



COLOR

CONFIDENTIAL



[MEXICO CITY, MEXICO]

THE PULSE OF MEXICO CITY IS STEADY AND STRONG THANKS TO A RECENT RENAISSANCE-LIKE REVIVAL. SLOW IT DOWN—AND FOCUS ON THE HIDDEN CULTURE OF DESIGN, OVERWHELMING ARCHITECTURE AND TRENDSETTING NEIGHBORHOODS—AND THE CAPITAL BEGINS TO REVEAL ITS SOUL. SO MUCH GOES UNSAID ABOUT THIS VIBRANT CITY SOUTH OF THE BORDER—BUT ITS BEAT IS UNDENIABLE.

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY MIRANDA AGEE

The towering Museo Soumaya's exterior is made up of more than 16,000 hexagonal aluminum tiles. Opposite: Colorful crystal tumblers at the Nouvel Studio headquarters.

architecture OUTSIDE THE LINES

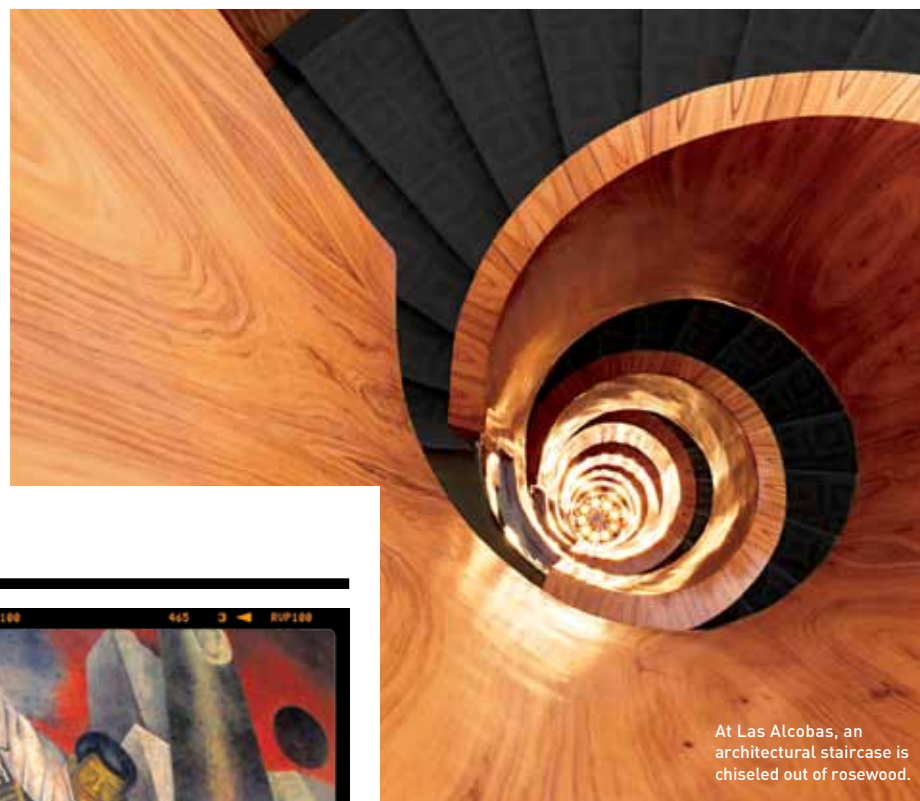
[LA CASA LUIS BARRAGÁN]

From the cutting-edge museum designs to the centuries-old cathedral in the historic center—Mexico City is an architectural paradise. But perhaps one of the most important structures—one that, in some ways, had a hand at shaping modern Mexican design—ironically stays completely hidden from view. In an unassuming neighborhood, behind an ominous cement wall, is the preserved home and now museum of celebrated Mexican architect Luis Barragán. Built in 1947, his home is a contemporary *mélange* of multiple floors, finishes, colors, and natural lighting techniques of which the architect is celebrated for. Throughout his career, Barragán followed the emotional architect's manifesto by using color as his ultimate muse. He intentionally planted it in various places throughout his home to evoke vivid and distinct emotions in each room. On the outdoor terrace, shades of violet and orange were used to elicit a sense of calm in one corner and passion in another. In his studio space, white walls are placed underneath a shocking yellow ceiling as a way of retrieving energy from above while he worked. The house may seemingly be all about shape and color, but Barragán intended nature to be the true focal point as the home is centered amongst a lush garden of imported South American jacaranda and pepper trees. Overgrown vines and shade-supplying plants sway in and out of view, demonstrating another move that would prove to be ahead of his time: using natural elements to keep out the chaos of city life. In 2004, La Casa Luis Barragán was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its overall influence on Mexican culture and design.

Las Alcobas lobby photo: Courtesy Las Alcobas Hotel. Romita Comedor photo: Courtesy Romita Comedor.



Frida Kahlo's former home is now a popular museum located in the picturesque Coyoacán neighborhood.



At Las Alcobas, an architectural staircase is chiseled out of rosewood.



Inspirational images are scattered throughout Luis Barragán's home.

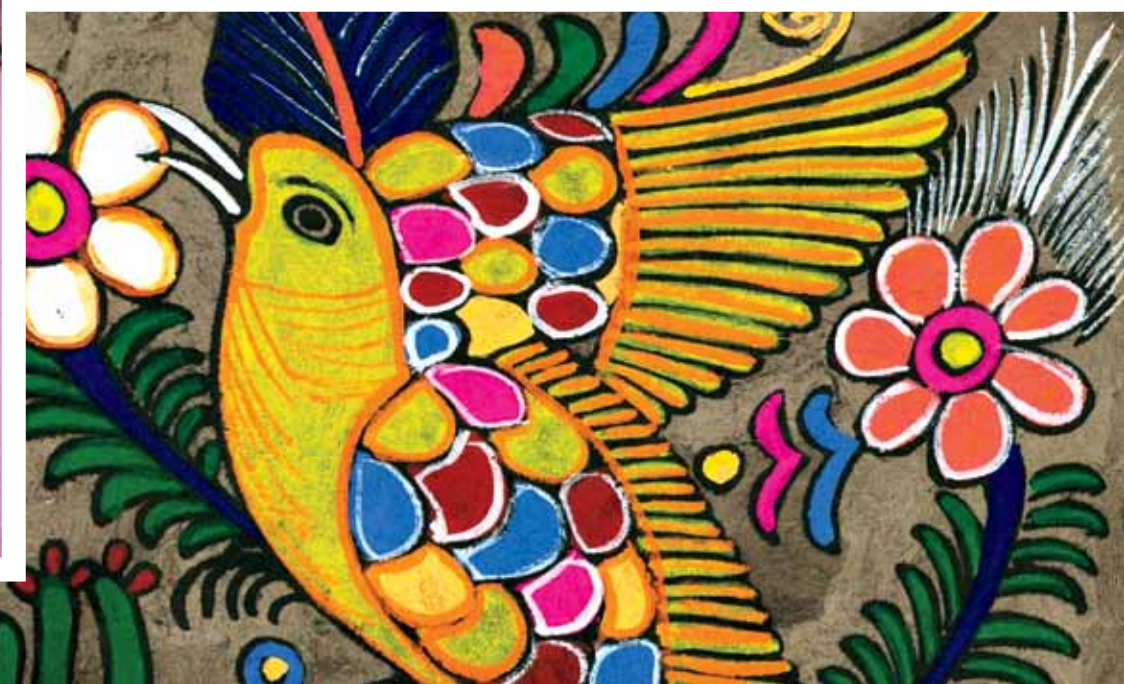


The serene courtyard at the National Institute of Anthropology and History.



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An interior wall on Barragán's outdoor terrace is painted in a calming violet hue.

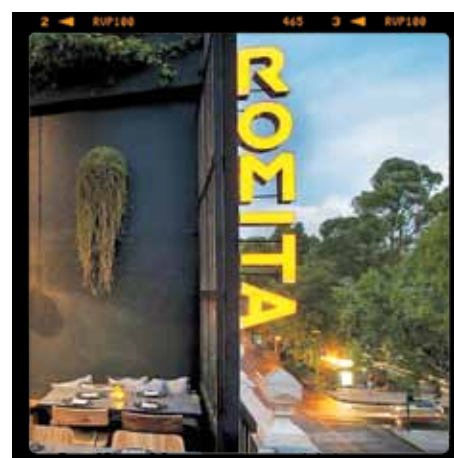


on the AGENDA



SLEEP

Located in Mexico City's chic Polanco neighborhood, **Las Alcobas** is a true study in high-end boutique hotels. Designed by internationally renowned architecture firm Yabu Pushelberg, the interiors are carefully curated with sleek wood walls, plush furnishings and state-of-the-art amenities including touch screen lighting and temperature controls. However, it's the enchanting spa that might be the best-kept secret amongst guests and locals alike, offering up luxuriously bespoke treatments in a small but tranquil space. Inside the trendy **Condesa DF**, you'll find Mexico's hipster-elite sipping mezcal on the Mexi-modern rooftop lounge that overlooks the bohemian Condesa neighborhood. Rooms come equipped with little luxuries such as Malin + Goetz bath products and custom furnishings by Parisian designer India Mahdavi.



EAT

Traditional Mexican flavors receive a creative overhaul at **Romita Comedor**, located in the see-and-be-seen Roma neighborhood. This bustling cantina-like establishment features a large picture window overlooking its surrounding lively locale, and, on a clear night, the roof retracts for a side of stargazing with an order of spicy octopus tacos. Taking its cue from the popular public market venues in the States, **Mercado Roma** is a contemporary iteration of the same concept. Recently redesigned by Mexican architect Michel Rojkind, the space offers three floors of delectable Mexican cuisine. Visitors can experience over 50 different options as they walk from stall to stall and savor incredible barbecue from Capulhuac at **Barbacoa del 23** or sample the pâté at **Campagne**, a Mexican-French fusion eatery. After dinner, head upstairs to the beer garden-esque terrace, where the trendy vibe is infused with inventive cocktails and some of the best people watching around.



SEE

Commissioned to house Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim Helú's extensive personal art collection, the **Museo Soumaya** is as much of a masterpiece on the outside as is the more than 66,000 pieces it contains inside. Take a walk along the perimeter and notice how the steel façade changes in every direction. Across the street from Soumaya is the equally impressive **Museo Jumex**, which holds Latin America's largest private contemporary art collection. Art lover or not, the best sight in the place is the second-floor terrace that gives way to incredible views of the neighboring museum. To truly understand the cultural roots of Mexico City, take a day to walk around the **Centro Histórico**. The city center starts with the **Zócalo**, or the main plaza, that can hold close to 100,000 people. Take a break from the hustle and bustle, and head inside the circa 16th-century **Metropolitan Cathedral** for a glimpse into old Mexico.

SLEEP: Las Alcobas: Presidente Masaryk 390, +52 [55] 3300 3900; lasalcobas.com. Condesa DF: Avenida Veracruz 102, +52 [55] 5241 2600; condesadf.com. EAT: Romita Comedor: Av. Álvaro Obregón 49, +52 [55] 5525 8975; romitacomedor.com. Mercado Roma: Querétaro 225 Roma Norte, +52 [55] 5521 2098; mercadoroma.com. SEE: Museo Soumaya: Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra 303, +52 [55] 1103 9800; soumaya.com.mx. Museo Jumex: Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra 303, Ampliación Granada, +52 [55] 5395 2618; fundacionjumex.org. Centro Histórico: Plaza de la Constitución.

design STOPS

[THREE PLACES WORTH ADDING TO YOUR ITINERARY]



Common People: Emilio Castelar 149, Polanco, +52 (55) 5281 0800; commonpeople.com.mx



La Casa Azul - Frida Kahlo Museum: Londres 247, Del Carmen, +52 (55) 5554 5999; museofridakahlo.org.mx



Chic by Accident: Lago Texcoco 112, Anáhuac, +52 (55) 5511 1312; chicbyaccident.com



Shaping and molding: The beginning stages of a Nouvel Studio vase.



A curated display at Nouvel Studio's Naucalpan-based showroom.



In the workroom, the kilns burn flames up to 2,700 degrees.



made in mexico city NOUVEL STUDIO

There is a lot going on in the workroom at Nouvel Studio: Multiple kilns are burning 2,700-degree flames and craftsmen are hurriedly walking around, clutching on to metal poles with molten glass connected to the ends. For these highly trained artisans, this isn't just a job—it's a career, one that took them eight years of apprenticeship to master. And these aren't just their colleagues; they are their teammates. Because as director Michael Kramer says, "One thing about Mexican craftsmen is that they are proud. Proud of the work, yes, but most importantly, proud of the technique." The old-world glassmaking technique is what Nouvel Studio still thrives on today. "In the beginning, we did all of the designing in-house," Kramer says of when he founded the studio 20 years ago. "But now, we started commissioning artists to work with us, always on the condition that they come and interact in our shop." Nouvel Studio started as a small experimental glass studio that

grew into an internationally known design house. Its use of color is uniquely Mexican as are the teams of artisans that hand shape and mold each piece. From simple glass tumblers to wine glasses and intricately carved vases, the bold color combinations are exactly what sets the company's work apart from the rest and is what keeps its two-decade-long history deeply rooted in timeless design. Even though the studio's roots in Mexico run deep, Kramer says that these days, design is international property. "We are always trying to keep our relationships with local design firms, but it doesn't mean that our designs are expressively Mexican. We've had architects and designers from all over the world create pieces for us and it's what makes us an international brand with thick Mexican roots." *Nouvel Studio, Gral. Aguatín Millán 10 Col. San Andrés, +52 (55) 5576 3325; nouvelstudio.com.*

Nouvel Studio glass images: Courtesy Santiago Tassier for Fotografía.