havana's burgeoning entertainment district along First Avenue from the Karl Marx theatre to the aquarium you are spoilt for choice with the always popular Don Cangreco featuring good live music (Kelvis Ochoas and David Torrens alternate Fridays), Las Piedras (insanely busy from 3am) and El Palio and Melem bar—both featuring different singers and acts in smaller more intimate venues.

Café Cantante, Teatro Nacional

▶ WEDNESDAYS 5 pm	Performances by Qva Libre
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Diablo Tun Tun

▶ WEDNESDAYS 5 pm	Gerardo Alfonso
FRIDAYS 5 pm	Gens

Submarino Amarillo

▶ THURSDAYS 5 pm	Dimensión Vertical
SUNDAYS 9 pm	Los Kents

Tercera y 8

▶ MONDAYS 11 pm	Baby Lores
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Café Concert El Sauce

▶ SUNDAYS 5 pm	La Máquina de la Melancolía, with Frank Delgado and Luis Alberto García
THURSDAYS 4 pm	Mucho Ruido
AUG 30 11 pm	Robertico Carcassés and Interactivo



ROBERTON VAN VAN

SALSA / TIMBA

Café concert El Sauce

▶ AUG 23, 11PM	Los Van Van
▶ AUG 9, 11PM	Isaac Delgado

Diablo Tun Tun

▶ WEDNESDAYS 11 pm	To Mezclao
▶ THURSDAYS 11 pm	José Luis Cortés y NG La Banda
▶ SATURDAYS 5 pm	Manana Club

Casa de la Música Habana

▶ WEDNESDAYS 11 pm	José Luis Cortés y NG La Banda
▶ THURSDAYS 11 pm	Charanga Latina

Salón Rosado de La Tropical

▶ AUG 28, 10 pm	Yuly y Havana C
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Casa de la Música de Miramar

▶ MONDAY	5 pm El Micha 11 pm Sur Caribe
▶ TUESDAYS	11 pm Pedrito Calvo y La Justicia
▶ WEDNESDAYS	5 pm Juan Guillermo 11 pm Adalberto Alvarez y su Son
▶ FRIDAYS	5 pm El Niño y La Verdad 11 pm José Luis Cortés y NG La Banda
▶ SUNDAYS	5 pm Lázaro Valdés y Bamboleo

Jardines del 1830

▶ SUNDAYS 10 pm	Dancing casino with Moncada
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Tercera y 8

▶ WEDNESDAYS 11 pm	Alain Daniel
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Café Jazz Miramar

Shows: 11 pm - 2am

This new jazz club has quickly established itself as one of the very best places to hear some of Cuba's best musicians jamming. Forget about smoke filled lounges, this is clean, bright—take the fags outside. While it is difficult to get the exact schedule and in any case expect a high level of improvisation when it is good it is very good. A full house is something of a mixed house since on occasion you will feel like holding up your own silence please sign! Nonetheless it gets the thumbs up from us.



Calle 88A No. 306 e/ 3ra y 3ra A, Miramar. +53 (07) 209-2719

Privé Lounge

Sundays from 10:30pm

Privé Lounge combines comfort, quality music, and a chill atmosphere brilliantly. It's snug—the stage accommodates a trio comfortably, a quartet if the musicians squeeze in “a lo cubano”—but design elements like drop down noise- and echo-dampening panels mean it has terrific audio, plus the musicians who play here (Harold López-Nussa; Oliver Valdés; Aldo López-Gavilán) are among the country's best.

Asociación Cubana de Derechos de Autor Musical

▶ AUG 21 6 pm	Alexis Bosch (pianist) and Proyecto Jazz Cubano.
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Casa de la Poesía

▶ AUG 15 8:30 pm	Jazz Poetry, a meeting of poetry and jazz, with the group Polaroid and poets Caridad Atencio, Rito Ramón Aroche, Antonio Armenteros y Julio Mitjan
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Jazz Café

▶ AUG 2 10 pm	César López (saxophone player and composer)
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Somavilla

▶ SATURDAYS 8:30 pm	Zule Guerra (singer and composer) and Blues d'Havana. (admission free)
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UNEAC

▶ AUG 14 2 pm	Peña La Esquina del Jazz hosted by showman Bobby Carcassés.
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Centro Hispano-Americano de Cultura

▶ AUG 16 5 pm	Alejandro Mayor and his band Galamayor along with trumpet player Ronald Arnold Hänsch from Germany.
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MUSIC BOLERO, FOLKLORE, SON & TROVA

Asociación Yoruba de Cuba

▶ FRIDAYS 8 pm	Obiní Batá (Folkloric group)
SATURDAYS 4 pm	Los Ibellis (Folkloric group)

Café cantante, Teatro Nacional

▶ SATURDAYS 4 pm	Waldo Mendoza
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Café Concert El Sauce

▶ TUESDAYS 8 pm	Plus Trova with Charly Salgado and guests.
WEDNESDAYS 11 pm	Yoruba Andabo
FRIDAYS 11 pm	Frank Delgado
AUG 2 11 pm	Pedro Luis Ferrer
AUG 16 5 pm	Ivette Ceped

Casa de África

▶ AUG 8 3 pm	Obiní Batá (Folkloric group)
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Casa del Alba

▶ AUG 1 7 pm	Eduardo Sosa and guests
AUG 26 6 pm	Peña El Canto de Todos, with singer-songwriter Vicente Feliú

Casa de la Cultura Comunitaria Mirta Aguirre

▶ AUG 31 5 pm	Get-together with trovador Ireño García.
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Casa de la Cultura de Plaza

▶ AUG 9 7 pm	Peña with Marta Campos.
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Centro Cultural Habaneciendo

▶ SUNDAYS 3 pm	Fausto Durán and guests
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Casa Memorial Salvador Allende

▶ AUG 29 5 pm	Peña La Juntamenta, with trovador Ángel Quintero.
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Centro Iberoamericano de la Décima

▶ AUG 31 5 pm	El Jardín de la Gorda with trovadors from every generation.
------------------	---

Centro Memorial Martin Luther King, Jr.

▶ AUG 21 4:30 pm	Marta Campos
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El Jelengue de Areíto

▶ TUESDAYS 5 pm	Sexteto Habanero
WEDNESDAYS 5 pm	Trovando, a meeting with good trova
FRIDAYS 5 pm	Rumberos de Cuba
SUNDAYS 5 pm	Timbalaye

Hotel Telégrafo

▶ FRIDAYS 9:30 pm	Ivette Cepeda.
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Hurón Azul, UNEAC

▶ AUG 9 10 pm	Mundito González.
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Pabellón Cuba

▶ FRIDAYS 5 pm	Peña Tres Tazas with trovador Silvio Alejandro
SATURDAYS 5 pm	Peña with trovador Juan Carlos Pérez

Piano Bar Tun Tun (Casa de la Música de Miramar)

▶ THURSDAYS 5 pm	Peña with trovador Ray Fernández
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Salón Rosado de La Tropical

▶ THURSDAYS 5 pm	Timbalaye
AUG 8 5 pm	Los Papines



Brutal Fest's 2014 Cuba Festival

by John Walters

Photos by Alex Mene

A festival that insisted on letting the world know that Cuban music is not only salsa and reggaeton, but also has a heavy metal tradition with enthusiastic fans

Brutal Fest takes place twice a year is the most important international metal music festival in Cuba. It consists in a 10-day tour of Cuba with both Cuban and 6-7 international bands. Organized by the French Brutal Beatdown Record Label in association with the Agencia Cubana de Rock (Cuban Rock Agency) and the Instituto Cubano de la Música (Cuban Institute of Music), this year's festival will include INSANITY (Switzerland), CARNAL DEMISE (Finland), DEAD COWBOY'S SLUTS (France) and NEID (Italy).

FRI, AUG 15	HOLGUÍN
SAT, AUG 16	BAYAMO
SUN, AUG 17	SANTIAGO DE CUBA
TUES, AUG 19	CAMAGÜEY
THURS, AUG 21	SANTA CLARA
FRI, AUG 22	HABANA
SAT, AUG 23	HABANA
SUN, AUG 24	PINAR DEL RÍO

Fans will enjoy the most radical sounds of contemporary metal such as grindcore, death metal, hardcore and black metal. And like the name of the CD launched in 2008, this is Not Salsa, Just Brutal Music.

Since 2012, Tattoo's Party runs parallel to Brutal Fest and is held at Maxim Rock in Havana, headquarters of the Cuban Rock Agency and Brutal Fest. This tattoo convention and contest is organized by Brutal Beatdown Recs, Toy Store Producciones and the Cuban Rock Agency and has been gaining in popularity ever since.

The event is organized by the French Brutal Beatdown Record Label with the collaboration of the Cuban Rock Agency and the Cuban Institute of Music. It is also sponsored by the Institute Français, the French Embassy in Cuba, Havana Club Internacional, Cuba Autrement and Los Portales.

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[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)

CLASSICAL MUSIC



Photo by Ivan Soca

Sala Gonzalo Roig. Palacio del Teatro Lírigo Nacional

▶ AUG 31
5 pm

Cuerda Dominical with guitarist Luis Manuel Molina.

Cine Avenida

▶ SUNDAYS
6 pm

Concerts by pianist and composer Ana Martin and guests



Shakespeare comes to Havana

Shakespeare's Globe Theater / directed by Dominic Dromgoole & and Bill Buckhurst, August 7, 2pm and 7pm, Teatro Mella

Globe to Globe is a two-year world tour by Shakespeare's Globe Theater that began on April 23, 2014 and will end on April 23, 2016 to mark the 450th birthday of William Shakespeare. The company has chosen Hamlet, the Bard's most iconic play, which the troupe plans to perform in 205 countries in the world, including Cuba during the first leg of the tour.



El tío Vania

Argos Teatro / Directed by Carlos Celdrán
Fri & Sat, 8pm; Sun, 5pm, Argos Teatro

With the classic of universal theater, Uncle Vanya, by Anton Chekhov, Carlos Celdrán aims to dissect today's Cuban ordinary man, who bears a burden of conflicts, contradictions, anguish, frustrations, lost ideals and disagreements.

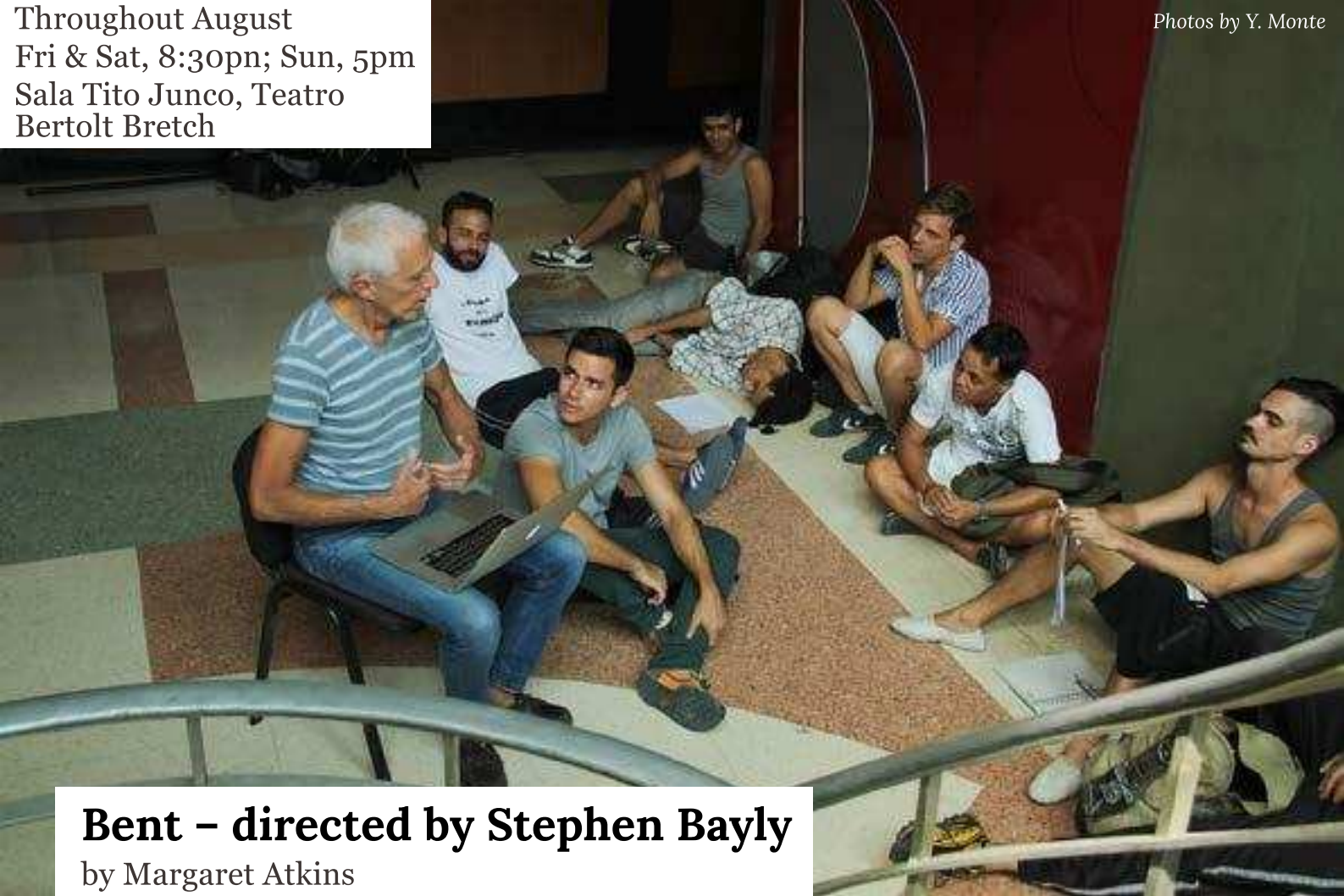


Antigonón, un contingente épico

Teatro El Público / by Carlos Díaz, Teatro Trianón, Fri & Sat, 8:30pm; Sun, 5pm

Antigonón, un contingente épico, Carlos Diaz and his troupe, Teatro el Publico's most recent performance involves a trip back to the classics, guided and partnered by Rogelio Orizondo who wrote *Antigonón, un contingente épico* especially for them. Carlos is the most well-known and brilliant Cuban theatre director with a reputation for directing plays with abundant nudity, transvestites and subtle winks at the Cuban national reality. *Antigonón* does not disappoint—go see it for yourself!

Throughout August
 Fri & Sat, 8:30pm; Sun, 5pm
 Sala Tito Junco, Teatro
 Bertolt Brecht

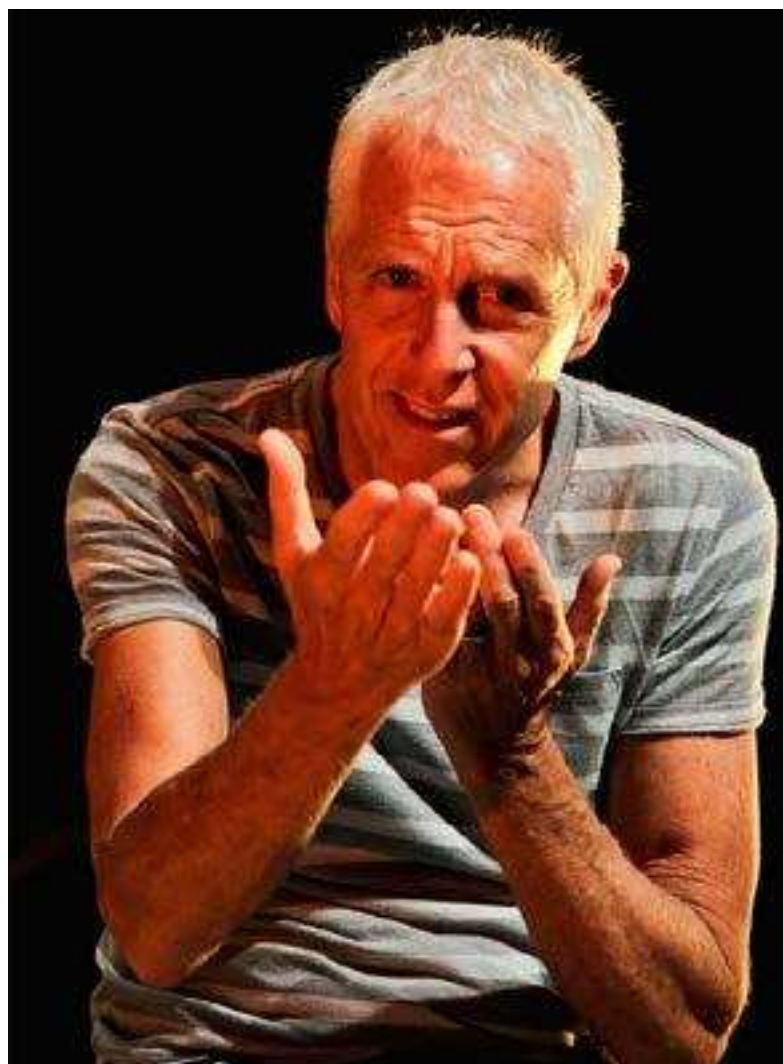


Bent – directed by Stephen Bayly

by Margaret Atkins

My love for the theater was stirred anew during my conversation with Stephen Bayly. At the Bertolt Brecht Theater, rehearsals are delayed, the actors are behind schedule and there have been several power outages. But when everything gets going we realize that it has all been worthwhile. The play starts in 1934 and is set on different German scenarios, ending up at the end in a concentration camp. Stephen has chosen this play because he thinks it is very fitting for the current context of Cuba where huge efforts are being undertaken to attain respect for sexual diversity. Friendship, tolerance, violence and love are some of the themes involved in “Bent” a play that pioneered the whole topic of homosexuality. Written by Martin Sherman and debuting in 1979, it has been staged all over the world with resounding success.

The main attraction of this production is the acting. The acting and the directing techniques created by acting teacher Sanford Meisner has by now a large number of followers in the Havana theater world, both among the participants at Bayly’s workshops twice a year for the past eight years at the International Cinema School at San Antonio de los Baños and at the Peña Meisner workshop that runs every month, bringing together young and veteran actors who are trying to learn this new manner of getting closer to their characters based on relationships with others. The result of



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this work introduced and promoted in Cuba by Bayly stages moving and believable performances without a whole lot of spectacular tricks; it bases its effectiveness on theatrical truth that is born from the performance range of the actors.

Rehearsals are calm and measured. The actors work on every scene with all the intensity of a performance and when they finish, the director makes his comments. There is a word of praise for each actor and a piece of precise criticism. Stephen is a living example of English “stiff upper lip” and only when asked for the date of his opening night, you can detect a spark of that anxiety that is synonymous with first-night jitters. “I try not to think of that,” he says. “We still have a fortnight to go.” Bent will be on stage during the entire month of August at the Bertolt Brecht Theater. Due to the magnitude and strength of the script, the play has been included in the CENESEX (the Spanish acronym for the National Center for Sexual Education) programing for the summer of 2014. The author, Martin Sherman, will be present on

opening night and this undoubtedly places more pressure on the team. Of course this isn't the first time Bayly faces Cuban audiences; “Las tumbas olvidadas” and “Blue/Orange” have already been seen by full-house audiences in Havana and Bayly promises a fourth play next year, when he plans to work with an all-female cast, in contrast with Bent that has an almost exclusively male cast.

This interview, taped right after a rehearsal, was a real pleasure listening to this man who knows and loves his job: film producer and director. He was the director of the National Film and Television School in the United Kingdom and he is a teacher with a genuine calling for the profession that makes every conversation into a learning opportunity. One question leads to another and time literally flies. When we have finished, Bayly leaves me with the happiness of having looked into his blue eyes and the almost adolescent enthusiasm of acting under his direction.

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)





Estampas Vietnamitas

Compañía de Marionetas Acuáticas de Thang Long, Aug 16-19, 5:00 & 7:00 pm, Carpa Trompoloco

Water puppetry is a tradition that dates back to the 11th century. Today's Vietnamese water puppetry is a unique variation on the ancient Asian puppet tradition.



Mowgli, el mordido por los lobos

Teatro La Proa, 9-10 de agosto, 10am, Teatro de la Orden Tercera

This puppet show, written by Erduyn Maza, based on Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, tells about the adventures of Mowgli, the jungle boy when he returns to a human village.



¡Cenicientaaaaa!!!!

Teatro La Proa, Fri, Sat & Suun, 3pm, Teatro de títeres El Arca

This play for children written by Blanca Felipe Rivero and directed by and produced by Arneldy Cejas, is a contemporary look into classical stories. This is the story of a Shoe who discovers that Cinderella doesn't want to wear it and prefers to go barefooted; of Prince Charming, who is tired of his fate; a couple of stepsisters who are the victims; and a favorite antagonist of all time: the wicked Stepmother.



En Buena Compañía

Carpa Trompoloco
Sat & Sun, 4pm & 7pm

The magical and adventurous world of the circus continues. Cuba's prime circus venue, Carpa Trompoloco, presents "En Buena Compañía" (In Good Company), the new show featuring, among other acts, tightrope walkers, acrobats, clowns, gymnasts, trained animals, and the fascinating flying trapeze, which was awarded the Grand Prix during the past CIRCUBA 2013 Festival.

EVENTS IN HAVANA

July 1-August 31, 2014
Pabellón Cuba, Havana



Feria de Arte en La Rampa

Pabellón Cuba, Havana

As is customary every summer since the year 2000, the Art at La Rampa Crafts Fair opens its door at the Pabellón Cuba, emblematic building of the architecture of the 1960s, with an attractive offer that includes the sale of serigraphs, footwear, clothing, costume jewellery, fans, household goods, furniture, ornaments, and much more, all made by Cuban artisans, and which will be showcased in over 100 stands. Fashion shows, concerts and activities for the kiddies will also take place during the Fair.

Saturdays and Sundays, from 6pm to 8pm have been reserved for performances by popular bands and soloists, including David Álvarez y Juego de Manos, Raúl Paz, Telmary, Arnaldo y su Talismán, Ivette Cepeda, Polito Ibáñez, Tony Ávila, Luna Manzanares and Qva Libre, among others. July 28 will be dedicated to Juan Formell, musician and leader of the emblematic band Van Van, who recently passed away. A photographic exhibition of blowups created from pictures taken by Iván Soca

of milestones in Formell's career will open that day at 4pm. opens the 28th a, These pictures will be on sale on August 2. And at 6pm, musicians from Van Van and children actors from La Colmenita will perform Van Van all-time favorites.

Epopéya, a photo show of Cuban masters of photography Alberto Korda, Osvaldo Salas, Perfecto Romero and Liborio Noval will open July 3. The public will be able to purchase a folder with reproductions of the pictures on exhibition. Tuesdays, at 4:30pm, are devoted to trova with performances by singer-songwriters of different generations, while Thursdays at 4pm, the public will be have the chance to dialogue with well-known figures of Cuban culture. And, as usual, there will be different activities for the kids on Saturdays and Sundays, at 11pm.

Open Tues-Fri, 2-8pm; Sat & Sun, 10am-8pm (closed on July 30)

EVENTS IN HAVANA



Danza Teatro Retazos. Talleres de verano

Sala Las Carolinas, August 1-15

Summer dance workshops for children and teenagers

Children: 10am-11am

Teenagers: 1pm-3pm



Verano flamenco

Centro Hispano Americano de Cultura

August 4-9

Second flamenco workshop organized by the Irene Rodríguez Dance Company for girls and boys, 9 to 29 years old. A performance by the students will be given on the 9th at 11 am at the Centro Hispano Americano.



Circuba 2014

August 1-5, 4pm & 8:30 pm, Carpa Trompoloco

August 7-9, 8:30 pm, Aug 10, 5pm, Teatro Karl Marx

Circuba 2014, the most important circus event in Cuba, has announced the performances of 20 different circus acts by international artists from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Spain, Mexico, Russia, Venezuela, and Cuba, who will be competing in gymnastics, acrobatics, juggling, tightrope, and much more. A special treat will be the performances of the juggling duo Sychev, the acrobatic act Spirin and the tightrope walker Maxim Helmut, all of international fame from the Moscow-based Rosgoscirk (Russian State Circus Company), the biggest circus company in the world with national status comparable to the Bolshoi Ballet. The competitions will take place at the Trompoloco Big Tent from August 1-5. Then, from August 7-10, Cuba's National Circus will present prize-winning acts from the Circuba 2014 Festival.



The longest rumba in the world at Timbalaye

(Festival Internacional de la Rumba Cubana)

“La rumba más larga del mundo”

At first, Cuban rumba smelled of solares, black people, sugar-cane syrup, wooden boxes and drums. Today, the aroma is different, but it maintains the mixed-race beat that defines us, the Caribbean sensuality that sets us apart and the irreverent party spirit that marked its birth over 200 years ago.

Rumba is one of the most authentic manifestations in Cuban culture. Widely popular and 100% Cuban, it was born as a process of hybridization of elements of different origins, in which the legacy of African cultures played a predominant role while it exhibited significant Spanish components. It emerged in Cuba in the late 19th century, and developed after the abolition of slavery.

More than a music and dance representation, rumba is a way of life, a philosophy that contains a mystique connected to religions and affiliations. It does not need specific instruments—the clapping of hands is enough to get a rumba going. For the people in the neighborhoods and in the streets, rumba is suited to their lives, to their emotions.

And this is what Timbalaye, a yoruba word that refers to feasible dreams and projects, is all about. Timbalaye 2013 included seminars on salsa, rumba and Afro-Cuban dances; courses on singing and percussion; lectures on music and anthropology;

Cuban popular dance competitions; theatre and dance performances; and the presentation of the Fernando Ortiz-Timbalaye Prizes to the best rumba group, singer, dancer and conga player of the event as well as the best essay on Cuban rumba. Sponsored by the AHS, the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba and the Fernando Ortiz Foundation, Timbalaye also honored one of the great exponents of rumba: Gonzalo Ascencio, known as Uncle Tom.

The International Cuban Rumba Festival, created to delve into the heritage of rumba, includes seminars on salsa, rumba and Afro-Cuban dances; courses on singing and percussion; lectures on music and anthropology; Cuban popular dance competitions; theatre and dance performances;



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and the presentation of the Fernando Ortiz-Timbalaye Prizes to the best rumba group, singer, dancer and conga player of the event, as well as the best essay on Cuban rumba.

The 6th International Rumba Festival will be held in the cities of Pinar del Río, Havana, Matanzas and Cienfuegos, from August 17-24. The extensive program of activities includes lectures, meetings and workshops, as well as performances by groups that cultivate syncretized African tradition, such as Muñequitos de Matanzas, AfroCuba, Los Reyes del Tambor, Ojundegara, Ganga Longobá and many others who keep the rumba legacy alive as an inseparable part of the Cuban character.



Selected activities:

AUG 17, 4:30PM	PABELLÓN CUBA, HAVANA	Rumba concert
AUG 18, 2:00PM	PINAR DEL RÍO	Timbalaye 2014 gala
AUG 19, 4:00PM	HAVANA	The Longest Ruma
AUG 20, 9:00PM	AMERICA THEATER, HAVANA	Timbalaye 2014 gala
AUG 21, 8:30PM	MATANZAS	Opening gala of the Timbalaye Rumba International Festival
AUG 23, 4:00PM	MATANZAS	Closing gala
AUG 24, 1:00PM	CIENFUEGOS	Performances & meetings with rumba artists

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)

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XXXVIII Jornada de la Canción Política

August 1-4, Guantánamo

The 38th Political Song Festival will be dedicated on this occasion to the 45th anniversary of the Grupo de Experimentación Sono-ra del ICAIC and to the graphic designer Alfredo Rostgaard (Guantánamo, 1943-2004), author of the famous poster of the rose and the thorn, which has identified this festival throughout the years. The opening concert will take place on August 1, 9pm, at the Guiñol Theater. Activities include besides concerts and recitals by singer-songwriters, exhibitions, talks, poetry recitals and a meeting with Pablo Menendez, founder of the Grupo de Experimentación Sono-ra. The Longest Trova will take place for the first time on Saturday, August 2, at 10:30 am at Casa del Joven Creador, with the performances of most of the participants to the event. The closing ceremony will be held August 4, at Guaso Theater, with the special performance of Raul Torres. Special guests include trovador and producer Pepe Ordaz and Dieguito Gutiérrez and his group.



III Jornada de Música Electrónica Estereo G

August 1-3 , Gibara

As usual, the town of Gibara in the eastern part of Cuba will host this electronic musical festival with the performances of electronic music producers and Djs ElectroZona, Dj Joker, Jordezz, Djjoy de Cuba and Alex6Music. Guests include Recrearte Projects and visual artists. The festival is sponsored by the Asociación Hermanos Saíz (AHS) and the group ELECTROZONA



Festival Verano en Jibacoa

August 5-7, Playa Jibacoa, Mayabeque Province

The festival, which takes place by the sea, is very popular with the young generations of Cubans. For three days and three nights, there will be non-stop music and dance with Djs, rap, reggae, rock and pop bands and soloists. Three days of music and fun.



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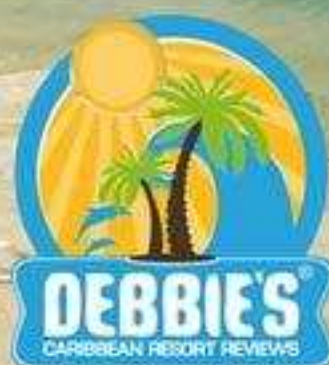
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Varadero – where the sand is made of grated silver mixed with diamond dust

'In all the beaches in Cuba the sand was made of grated silver, though in Varadero it was also mixed with diamond dust. Who can argue? Varadero's prize beach resort revolves around the slender 20-mile-long Peninsula de Hicacos protruding east like a crooked finger into Bahía de Cárdenas. The town lies at the western end of the island-peninsula, which is separated from the mainland by a man-made lagoon. The main beach—Playa Mayor—is a virtually unbroken 7-mile strip. There is plenty to do, from diving and sailing to golf and even sky-diving. Although you should not expect much in the way of shopping, the resort is overly spread out and the architecture underwhelming, there is a reason though that more than 50 hotels with 16,000 rooms have been built here.*

Varadero has been Cuba's trendiest beach town for more than a century. In 1926, U.S. industrialist Irénée Du Pont bought most of the peninsula beyond the town and built a large estate, complete with a golf course, called Xanadu. Having reputedly paid four cents a square meter for his land, he profited handsomely by selling off parcels at 120 pesos a meter. Al Capone and dictator Fulgencio Batista built vacation homes as Varadero metamorphosed into a Miami in miniature, peaking in the 1950s, when "yanqui" corporations put up ritzy hotels and casinos. Since the 1990s, the Cuban Government has added dozens of new, even ritzier, all-inclusive hotels, most of them managed by foreign hotel corporations, such as Blau, Barceló, Oasis, Sandals, Sol Meliá and Superclubs.

The dining in town is somewhat desultory. However, you can easily fill a few days off the beach by dining at Las Américas (Du Pont's Xanadu,



Mansion Xanadu, Varadero

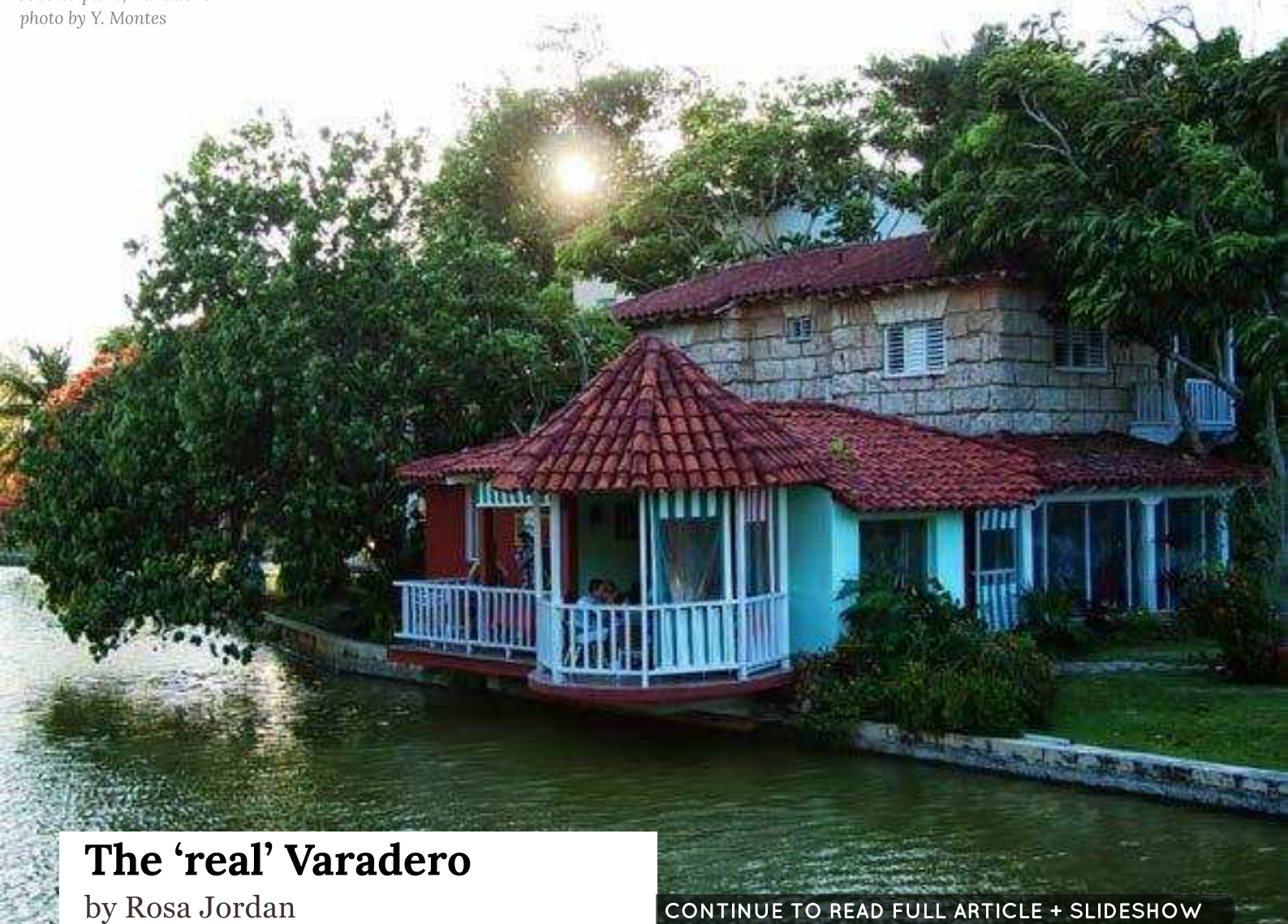


Josone park, Varadero

which today operates as a hotel and restaurant); with a round of golf at the 18-hole Varadero Golf Club; hiking in Reserva Ecológica Varahicacos; and watching dolphins perform at the Delfinario (you can also swim with them for a hefty additional fee). The sightseeing is otherwise limited, although hotel tour desks offer excursions to Matanzas, the Bay of Pigs, and Havana. And catamarans and other sail-craft offer daytime sightseeing and party excursions. For many, though, Varadero's main draw is the excellent diving offshore, in the gin-clear waters of Parque Marino Cayo Piedras del Norte, where scuba aficionados give a new meaning to raptures of the deep—there's even a Soviet AN-24 aircraft, and a gunboat, still laden with missiles!

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The 'real' Varadero

by Rosa Jordan

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It's something of a cliché to say that Varadero, (Cuba's top resort area) is not the "real Cuba." Why is that? Is it because Varadero hosts so many non-Cuban visitors? Or because the Cubans who live there and provide services for those visitors are not considered "real Cubans?"

Overlooked in this dismissal of Varadero as "not real Cuba" is the fact that Varadero has *always* served and hosted foreigners. Five centuries ago it was a place where Cubans extracted salt from a nearby lagoon and loaded it, along with cattle, onto Spanish ships bound for Mexico or Spain. Soil on the 23-km-long peninsula is poor but a few ranchers found it convenient to run cattle there, and likewise convenient to build haciendas on the peninsula's exceptionally beautiful beach. It is not much of a stretch to surmise that those first Varadero residents occasionally invited Spaniards from the ships they were supplying to come ashore for a little R&R.

Over the next 300 years, that core of local service providers evolved into a village known as Varadero. Some built large wooden houses, and when a railway was laid from Havana to Matanzas in the

early 1800s, those big wooden houses, or rooms in them, were often rented to Cubans on holiday. Habaneros reached Varadero by traveling the 100 kilometers to Matanzas on the train and covering the remaining 40 kilometres by horseback or buggy. Visitors from other parts of the island came by steamboat, the *Caridad*, across the bay of Cárdenas. This was the nature of Varadero's main industry (tourism) for about a hundred years.



Josone park, Varadero
photo by Ana Lorena

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In 1910, the filthy rich Spanish Iturrioz family developed an estate on the grounds of what today is Varadero's Josone Park. It is said that the patriarch of the family so valued his privacy that he had a tunnel built from his property to the beach about a block away, and when he wished to swim, sent servants ahead to shoo everyone else away. He wanted privacy and so did other wealthy families who bought beach properties in and around Varadero. With at least 20 kilometres of pristine white sand beach, there was room for all of them to have privacy, even after 1931 when someone thought to build a hotel. Cuba's native bourgeoisie, plus wealthy Americans (who by then controlled most of the island's resources) continued to vacation in Varadero. Among those who built elegant residences on beachfront properties were Irénée Du Pont who during World War I had earned a fortune by the manufacture of munitions; Al Capone who earned his in a less legal but equally reprehensible way; and Cuba's dictator Fulgencio Batista, who combined the unsavoury qualities of both those men to acquire his wealth.

It was about then that 400-year-old Varadero underwent a 30-year period that could fairly be called "un-Cuban." Between 1929 and 1959, access was mostly limited to wealthier Cubans (although many middle-class Cubans continued to visit).

One of the first things the Castro government did when it took power in 1959 was to open all Cuban beaches to all Cubans. The wealthy fled and their properties were confiscated. Al Capone's "cottage" became a restaurant. Du Pont's Spanish Renaissance mansion, Xanadú, became a six-room guest house with restaurant, bar, and adjacent golf course. Batista's compound, Cuatro Palmas, was first used by the Revolutionary Government to house young people being trained as teachers to be sent into the countryside to eradicate illiteracy and later recycled as a beachfront resort—one of the few right in town. Once again, Varadero had become wholly Cuban.

But not for the rich alone because under the new regime there weren't supposed to be any rich Cubans. *Vanguardias Nacionales* (model workers) were given government-paid vacations at the Cuban-owned resorts. About the only foreigners one saw in Varadero in those days were a few white-bodied Russian advisors who had driven from Havana in their government-issue Lada. On my first visit to Varadero in 1997, I stayed not in a hotel but in a *campismo* (Cuba's version of a campground). That beach, as beautiful as any I have ever seen, swarmed with Cuban teenagers who had been bussed there by their school and were lodged, for free, in little on-the-beach A-frames.



local residents and their guests, but foreigners often didn't notice. Visitors who ventured out of their resort only in an air-conditioned tour bus or on a boat excursion could spend two weeks there without meeting a single Cuban who wasn't on hand to serve them.

During the past two decades, the proliferation of mega-resorts has continued. From town out to the tip of the peninsula some 20 kilometers away, surf sounds compete with the clang of construction. These resorts are joint ventures between the Cuban Government and foreign partners. The construction workers are both Cuban and foreign. When the place opens, the staff, including managers, will be Cuban. And the guests?

There are no longer policies against Cubans vacationing in the big new resorts. Today only those who can't afford to stay there are excluded. What this means in practice is that Cubans, being overall less affluent than First Worlders, now fill Varadero's less expensive hotels, particularly those right in town, while foreigners dominate the pricier places further down the beach.

It's not impossible, nowadays, for visitors to outnumber the locals. But not as outnumbered as a visiting foreigner might suppose. Besides Cuban vacationers and day trippers, there are the local residents. Only Cubans are allowed to own homes, so every property in Varadero not owned by the Cuban Government is owned by a Cuban citizen. This spring I stayed not in a hotel but in a beachfront home owned by a Cuban lifeguard. Was he a new breed of Cuban renting out a room in his house to a traveler looking for a little R&R? Or was he no different from property-owning locals who rented rooms to Habaneros who arrived by horse and buggy 180 years ago?

Given that Varadero's present population of 20,000 is twice what it was in 1990, and there are at least 60 resorts, it is definitely not the sleepy little resort

I didn't know it at the time, but my first visit to Varadero was on the cusp of the peninsula's transformation into yet another aspect of "real Cuba." Not the Cuba of cane fields and colonial architecture (which Varadero had never been), but a Cuba that in less than a decade would be the most popular resort destination in the Caribbean. At the highest levels of government, that decision had already been taken. To stave off economic collapse after the withdrawal of Soviet support, the nation began promoting recreational tourism. Barely three years after my first visit to Varadero, the campismo where I had stayed was bulldozed to make way for one of many mega-resorts to come.

During that transition period, many claimed that Varadero was no longer Cuban, but I never saw it that way. True, fewer Vanguardias Nacionales were given free vacations in Varadero—and almost none to the new out-of-town resorts. Those beds were needed for foreigners who could pay in desperately-needed hard currency. And during that "Special Period," not many Habaneros could afford to take the bus to Varadero for a day. The public beaches were still there and still used by



Varadero beach
photo by Alex Mene

town it was in earlier times. But it was then and is now a vibrant part of “real Cuba.” Cubans work in its restaurants and eat there, too; serve in its shops and shop in them. In the past, commercial enterprises would have been wholly owned by the Cuban Government, but now private enterprise is visible all over town. Many Varadero residents sell arts, crafts, and clothing right from their front yard—or rent the space to others for that purpose. You see few Cubans on the beach in winter, when they consider it too cold for swimming, but go during spring break or summer and you’ll find them there in number. This Easter, while tourists paid extravagant prices to lunch on the terrace of the old Du Pont mansion, I watched what seemed to be happier Cuban families (and certainly livelier ones) picnicking on the palm-shaded grass below and frolicking in the surf. Some, I know, were staying in B&Bs owned by local families.

In short, Cubans live, work, and play in Varadero just as they always have. To say that this is not “real Cuba” because it’s main industry is tourism rather than sugar cane is like saying Orlando is not “real Florida” because its economy is based on tourism rather than oranges. Varadero is as Cuban now as it was 200 years ago, when locals provided lodging and other services to beach-hungry transients. Or what it was 80 years ago when the first hotel was built there. And it’s even more Cuban now than it



Casa de la Música Varadero
photo by Alex Mene

was 60 years ago, when just about all 21 kilometres of the peninsula’s best beaches were the exclusive domain of wealthy foreigners.

Just prior to the Revolution, most of the boats one saw in Varadero were foreign-owned. But it wasn’t like that when the town was founded. The word *varadero* means dry dock where boats are repaired or built, and back then most of the boats belonged to Cuban fishermen. Today the boats one sees at Varadero’s beaches belong to Cuban-owned resorts. Those boats, the men who crew them, and the sand and water moving around them, are as real and as Cuban as you will find anywhere on the island.



Varadero beach
photo by Ana Lorena

Rosa Jordan is the author of *Cuba’s Best Beaches*. See www.rosajordan.com for more information

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Kite-riding in Varadero

by John Waterhouse
Photos by Vanotti

I bought all the kit a couple of years ago, fired up with the enthusiasm of a day spent on the beach at Playas del Este watching people race backwards and forwards parallel with the beach. At an age when contemporaries were pulling on the lycra and getting on their bikes, it seemed to be a good way of defying oncoming middle age by hanging out with the young and the funky—harnessing my inner surfer spirit.



Varadero beach



In the event, the kit languished in the garage, threatened every few months by the wife to be thrown out or put in a garage sale. There always was a reason why I never took it out of the bag. Firstly, I needed to swim better; then the wind seemed weak, too hot, too cold; my Cuban teacher disappeared; my car broke down. The years passed with the gear collecting more dust.

And then last month, a friend came to stay and there was no more prevaricating possible. He had come to kite-surf and wanted to spend the week in Varadero. Now or never, I resolved that I would give it a go, but only under decent instruction on a proper beach—horror stories always seem to abound of surfers flying into power cables and taking small Caribbean islands off the grid.

This is where the Caribbean Riders Kite School came in. Founded by local kites Carlos Casola and Darien Sarebia, it was recommended by three separate people and a four-day course was booked. They have a great piece of beach where you can have the joy of learning to inflate the kite, deflating the kite, practice running into the wind, away from the wind. Wind, wind, wind, my new God. On-shore good, off-shore bad. It's a simple mantra.





It took until the second day to really get into the water, and by get into I mean being dragged face down up and down the beach. Losing the board, arms pulled. Walking back up the beach time and again dragging the gear. Now I know why I had left the kit in the garage. Full credit to Carlos (Charlie) and Darien, for they kept me going, and the moment on the last day when I not only went down the beach but came back was immensely satisfying.

If you want to put off middle age, trust me, there is little better than getting out in the ocean with a bit of a swell, an on-shore breeze and a baking hot sun in the background to warm you up. And for learning, Carlos and Darien definitely get my vote.

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)



Caribbean Riders Kite School

<http://varaderokiteschool.com/>
vdial1@gmail.com

Autopista Sur, Séctor Punta Hicacos, Varadero, Cuba

Postscript: On the lee side of the Varadero peninsula, there is no white sand beach, no hotels and no tourists. This side does, though, offer some of the best conditions for the more experienced kite surfer. On our way back, we caught up with some locals riding the wind and the waves right up to the mangroves. Next year, I am definitely there...



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The Good Stuff

by Margaret Atkins

photos Ana Lorena



Whenever Cubans mention that they are going to drink “the good stuff,” they’re saying that they are going to drink Havana Club Rum. This expression denotes local acknowledgement of the quality of a beverage that has almost become a national symbol. The arrival of summer along with holidays and heat is synonymous to getting together with friends, celebrating, seeing some old acquaintance or attending a university graduation, going “camping”* or sitting down to a late afternoon game of dominoes accompanied by munchies and drinks, which, of course, should be “the good stuff.”

A day at the beach is often livened up by buying a bottle of Havana Club among a bunch of friends, cooling it with ice and often mixing it with cola or lemon juice. And just in case you think that rum is



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far too heavy a drink for such high temperatures on this very tropical island, remember that Havana Club is the key ingredient in some of the most refreshing cocktails ever invented.

The most typical Cuban cocktail uses the quintet of rum, lemon juice, refined cane sugar, ice and *hierbabuena*,** a variety of mint that is a must for every bar on the island. Some people even grow it in their gardens, backyards and balconies. Other cocktails use a vast array of different ingredients but almost always one of those five has to be present. The drinks provide a special way of dealing with the heat as well as a pleasurable sensation to your taste buds. The daiquiri, created in 1898, comes from Santiago de Cuba and after it arrived in Havana, it became famous all over the world. Nowadays, it is prepared in bars and homes in many different varieties. Added to the chipped ice and the Havana Club Añejo Blanco Rum are pineapple, grapefruit or orange juice, sparkling water or even coconut milk to create an endless array of fresh sweet drinks that are well-worth trying. The mojito is well known thanks to Hemingway's comment: "My daiquiri in El Floridita and my mojito in La Bodeguita [del Medio]." You

cannot claim to have been in Cuba if you haven't tried a mojito. The same goes for a Cuba Libre, a drink with mysterious origins and many varieties. The only thing for sure is that it was first sipped in Cuba.

At family celebrations, especially *quinceañera* parties, a fruit punch is prepared using a traditional



recipe to which you add rum and orange or lemon juice along with an abundant assortment of fruit cut into small pieces. It is always prepared in large amounts and served cold. But watch out! It looks and tastes harmless but it can turn into a stupendous hangover! With or without hot sauce, the Cuban version of the Bloody Mary is known as the Cubanito, keeping its red tomato juice color and replacing the vodka with white aged rum. Other more sophisticated mixed drinks use Añejo 3 Años or Añejo 7 Años, or a combination of the two such as the Mulata or Flamenco, creations of inventive barmen who blended native elements with others coming from other countries.

In the end, there is a lot you can do to keep cool on those steamy August days thanks to the drink that was created in the mid-nineteenth century for the purpose of transforming the plain rough-tasting rum of those days into a new product with a fine bouquet and delicate taste. So, if you are going to drink rum, do as Cubans and many others all over the world do—choose Havana Club. I would just change the term “the good stuff” to “the best stuff”



* *Campismo in Cuba refers to seaside or riverside dedicated campgrounds with one- or two-room rustic buildings for shelter, at budget prices)*

** *Hierbabuena: a mint species that goes by several names including, mojito mint or Cuban mint.*

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Iván Chef Justo: Original, organic, outstanding

by Margaret Atkins

After only two years since it was inaugurated, Iván Chef Justo has managed to gain a clientele and reputation in the ever-widening and competitive circle of private restaurants in Havana. The menu featuring impeccable and new dishes is shown on large blackboards and it changes along with the varying island market, providing diners with many a surprise.

A short steep stairway leads up to the restaurant on Calle Aguacate No. 9 at the threshold of La Habana Vieja. As soon as you enter, you see the kitchen, completely visible, where customers can pry into the secrets of the chef or thank him for some delicious meal. A few more steps inside, on a lovely piece of furniture, hats, walking sticks and umbrellas invite us to set down our bundles and make ourselves at home. To the left is a small dining room with three tables. Three steps ahead is the main dining area. Beside the kitchen, another narrow stairway provides a route for waiters and clients to go to the bar and the terrace. Upstairs you can dine under the stars protected by a red awning. Everything is small and cozy. The house dating back to the eighteenth century has preserved some of the original mosaic floors and it is the only building left in the colonial part of Havana to have a hip roof. They say that the writer Cirilo Villaverde may have used it as a



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When we asked Iván Justo how he would like his restaurant to be described, he simply states: “That our food is excellent.” It isn’t difficult to make his wish come true because everybody going to Iván Chef Justo recommends the place. Proof of this are some people from Andalusia in Spain that we met on the terrace—they are raving about how they have found the best squid on this side of the Atlantic. And the newly-weds celebrating at the bar invite us to have a fruit daiquiri to beat the July heat, or a tropical lemonade tempered with sweet coconut.

The chef proudly uses only fresh organic produce. Coming out of his kitchen are incredible salads, tacos, fish, meat and seafood. He recommends the *caldereta* (fish stew) and the *paella*. I have my eye on the fish filets and the suckling pig. Of course, Iván chef Justo’s food is not for just writing about. You have to enjoy it in person, so it requires your visit. Stroll around Iglesia del Ángel (Angel Church), take in the Granma Memorial commemorating the boat that brought the expedition of men who started the Cuban Revolution, visit the Museo de Bellas Artes and the former Presidential Palace. And then, have your meal at Calle Aguacate No. 9. You will be more than pleased that you did.

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)

setting for some of the scenes in his novel *Cecilia Valdés*, which told a story of love, and social and racial interaction in the Cubans of the early 1800s. But the interior decoration tends to drift towards the 1940s and 50s with photos of actors, and theater and movie posters. Sara Montiel is smiling near Marilyn Monroe and just a few inches away, dancers from the Tropicana cabaret seem almost ready to jump out of the frame and strut their stuff. Antique furniture, clocks, a bonsai. Each table is set up with different colored tablecloths. On the wall, close to the ceiling, hangs an old cart that may have once served as a children’s toy.



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O'Reilly #304 e/Habana y Aguiar, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 5-264-4725

Santy

CA★5+

SUSHI/ORIENTAL

Authentic fisherman's shack servicing world-class sushi. Fabulous.

Calle 240A #3023 esq. a 3ra C, Jaimanitas

☎(+53) 5-286-7039

Café Laurent

CA★4+

SPANISH/MEDITERRANEAN

Beautiful penthouse restaurant with lovely terrace.

Calle M #257, e/ 19 y 21, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-831-2090

Casa Miglis

CA★5

SWEDISH-CUBAN FUSION

Oasis of good food & taste in Centro Habana

Lealtad #120 e/ Ánimas y Lagunas, Centro Habana

☎(+53) 7-864-1486

Corte Príncipe

CA★5+

ITALIAN

Sergio's place. Simple décor, spectacular food, excellent service.

Calle 9na esq. a 74, Miramar

☎(+53) 5-255-9091

Esperanza

CA★4+

CUBAN FUSION

Intimate, idiosyncratic & charming (although not cheap).

Calle 16 #105 e/ 1ra y 3ra, Miramar

☎(+53) 7-202-4361

El Litoral

CA★5+

INTERNATIONAL

Watch the world go by at the Malecón's best restaurant.

Malecón #161 e/ K y L, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-830-2201

Piccolo

CA★4+

ITALIAN

Kitsch pizza place with animals. Great after the beach.

Calle 5ta A #50206 e/ 502 y 504, Guanabo, Habana del Este

☎(+53) 796-4300

Starbien

CA★5

SPANISH/MEDITERRANEAN

Spacious. Serving some of Havana's best food at present.

Calle 29 #205 e/ B y C, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-830-0711

La California

CA★5

CUBAN-CREOLE/INTERNATIONAL

Beautiful C19 colonial building. Great fresh pastas.

Calle Crespo #55 e/ San Lázaro y Refugio, Centro Habana

☎(+53) 7-863 7510

Chanchullero

CA★5

SPANISH/MEDITERRANEAN

Fabulous value hole in the wall tapas. Trendy.

Teniente Rey #457 bajos, Plaza del Cristo, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-872-8227

Il Divino

CA★4+

INTERNATIONAL

Set in huge gardens outside town. Great for the kids.

Calle Raquel, #50 e/ Esperanza y Lindero, Mantilla, Arroyo Naranjo

☎(+53) 7-643-7734

La Fontana

CA★4+

INTERNATIONAL

Consistently good food, attentive service. Old school.

Calle 46 #305 esq. a 3ra, Miramar

☎(+53) 7-202-8337

Mediterráneo

CA★5

INTERNATIONAL/SEAFOOD

Interesting and varied menu. Lovely second floor terrace in quiet neighborhood.

Calle 13 #406 e/ F y F, Vedado

☎(+53) 7 832 4894

Río Mar

CA★5

INTERNATIONAL

Contemporary décor. Wonderful sea-view.

Ave. 3raA y Final #11, La Puntilla, Miramar

☎(+53) 7-209-4838

El Templete

CA★5-

SPANISH/MEDITERRANEAN

Overlooking harbor. Good quality but expensive.

Ave. del Puerto #12 esq. a Narciso López, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-866-8807

El Cocinero

CA★5+ CA TOP PICK ★



Style of food International

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Fabulous industrial chic alfresco rooftop with a buzzing atmosphere, great service & good food.

Don't miss The best parties in Havana, held on the rooftop attracting a new crowd of Cuban entrepreneurs.

Calle 26, e/ 11 and 13, Vedado.

☎ (+53) 7-832-2355

La Guarida

www.laguarida.com

CA★5+ CA TOP PICK ★



Style of food Contemporary fusion

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Authentic, charming and intimate atmosphere in Cuba's best known restaurant. Great food, professional. Classy.

Don't Miss Uma Thurman, Beyoncé or the Queen of Spain if they happen to be dining next to you.

Concordia #418 e/ Gervasio y Escobar, Centro Habana.

☎ (+53) 7-866-9047

Iván Chef Justo

CA★5+ CA TOP PICK ★



Style of food Spanish

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Spectacular innovative food. Light and airy place where it always seems to feel like Springtime.

Don't Miss The lightly spiced grilled mahi-mahi served with organic tomato relish. Try the suckling pig and stay for the cuatro leches.

Aguacate #9, Esq. Chacón, Habana Vieja.

☎ (+53) 7-863-9697 / (+53) 5-343-8540

El Litoral

CA★5+ CA TOP PICK ★



Style of food International

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Quality décor, good service and great food. Best new place recently opened.

Don't Miss Drinking a cocktail at sunset watching the world go by on the Malecón

Malecón #161 e/ K y L, Vedado.

☎ (+53) 7-830-2201

Santy

CA★5+ CA TOP PICK ★



Style of food Sushi

Cost Moderate

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Fabulous sushi, wonderful ambience overlooking fishing boats heading out to sea. World class.

Don't miss Getting a reservation here.

Calle 240A #3023 esq. 3raC, Jaimanitas.

☎ (+53) 5-286-7039

Atelier

CA★5 CA TOP PICK ★



Style of food Experimental fusion

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Interesting menu, beautiful building with great décor and service.

Don't miss Dinner on the breezy terrace during summer.

Calle 5ta e/ Paseo y 2, Vedado

☎ (+53) 7-836-2025

atelierdedecuba@yahoo.es

La Casa

CA★5 CA TOP PICK ★



Style of food International/sushi

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Warm hospitality and openness from the four generations of the Robaina family. Quality food.

Don't miss Thursday night sushi night. The Piña Colada.

Calle 30 #865 e/ 26 y 41, Nuevo Vedado.

☎ (+53) 7-881-7000

alerobaina@restaurantelacasacuba.com

Casa Miglis

www.casamiglis.com

CA★5 CA TOP PICK ★



Style of food Swedish-Cuban fusion

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for The beautifully designed interior, warm ambience and Miglis's personality create the feeling of an oasis in Central Havana.

Don't Miss Chatting with Mr Miglis. The Skaargan prawns, beef Chilli and lingonberries.

Lealtad #120 e/ Ánimas y Lagunas, Centro Habana.

☎ (+53) 7-864-1486



Style of food Cuban-Creole/International

Cost Moderate

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★★★★★

Ambience ★★★★★

Service ★★★★★

Value ★★★★★

Best for Beautiful C19 colonial building. Popular place with quality food and great service. Love the fresh pastas.

Don't Miss The interesting history of the neighbourhood, where Chano Pozo (legendary Afro-Cuban jazz percussionist) hung out.

Calle Crespo #55 e/ San Lázaro y Refugio, Centro Habana

☎ (+53) 7-863-7510

Corte del Príncipe



Style of food Italian

Cost Expensive

Type of place Paladar (private)

Food ★★★★★

Ambience ★★★★★

Service ★★★★★

Value ★★★★★

Best for Spectacular homemade Italian pastas. Cozy atmosphere, excellent service.

Worst for Getting a reservation. Not cheap (although its worth it)

9na esq. 74, Playa

☎ 5-255-9091

Opera



www.facebook.com/opera.cuba



Style of food International

Cost Moderate

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★★★★★

Ambience ★★★★★

Service ★★★★★

Value ★★★★★

Best for Homely & intimate environment. Quality food in a beautiful setting. By reservation only.

Don't miss The fresh pasta & vegetarian dishes. Having a game of pool in elegant setting.

Calle 5ta #204 e/ E y F, Vedado

☎ (+53) 7-831-2255

opera.cuba@gmail.com

Café Bohemia



<http://www.havanaboheemia.com>

Style of food Café

Cost Moderate

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★★★★★

Ambience ★★★★★

Service ★★★★★

Value ★★★★★

Best for Bohemian feel. Great sandwiches, salads & juices

Don't miss Thursday night happy hour (7-9pm)

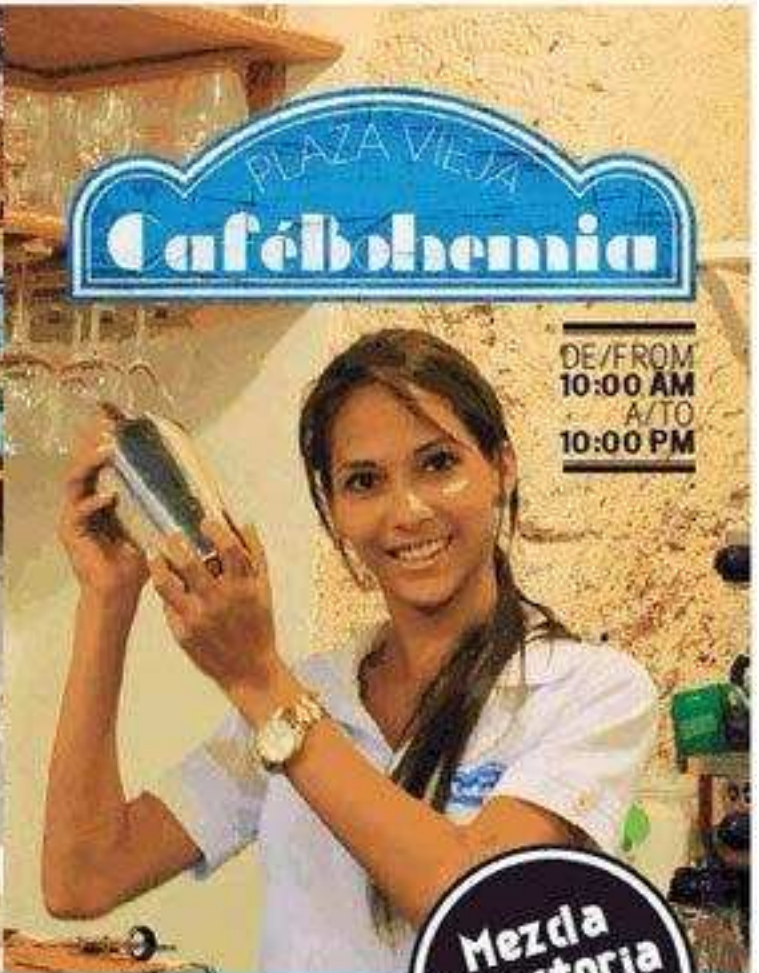
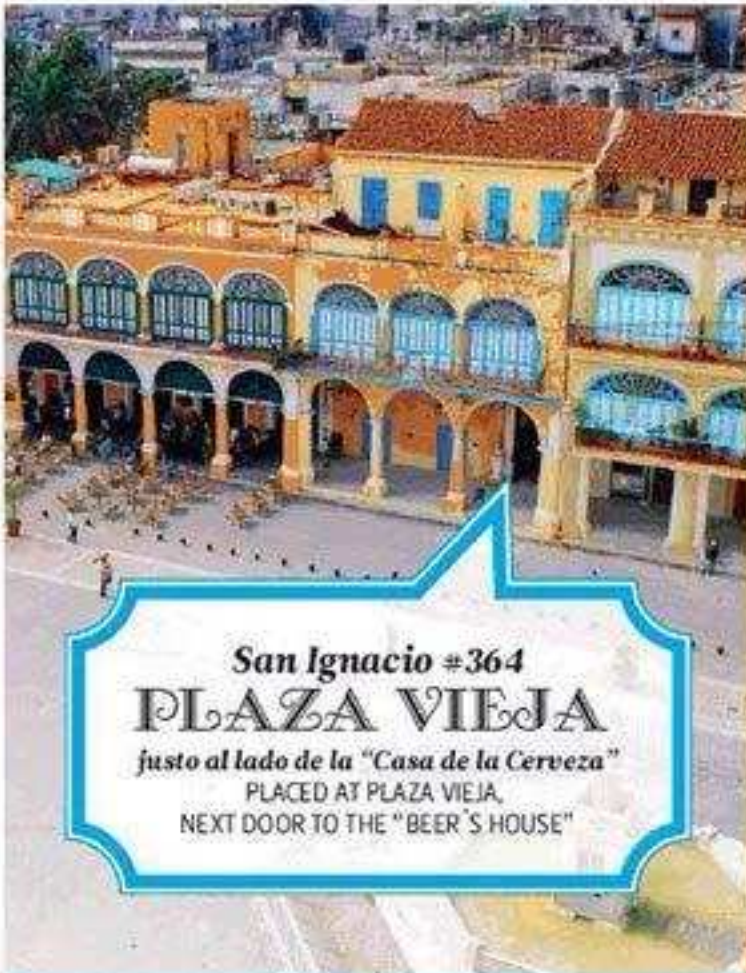
Ground floor of the Palacio de la Casa del Conde de Lombillo, Calle San Ignacio #364, (Next to Factoria Plaza Vieja)

bohemia.plazavieja@gmail.com

10:00
AM

Mezcla
de historia
y sabor

10:00
PM



Havana's best Bars & Clubs

Traditional Bars

El Floridita CA★4+

Hemingway's daiquiri bar. Touristy but always full of life. Great cocktails.

Obispo #557 esq. a Monserrate, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-867-1299

Factoría Plaza Vieja CA★5

Microbrewery. Serves ice chilled bong of light locally brewed beer. New locale as well overlooking Havana bay.

San Ignacio esq. a Muralla, Plaza Vieja, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-866-4453

Sloppy Joe's Bar CA★4+

Recently (beautifully) renovated. Full of history. Popular. Lacks a little 'grime'.

Ánimas esq. a Zulueta, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-866-7157

Cervecería CA★5+

ANTIGUO ALMACÉN DE LA MADERA Y EL TABACO

Stunningly well done larger version of the microbrewery on Plaza Vieja. Located by the waterfront area. Simply brilliant.

Avenida del Puerto y San Ignacio, La Habana Vieja

Contemporary Bars

El Cocinero CA★5+

Fabulous rooftop setting, great service, cool vibe.

Calle 26 e/ 11 y 13, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-832-2355

Espacios CA★5-

Laid back contemporary bar with a real buzz in the back beer-garden.

Calle 10 #510, e/ 5ta y 31, Miramar

☎(+53) 7-836-3031

Esencia Habana CA★4+

Spacious modern bar. Good service and nice cocktails. Non-smoking inside.

Calle B e/ Línea y Calzada, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-836-3031

Fábrica de Arte CA★5+

X Alfonso's new cultural center. Great concerts, funky young scene.

Calle 26 e/ 11 y 13, Vedado (next to the Puente de Hierro)

☎(+53) 5-329-6325
www.facebook.com/fabrica.deartecubano

Contemporary bars/clubs

Bertolt Brecht CA★5

Think MTV Unplugged when musicians play. Hip, funky and unique with an artsy Cuban crowd.

Calle 13 e/ I y J, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-830-1354

Kpricho CA★4

Über modern and stylish indoor bar/club. Miami style crowd and attitude.

Calle 94 #110 e/ 1ra y 3ra, Miramar

☎(+53) 7-206-4167

Melem CA★4+

Popular modern bar. Can get smoky and a little tight on space by the bar.

Ave. 1ra e/ 58 y 60, Miramar

Sangri-La CA★5

For the cool kids. Basement bar/club which gets packed at weekends.

Ave. 21 e/ 36 y 42, Miramar

☎(+53) 7-264-8343

Other

Meliá Sports Bar CA★4

Big-screen sports-bar in modern outdoor terrace with cooling air jets (when working!). Good for sports and live music, not cheap for drinks/food.

Meliá Habana Hotel
Ave. 3ra e/ 76 y 80, Miramar

☎(+53) 7-204-8500

Las Piedras CA★4+

Large mansion functioning as bar of choice for the after-party (3am+), when it gets packed to the rafters.

Ave. 1ra y 32, Miramar

☎(+53) 7-202-9486

El Tocaroro CA★4+

Expat favorite hangout. Small indoor bar with live music and eclectic clientele.

Calle 18 e/ 3ra y 5ta, Miramar

Don Cangrejo CA★4+

Love it/hate it—they have at least filled in the pool—this is the oldest Friday night party place and is still going strong. Outdoor by the sea.

Ave. 1ra e/ 16 & 18, Miramar

☎(+53) 7-204-3837

Gay-friendly

Cabaret Las Vegas CA★4

Can get dark and smoky but great drag show (11pm) from Divino—one of Cuba's most accomplished drag acts.

Infanta #104 e/ 25 y 27, Vedado.

☎(+53) 7-870-7939

Escaleras al Cielo CA★5

Friday night attracts a LGBTI crowd. Great bands, hip crowd, pole dancing—what more could you want?

Zulueta #660 e/ Apodaca y Gloria, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-861-9198

Fashion Bar Havana CA★5

A superb example of queer class meets camp, accompanied by a fantastic floor show.

San Juan de Dios, esq. a Aguacate, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-867-1676

Humboldt 52 CA★5

Humboldt #52 e/ Infanta y Hospital, Centro Habana.

☎(+53) 5-330-2989

Bertolt Brecht

CA★5 CA TOP PICK ★



CONTEMPORARY BAR/CLUBS

Ambience	★★★★★
Popularity	★★★★★
Entertainment	★★★★★
Service & drinks	★★★

Best for Hanging out with hip & funky Cubans who like their live music.

Don't Miss Interactive playing on a Wednesday evening.

Calle 13 e/ I y J, Vedado
☎ (+53) 7-830-1354

Escaleras al Cielo

CA★5 CA TOP PICK ★



GAY FRIENDLY

Ambience	★★★★
Popularity	★★★★★
Entertainment	★★★★★
Service & drinks	★★★

Best for Interesting venue with good décor and great bands. Busy

Don't Miss Friday night attracts a LGBTI crowd. Great bands, hip crowd, pole dancing—what more could you want?

Zulueta #660 e/ Apodaca y Gloria, Habana Vieja
☎ (+53) 5-2861-9198

Fábrica de Arte

CA★5+ CA TOP PICK ★



CONTEMPORARY BAR

Ambience	★★★★★
Popularity	★★★★★
Entertainment	★★★★★
Service & drinks	★★★★

Best for X Alfonso's superb new cultural center has something for everyone

Don't Miss Ne pas manquer Les meilleurs musiciens cubains

Calle 26 e/ 11 y 13, Vedado
(next to the Puente de Hierro)

Don Cangrejo

CA★4+ CA TOP PICK ★



CONTEMPORARY

Ambience	★★★★
Popularity	★★★★★
Entertainment	★★★★★
Service & drinks	★★★

Best for Interesting venue with good décor and great bands. Busy.

Don't Miss Friday night attracts a LGBTI crowd. Great bands, hip crowd, pole dancing—what more could you want?

Ave. 1ra e/ 16 y 18, Miramar
☎ (+53) 7-204-3837

Privé Lounge

CA★5

CA TOP PICK



JAZZ CLUB

Ambience	★★★★★
Popularity	★★★★★
Entertainment	★★★★★
Service & drinks	★★★

Best for Intimate lounge club with quality decor and great acoustics.

Don't Miss Sunday night jazz – brilliant musicians play here.

Calle 88A #306 e/ 3ra y 3raA, Miramar
☎ (+53) 7-209-2719

Humboldt 52

CA★5

CA TOP PICK



GAY FRIENDLY

Ambience	★★★★
Popularity	★★★★★
Entertainment	★★★★★
Service & drinks	★★★★

Best for Hot staff, comfortable setting, and welcoming vibe at Havana's first full-time, openly-gay bar

Don't Miss The disco ball, a talented opera duo performing Wednesdays and karaoke and drag performances other days of the week

Humboldt #52 e/ Infanta y Hospital, Centro Habana.
☎ (+53) 5-330-2989

Sangri-La

CA★5+

CA TOP PICK



CONTEMPORARY BAR/CLUB

Ambience	★★★★★
Popularity	★★★★★
Entertainment	★★★★
Service & drinks	★★★★★

Best for Hanging out with the cool kids on the Havana Farundula in the most popular bar/club.

Don't Miss The best gin and tonic in Havana.

Ave. 21 e/ 36 y 42, Miramar
☎ (+53) 5-264-8343

Espacios

CA★5-

CA TOP PICK



CONTEMPORARY BAR

Ambience	★★★★★
Popularity	★★★★★
Entertainment	★★★
Service & drinks	★★★★★

Best for Laid back lounge atmosphere in the garden area which often has live music. Good turnover of people.

Don't Miss Ray Fernandez, Tony Avila, Yasek Mazano playing live sets in the garden.

Calle 10 #510 e/ 5ta y 31, Miramar
☎ (+53) 7-202-2921



Havana's best live music venues

Concert venues

Karl Marx Theatre CA★5

World class musicians perform prestigious concerts in Cuba's best equipped venue.

Calle 1ra esq. a 10, Miramar
☎ (+53) 7-203-0801

Basílica Menor de San Francisco de Asís CA★5

A truly beautiful church, which regularly hosts fabulous classical music concerts.

Oficios y Amargura, Plaza de San Francisco de Asís, Habana Vieja

Fábrica de Arte CA★5

X Alfonso's new cultural center. Great concerts inside (small and funky) and outside (large and popular!). Great mix of people.

Calle 26 e/ 11 y 13, Vedado (next to the Puente de Hierro)

Sala Covarrubias CA★5

TEATRO NACIONAL

Recently renovated, this is one of Cuba's most prestigious venues for a multitude of events.

Paseo y 39, Plaza de la Revolución.

Jazz

Café Jazz Miramar CA★4+

This newish club is clean, modern and atmospheric where Cuba's best musicians jam and improvise.

Cine Teatro Miramar
10:30pm - 2am
Ave. 5ta esq. a 94, Miramar

Jazz Café CA★4

A staple of Havana's jazz scene, the best jazz players perform here. Somewhat cold atmosphere wise.

Galerías de Paseo
Ave. 1ra e/ Paseo y A, Vedado

Privé Lounge CA★5+

Small and intimate lounge club with great acoustics and beautiful decor. Jazz groups play Sunday night.

Calle 88A #306 e/ 3ra y 3raA, Miramar
☎ (+53) 7-209-2719

La Zorra y el Cuervo CA★5

Intimate and atmospheric, this basement club, which you enter through the Red telephone box, is Cuba's most famous jazz club.

Calle 23 e/ N y O, Vedado
☎ (+53) 7-833-2402

Salsa/Timba

Café Cantante Mi Habana CA★4

Attracts the best Cuban musicians to play including for matinees. Recently renovated with an excellent new sound system.

Ave. Paseo esq. a 39, Plaza de la Revolución
☎ (+53) 7-878-4273

Casa de la Música CA★4

CENTRO HABANA

A little rough around the edges but spacious. For better or worse, this is ground zero for the best in Cuban salsa.

Galiano e/ Neptuno y Concordia, Centro Habana
☎ (+53) 7-860-8296/4165

Casa de la Música CA★4

MIRAMAR

Smaller and more up-market than its newer twin in Centro Habana. This is an institution in the Havana salsa scene although probably seen better days.

Calle 20 esq. a 35, Miramar
☎ (+53) 7-204-0447

Salón Rosado de la Tropical CA★5

The legendary beer garden where Arsenio tore it up in the 40s. Look for a salsa/timba gig on a Sat night and a Sun matinee with an older crowd.

Ave. 41 esq. a 46, Playa Times: varies wildly
☎ (+53) 7-203-5322

Contemporary

Café Teatro Bertolt Brecht CA★5

Think MTV Unplugged when musicians play. Hip, funky and unique with an artsy Cuban crowd.

Calle 13 e/ I y J, Vedado
☎ (+53) 7-830-1354

Don Cangrejo CA★4+

Love it/hate it—they have at least filled in the pool—this is the oldest Friday night party place and is still going strong. Outdoor by the sea.

Ave. 1ra e/ 16 y 18, Miramar
☎ (+53) 7-204-3837

El Sauce CA★5-

Great outdoor concert venue to hear the best in contemporary & Nueva Trova live in concert.

Ave. 9na #12015 e/ 120 y 130, Playa
☎ (+53) 7-204-6428

Teatro de Bellas Artes CA★4+

Small intimate venue inside Cuba's most prestigious arts museum. Modern.

Trocadero e/ Zulueta y Monserrate, Habana Vieja.

Trova & traditional

Barbaram Pepito's Bar CA★4+

Some of the best Cuban Nueva Trova musicians perform in this small and intimate environment.

Calle 26 esq. a Ave. del Zoológico. Nuevo Vedado
☎ (+53) 7-881-1808

Gato Tuerto CA★4+

Late night place to hear fabulous bolero singers. Can get smoky.

Calle O entre 17 y 19, Vedado
☎ (+53) 7-833-2224

Legendarios de Guajirito CA★5

See Buena Vista Social Club musicians still performing nightly from 9pm. Touristy but fabulous.

Zulueta #660 e/ Apodaca y Gloria, Centro Habana
☎ (+53) 7-861-7761

Salón 1930 'Compay Segundo' CA★4+

Buena Vista Social Club style set in the grand Hotel Nacional.

Hotel Nacional
Calle O esq. a 21, Vedado
☎ (+53) 7-835-3896