



- NIGHTS
- SPAS
- HOTELS

ARGENTINA

Loi Suites Iguazú Hotel,
Puerto Iguazú

🔥 The first of nine planned hotels in the Selva Iryapú, a 1,480-acre plot of former Guaraní tribal land bordering Argentina's Iguazú National Park, just 15 minutes from the two-mile-wide Iguazú Falls, the 162-room Loi Suites is set within a butterfly- and toucan-filled jungle on the steep banks of the Río Iguazú, so close to the national frontier that cell phones pick up Brazilian signals. Five stone-clad buildings decorated in a sober, elegant fashion are scattered among dense clusters of earpod and rosewood trees. The spacious rooms—with handsome bamboo, leather, and Indonesian hardwood furnishings—all give onto the forest. Despite the hotel's size, the service is surprisingly personal: Reception staff remember guest names, waiters stop to chat, and even security guards point nature-inclined visitors to trails known for hummingbirds and tanagers. Activities include outings by motor launch or kayak, canopy tours, and jungle walks, but most guests spend their days at the falls, returning by night to savor *surubi* or *pacú* (river fish) on the restaurant terrace, to enjoy the well-equipped spa, or to splash in the pool on a velvety, breezeless moonlight. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:** Cabler suites have canopy beds, stone-clad bathrooms, hot tub-equipped decks, and seclusion (\$435–\$598-300; doubles, \$189–\$222). 🍷 🏊 🚿 📶 🛏

AUSTRALIA

The Cullen, *Melbourne*

UNDER \$250 🔥 61-3-9098-1555; suites, \$205–\$446. 🍷 🏊 🚿 📶 🛏

Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa, *Blue Mountains, New South Wales*

🔥 Charles Darwin passed through Wolgan Valley in 1836, and it's tempting to believe that this brand-new \$112 million conservation-focused resort in a 4,000-acre nature reserve would impress even him. The Greater Blue Mountains Area is a nature-lover's paradise of eucalyptus forests, jagged sandstone outcrops, ancient flora, and isolated marsupials a three-hour drive from Sydney. Within Wolgan's boundaries, the goal is to augment this natural beauty via a massive tree-planting and a native-fauna-breeding program aimed at returning the land to its condition before ranchers moved in. The price for a stay in one of the 40 close-clustered, free-standing suites is as steep as the nearby escarpments, but this is responsible luxury on an impressive scale. Designed to complement the surroundings, Wolgan nestles into its setting with great sensitivity (recycled materials abound, rainwater powers the showers). A homestead museum has been constructed, and activities include mountain biking and (for experienced riders) horse

treks—although it's wonderful to just relax in a location so idyllic that it soothes the senses and the soul. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:** Suite 4 to be nearest the main buildings, Suite 38 for maximum privacy (61-2-6350-1800; suites, \$1,742–\$4,913). 🍷 🏊 🚿 📶 🛏



BELGIUM
Maison DeLanau, *Antwerp*
UNDER \$250 🔥 32-3-216-27-85; doubles, \$244–\$678. 🍷 🏊 🚿 📶 🛏

BELIZE
Machaca Hill Rainforest Canopy Lodge, *Punta Gorda*

🔥 501-722-0050; doubles, \$280–\$540. 🍷 🏊 🚿 📶 🛏

BRAZIL
Hotel das Cataratas, *Iguaçu Falls*

🔥 The only hotel within Brazil's 657-square-mile Iguaçu National

Park, the 1958-built Das Cataratas was nearly derelict when Orient-Express Hotels took over in 2007, spending the next two years painting the elaborate Portuguese colonial-style building a delicate pink; highlighting the lintels, porticos, and balustrades in brilliant white; and adding two restaurants, a spacious pool, and a new spa. The 193 rooms—stuffed with heavy wooden furniture, florid Portuguese tilework, and repeated subtropical motifs—feel a bit cramped, and the reception desk appears understaffed. What's unbeatable, though, is the location: The hotel's lawns slope down to a splendid lookout over Iguaçu Falls, its sound and fury overpowering. Activities include helicopter and boat tours, and a simple stroll down paths of the park after hours is a

privilege afforded only to hotel guests. It's possible to observe night-herons, corzuela deer, and raccoon-like coatis bedding down for the night, before you return to the pool-side outdoor restaurant and a feast of grilled tilapia, partridge, and duck ravioli served amid verdant gardens of palm, mango, and tropical apricot. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:** Most of the Cataratas deluxe rooms, as well as the Cataratas suites, have waterfall views; rooms on the Forest Wing's upper floor overlook the jungle canopy (55-45-2102-7000; doubles, \$340–\$590). 🍷 🏊 🚿 📶 🛏

Tivoli São Paulo-Mofarrej, *São Paulo*
🔥 Location, location... and now luxury. The Portuguese chain Tivoli overhauled this 220-room concrete business hotel one block from São Paulo's main drag (Avenida Paulista), two blocks from its best museum (the MASP), and in its top restaurant area (Jardins), finally giving the per-

fect address the swank it deserves. The glass-enclosed lobby is surrounded by vegetation that makes it feel more tropical retreat than big-city high-rise. Tucked beyond the slick Narã Bar and Lounge is a cozy pool area with a multitude of lounging options among the cushiony daybeds, beach chairs, and chaise longues. The orange-tiled pool itself is oddly overheated but perfect for admiring over a complimentary *caipirinha*. (Order the tangerine version with *pouco açúcar*—lightly sweetened.) Earth-tone rooms are spacious if utilitarian, though a Nespresso machine and Brazilian-themed turndown service (Havaianas flip-flops and a treat like a chocolate-honey *pão de mel*) add a homey touch. Catalan chef Sergi Arola's first restaurant outside Spain, Arola Vintetres, has a high-end tapas menu; the twenty-third-floor restaurant is already a hot spot with Paulista's. Overall, service is extremely considerate if occasionally flawed: Dial "3" for everything becomes dial "3" for nothing if no one answers, as happened twice to our reviewer. But as long as someone picks up the phone, requests are fulfilled with speed and flair. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:** Anything with the word *Collection* is spacious and has completely overhauled bathrooms (55-11-3146-5900; doubles, \$390–\$500). 🍷 🏊 🚿 📶 🛏

Uxua Casa Hotel, *Trancoso*

🔥 Every summer, Brazil's fashion and finance sets steal away to Trancoso, a colonial village on the Bahian coast (imagine the Hamptons in vivid colors). Those who don't already have their own fabulous digs in the area more than make do at Uxua Casa Hotel, built by Dutchman Wilbert Das, the former creative director of fashion label Diesel. With just nine guest quarters scattered around a lantern-lit garden, this posada tucked discreetly off the main square makes high style of rusticity. Casitas have thatched roofs, cement floors, king-size beds with fine linens, and a catalog's worth of vintage furniture and Bahian folk art. Sumptuous bathrooms incorporate reclaimed tree trunks. At the beach, a five-minute stroll away, the hotel runs a lively bar and lounge, where locally crafted daybeds front a gorgeous strand. Staff may be snooty or sweet, depending on who's on duty, but with luck you'll run into barman Morgan Biagio, who makes a mean passion fruit *caipirinha*. One tip: Don't miss the breakfast banquet, which should keep you satiated well past lunch. **WHICH ROOM TO BOOK:**

KEY TO SYMBOLS

- 🍷 = Bar/lounge
- 🏊 = Beach
- 🚿 = Free Wi-Fi
- 📶 = Gym
- 🛏 = Pool
- 🚿 = Spa
- 🔥 = Hot Spa 2010
- 🛏 = 24-hour room service
- 🔥 = Hot
- 🔥🔥 = Hotter
- 🔥🔥🔥 = Hottest

For the full reviews of hotels designated 🔥 go to cntraveler.com/hotlist