

RIO Romance

Rio de Janeiro Fashion Week sets **ARJUN BHASIN** off on a style quest through the city's chic streets



Filhas de Gaia



Melk D-Za

FASHION FILE

Something about Brazilian fashion was different this year—it was stronger, bolder, and more eager to impress. Structure, architecture, construction—these were the key words from Fashion Rio 2010, a hilarious irony considering that in Rio, flip-flops are the chic walks and you're more likely to go shopping in a string bikini than a pair of jeans. Still, the collections seemed more geared toward winter in Paris and Milan than the beach-front promenades of Rio. Ultra-slick and super-luxe, the collections covered futuristic looks for high-fashion Barbie (Aquastudio), S&M Lara Croft (Espaco), and Lufthansa's first flight to the moon (Mara Mac). Techno fabric, luxurious black jersey, and leather ruled the catwalks. It was all about Amazonian models, stilettos that look like weapons, guys in panama hats, a caffeine-charged crew of photographers, and a brigade of trendy bookers, makeup artists, and hair persons—all things that we've come to know and love about fashion week.



Mara Mac



Giulia Borges



Claudia Simoes



HATS OFF

Before Gisele Bündchen and Adriana Lima, there was only one Brazilian bombshell—Carmen Miranda. No pilgrimage to Rio is complete without a visit to the Carmen Miranda Museum, which houses the diva's costume and shoe collection. One of the highest paid women in Hollywood in the 1940s, she wowed the crowds with her voice, figure, and her famous hats! (Av Rui Barbosa, Flamengo; +55 21 2299 5586)

STILETTO STYLE

When Vivienne Westwood asked Brazilian designer Melissa to design a line of plastic heels for her Anglomania line, everyone realised that the brand had arrived. Harajuku girls, eat your heart out!



Melissa Shoes, price upon request.



WRITINGS ON THE WALL

Rio de Janeiro is ground zero for the most artistic graffiti you'll ever see. All over the city, witness this expression of pop art at its finest—it gives vandalism a desirable twist.



ROLE REVERSAL

A friend took me to the atelier of the local artist Zemorg to look at his sculptures made from recycled bottle caps. Vibrant and menacing, they are at once a reminder of consumption and waste, and the boundless creativity we are capable of.



Zemorg makes sculptures from recycled bottle caps



Mama Ruisa has quaint appeal

LIVING THE LIFE

Owned and run by the charming Jean-Michel Ruis, Mama Ruisa is a stunning boutique hotel that is the perfect refuge for the fashion set. In quaint Santa Teresa, far from the hoopla of downtown Rio, it is the most elegant place to lay your weary head. (+55 21 2242 1281; www.mamaruisa.com)



The view over Santa Teresa



The delectable feast at Le Pre Catelan

FINE FARE

At the top of Rio's food chain is Le Pre Catelan, the stunning restaurant at the prestigious Sofitel Rio Palace Hotel where chef Roland Villard presides over the three dining rooms—one red, one black, and one white. If the fine food is not a draw enough, the stunning view over Copacabana beach will keep you drooling. (+55 21 2525 1232; www.sofitel.com)



CHRIST ALMIGHTY!

Take the toy train up Corcovado Hill and be engulfed in the arms of the mighty statue of Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer). A stunning, majestic, exhilarating morning.



CASUAL COOL

The uniform dress shoe of fashionistas and locals alike. No ensemble is complete without the iconic Havaiana.



Havaianas, price upon request.



SPACE-AGE ART

The magnificent curves of Oscar Niemeyer's Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói are a sight to behold. Perched on a cliff on the island of Niterói, the museum is part '60s modernist pod, part futuristic flying saucer. Truly a marvel. (+55 21 2620 2400; www.macniteroi.com.br)

This is the life drinking passionfruit caipirinhas on Ipanema Beach. Practically a national pastime. If I had to cite just one reason to return to Brazil, this would be it.



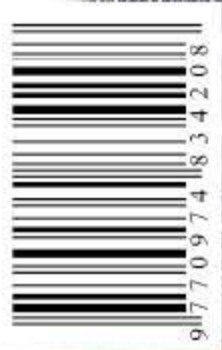
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Spring Fashion

Katrina
& Hrithik

BIG STYLE
EDITION

