

THE SUNDAY TIMES

travel

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+ EVERYBODY SKI! Great breaks for beginners, bargain-hunters, parents and pros...

£78 Querido 'Rooms tread the line between minimalism and homeliness'

In some parts of Buenos Aires, there are so many new accommodation options, you feel they may as well knock down the intervening walls and create one giant, super-boutique hotel. The same cannot be said for the quietly-up-and-coming Villa Crespo neighbourhood. Still, that's where Querido, a relaxed B&B, has set up shop. In a three-floor 1920s townhouse, its seven modern rooms tread the line between minimalism and homeliness. Nothing is too fussy, but you get the distinct impression that the details – flower-power cushions and wool throws – were lovingly handpicked. Downstairs has more character still, with a vintage record player, reclaimed furniture and original heavy-set wooden window frames. Space has been maximised – there is an open-plan reception/lounge/kitchen – but this allows your hosts, a very friendly Anglo-Brazilian couple, to be close at hand for info and local tips. They'll point you in the direction of the hip neighbourhood cafes, and you're still just a 10-minute walk from lively Plaza Serrano, in the heart of fashionable Palermo Soho. **Doubles from £78 paying cash, or £86 by other means, B&B (00 54 11 4854 6297, www.queridobuenosaires.com).**



£181 Faena Hotel+Universe 'Each dinner table is overlooked by a red-eyed unicorn'

Now, the last thing we want to do is spook you out, but if you've ever come across a late-night David Lynch flick – those foreboding velvet screens, blood-red walls, leather Chesterfields – your imagination may get the better of you at Faena. It's not so much a hotel as a collection of exquisite film sets in which you happen to be able to sleep. Gigantic gilt mirrors, coloured goblets, white leather chairs

(with gold swan-wing arms), black Murano-glass chandeliers, sumptuous scarlet drapes – there is no decorative flourish considered too extravagant for Faena guests. Then come the restaurants: choose between rustic El Mercado, inspired by old Buenos Aires cantinas (wooden benches, family heirlooms, sepia photographs), and El Bistro, where each table is watched over by a red-eyed unicorn.

The outdoor pool, too, is hotel amenity meets cinematic tableau: international travellers stretch out on scarlet daybeds, while a submerged gold crown glints in the water (be careful swimming laps). If there is a downside – and for design devotees, it's hard to think of one – it is the location in evolving Puerto Madero, Buenos Aires' answer to London's Docklands. But even that ensures views and a quiet night's sleep. Sweet dreams...

Doubles from £181, room only (00 54 11 4010 9000, www.faenahotelanduniverse.com).

AND THE BEST OF THE REST...

£70 BONITO SAN TELMO
There are just seven rooms in this eccentricity-styled Art Nouveau townhouse, so book ahead. **Doubles from £70, B&B (00 54 11 4362 8451, www.bonitobuenosaires.com)**

£89 HOTEL HOME
Revel in the good taste of its Anglo-Irish owners –

mid-century furniture, vintage wallpaper, polished concrete floors – and pretend it's your own. **Doubles from £89, B&B (00 54 11 4778 3008, www.homebuenosaires.com)**

£154 LEGADO MITICO
Consider this your casa con casa in tree-lined Palermo Viejo. An intimate decked patio, library with honesty bar, and open fires in winter make you feel instantly at home. **Doubles from £154**

B&B (00 54 11 4835 1300, www.legadomitico.com)

£235 ALVEAR PALACE
Every capital has one: an unabashedly-glitzy grande dame for visiting dignitaries and divas (Mandela, Chirac, Connelly, in this case). This one (pictured) flaunts all the florals, chandeliers and marble they'd expect. **Doubles from £235, B&B (00 54 11 4808 2100, www.alvearpalace.com)**



Get me there

Exsus (020 7337 9010, www.exsus.com) has a five-night break at Nuss from £1,495pp, including flights and private transfers; the same at Faena starts from £1,735pp. **BA (0844 493 0787, www.ba.com)** flies from Heathrow to Buenos Aires from £737.