



BELMOND
COPACABANA PALACE
RIO DE JANEIRO



PRESS KIT

Belmond Copacabana Palace introduced by Amanda Woods

OVERVIEW

Belmond Copacabana Palace is a destination in its own right; the mention of its name alone instantly conjures up images of glamour and sophistication. A South American landmark, it has long been a favourite retreat for royal families, presidents, movie stars, rock gods, models, athletes and many other celebrated guests.

While just outside, on Copacabana beach, the vibrant atmosphere can at times be overwhelming, as soon as guests walk through the doors of the hotel they are in a protected oasis. Here they can feel that they are in both Rio and in another, timeless, world.

Belmond Copacabana Palace's restaurants and bars are amongst the best in the city, and are filled with stylish locals and international travellers alike.

Restaurant Hotel Cipriani, named after the finest hotel in Venice, combines Brazilian and Italian ingredients in innovative Northern Italian cuisine. The restaurant looks out over the hotel's famous swimming pool while the chef's table in the middle of the restaurant's kitchen is a special experience for up to six people where the chef creates dishes according to their tastes.

One of the first restaurants in South America to be awarded a Michelin star, MEE is Rio's first pan-Asian restaurant. With a menu created by Chinese gastronomy star Ken Hom together with Brazilian chef Kazuo Harada, dishes from Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Vietnam and China take taste buds on a journey across Asia.

At Pergula guests can dine either on the terrace by the pool or inside the restaurant with a view of both the pool and Copacabana beach. With a focus on international cuisine, the restaurant offers both à la carte and buffet options and is famous for its Saturday Brazilian Cuisine Buffet and extensive Sunday Brunch.

Meanwhile the Copacabana Piano Bar is where Rio's A-List meet to mingle over drinks to the sounds of the resident pianist. Guests can also sip cocktails and champagne or simply be refreshed by the fresh fruit trays and iced towels that pool staff bring around as they lounge by Belmond Copacabana Palace's beautiful semi-Olympic sized pool.

Staff at Belmond Copacabana Palace are known for their discreet service and with nearly three team members per apartment they offer a rare level of personalised attention.

The Art Deco hotel has 239 rooms, 146 of which are in the main building. All rooms and suites at Belmond Copacabana Palace have luxurious king size or single beds depending on the

guests' preferences. Beds are so comfortable that Keith Richards' wife asked to buy some after staying at the hotel when the Rolling Stones were on tour.

The rooms also have soundproofed windows, air conditioning and room safes, and direct international dialling telephones with free Wi-Fi which is available throughout the hotel.

The elegant furniture is made from Brazilian freijo or mahogany wood, and bathrooms usually feature large baths imported from America in a room of white and pink Brazilian marble.

There are seven penthouse suites on the sixth floor of the hotel. Each one is filled with specially chosen antiques, French fabrics and oriental carpets, and comes with a 24-hour butler. They share a private black swimming pool that is surrounded by plants and white trellis and has bird's eye views over Copacabana Beach.

Belmond Copacabana Palace Spa is the largest urban space of its kind in Brazil, with seven contemporary treatment rooms spread out over two floors, where guests enjoy massages, facials and body treatments and relax on chaise longues while sampling dishes from the spa cuisine menu.

One of the most exclusive hair salons in Rio, the hotel's separate Beauty Salon offers hair care, manicure, pedicure and make up services and is popular with both guests and locals getting ready for a special occasion.

Guests can get the adrenalin pumping on the hotel's tennis court or in the state of the art fitness centre either alone or with the encouragement of a personal trainer. And there's no need to leave the hotel for a style fix thanks to the 1923 Luxury Boutique. One of the new additions in a recent refurbishment, the boutique offers a curated collection of the season's top fashions, including international and Brazilian designers such as Adriana Degreas and Lenny.

As well as being a wonderful place to stay, Belmond Copacabana Palace is also one of the most sought after event venues in Brazil. The hotel's convention centre boasts 13 different rooms and salons of various sizes to host everything from workshops to weddings.

While the team at Belmond Copacabana Palace love to greet newcomers, welcoming back guests to the hotel can be even more fun as they often arrange special surprises for them. Belmond Copacabana Palace General Manager Andrea Natal says the staff become attached to repeat guests and love to create unique experiences that reflect their interests, such as organising a private tour of a museum with champagne at sunset.

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

When President Epitácio Pessoa asked businessman Octavio Guinle to build a grand hotel on Copacabana Beach to mark the Centennial Celebration of Brazilian independence in 1922 Rio was a very different city from the one it is today. The beach was mostly deserted and far from fashionable. Wealthy people lived in the mountains, not by the sea, and the idea of building a hotel at Copacabana seemed very strange indeed.

While the hotel narrowly missed the centenary it attracted huge attention when it opened in August 1923. Inspired by the Mediterranean style of hotels such as the Carlton in Cannes, its French architect Joseph Gire had created a landmark hotel—one that instantly put Copacabana on the map.

In the 1930s the hotel's Golden Room was Latin America's number one show venue, with performers including Josephine Baker, Ella Fitzgerald, Marlene Dietrich and Nat King Cole. In 1933 it became the backdrop of the film *Flying Down to Rio*, the first film to feature Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers dancing together.

Over the years the hotel has welcomed a long list of celebrities, including Alberto Santos-Dumont, Marilyn Monroe, Rita Hayworth, Tony Bennett, Gene Kelly, Orson Welles, Nelson Mandela, Bill Clinton, The Prince and Princess of Wales, King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia of Spain, Madonna, the Rolling Stones and Paul McCartney, while Brazilian supermodel Gisele Bündchen is amongst those who call the hotel their second home. Belmond Copacabana Palace's Golden Book, filled with the signatures of VIP guests, is so precious that is locked in a safe and white gloves must be worn before handling it.

While the hotel had become a faded beauty by the time Belmond (previously Orient-Express Hotels) acquired it in 1989 it has since been reborn as one of the great luxury hotels of the

world. The company invested more than \$50 million in this heritage building, updating all of the rooms and enhancing the beautiful swimming pool.

By 2012 it was time for another major refurbishment and a \$15 million investment. French designer Michel Jouannet, who also oversaw the refurbishment of Belmond Hotel das Cataratas at Iguassu Falls and Belmond Hotel Cipriani in Venice, expanded the main lobby to almost double its former size and refreshed all the rooms. Belmond Copacabana Palace continues to be one of Latin America's finest places to stay.

PEOPLE

Andréa Natal, General Manager

Andréa Natal, the woman behind the iconic Belmond Copacabana Palace, is one of the most recognisable businesswomen in Brazil.

Passionate about her work and her city, the last 20 years of her life have been dedicated to the hotel that she also calls home. Andréa lives at the hotel as a resident manager with her son and says even when she is working non-stop she wouldn't change her job for the world.

Born in Petrópolis in the mountains of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Andréa graduated in hotel management from Estácio de Sá University in 1980. When she went to university her ambition was to travel the world and she never dreamed she would one day become the General Manager of a legendary hotel in her own country.

Andréa's career started at Le Méridien in Copacabana and in 1981 she was transferred to another hotel from the same group in Salvador, where she worked for nearly four years. She came to work at the Copacabana Palace in 1990, just three months after the hotel was acquired by its present owners from the Guinle family, who built the property in the 1920s. At that time she was the only female employee at the hotel to work in a leadership position. Two years later, she moved to Saint Martin in the Caribbean, and on to the Seychelles and Paris.

After travelling to different countries and improving her skills, she returned to the Copacabana Palace in 1996. In 2003 she became the hotel's Resident Manager and on 1 October 2012, she was named General Manager. In 2013 she participated in the General Managers Program at Cornell University, USA.

Andréa now manages a team of 670 employees and is known as a creative and innovative leader, with a great mind for business and a sense of fun. When the hotel's main building reopened in 2012 she surprised guests and friends with synchronised swimming in Belmond Copacabana Palace's famous pool. She loves the long-term friendships that are formed with guests, many of which begin over Thursday evening cocktails hosted by the management team.

Named the most elegant executive in Brazil by the city's top newspaper, O Globo, Andréa is known for her stylish white shirts. As well as being deeply engaged in the creative process, VIP list and operational details, Andrea loves dressing up for the Carnival Ball in a spectacular costume related to the theme. "My favourite costume of all time was the one I wore at the Butterflies Magic Ball in 2010. Actually this ball was very special to me for many reasons. Besides being an amazing party and a huge success, this was the occasion I celebrated a key moment in the treatment of my breast cancer. I even danced with Gerard Butler, so it was definitely a night to remember."

President of the Board of Advisors at the Rio Convention & Visitors Bureau, Andréa is also the ambassador of Laço Rosa, a non-profit organisation that promotes breast cancer awareness. She enjoys creating fun fund-raising events, including the annual Cantores do Bem choral afternoon for non-professional singers which in the first year alone raised R\$ 180,000 (over \$50,000) for the Solar Meninos de Luz children's charity.

When she is not in Rio Andréa can often be found at her farmhouse 50 miles from the city where she tends her vegetable garden. She also enjoys cycling and after participating in her first Gran Fondo in New York looks set to happily ride into the future.

Jorge Freitas, Doorman

At Belmond Copacabana Palace, one of the first people you meet is also someone who you will always remember. Jorge Freitas, affectionately known as Cafú, has been working at the

hotel for 44 years. "I was introduced by my uncle, who at the time had been working at the hotel in housekeeping for 20 years." Jorge explains. "This is my first and last job."

Over the years Jorge has met an array of VIPs and charmed everyone from royalty to rock stars, with many guests including Barbra Streisand and Will Smith asking him to pose for photos with them. When asked how many photos he might appear in, Jorge smiles. "It's very hard to tell, but people take at least one picture of me every day. American and Japanese groups always take a picture."

Although he has met many people of note over the years, Jorge has no hesitation in naming his favourite encounter: The Princess of Wales, when she came to stay at the hotel with Prince Charles. "She was smiling, sweet and very polite," he warmly recalls.

Jorge grew up in Vitória in Espírito Santos, Brazil and moved to Rio when he was 21 years old. He now lives around 60km away from the hotel and takes the train and subway for his hour and a half commute to work, six days a week.

He says a good doorman needs to be careful, helpful and discreet, and that he loves his job. "I perform it with dedication and pride. I'm the first contact that every guest has with the hotel so they have to feel very welcome. I receive them, assist with their luggage and escort them to the front desk."

Jorge loves the history and location of Belmond Copacabana Palace. His position at the front of the hotel means he is exposed to crowds of fans when stars come to stay, and admits it can be challenging when they are making so much noise. "It really requires a lot of concentration as they keep singing all day, but I don't let this affect the quality of my work." So who has the fans who scream the longest and loudest? "Madonna and Justin Bieber."

As for anyone who would like to become a Belmond Copacabana Palace doorman, Jorge has some advice. "You need to be calm, agile and discreet—and always have a smile. You can take pride in working at this iconic hotel—and should communicate this feeling to guests."

EXPERIENCES

While days can happily be spent simply relaxing by the pool, Belmond Copacabana Palace also offers a range of special activities.

Tijuca Forest Picnic

One of the world's largest urban forests, Tijuca spreads over more than 30km² within the city of Rio itself. It is home to hundreds of varieties of plants and animals, including some threatened species.

The Tijuca Forest Picnic takes up to four guests in a car with a private driver from Belmond Copacabana Palace up into the tree-covered mountains from where they can gaze down onto beaches including Copacabana, Ipanema, Leblon and São Conrado. As part of the adventure, guests will enjoy a gourmet picnic, accompanied by a signed menu from Executive Chef David Mansaud.

The Ultimate Rio Carnival Experience

The Copacabana Palace Ball started during Carnival back in 1924 and was one of the highlights of the city's social calendar. Guests have included Jayne Mansfield who attended the 1959 ball and shocked onlookers when the strap of her dress came loose, and Brigitte Bardot who dazzled guests at the 1964 ball which celebrated Rio's 400th anniversary. Other memorable VIPs include Orson Welles, Ginger Rogers, Lana Turner, Zsa Zsa Gabor and Rita Hayworth.

Many were disappointed when the ball stopped in 1973 but 20 years later it was spectacularly revived for Carnival 1993 and has increased in grandeur and glamour ever since. Now the gala ball at Belmond Copacabana Palace is considered the official opening of Carnival. Fun lovers from around the world dance the night away on the Saturday evening, and then watch the Sunday parade.

The team at Belmond Copacabana Palace not only arrange tickets to the ball and great viewing positions for the Carnival parade, but also organise samba pre-party dancing lessons.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & ENVIRONMENT

Belmond Copacabana Palace is a long-time supporter of the local children's charity Solar Meninos de Luz, which supports the education and welfare of vulnerable children from underprivileged communities in Rio de Janeiro's South Zone.

Throughout the year the hotel holds a range of activities for the children, from inviting them to the hotel for fun tour days to major fund raising dinners and events.

Children from public schools are also invited to visit, and after a tour of Belmond Copacabana Palace and seeing a documentary about the history of both Copacabana and the hotel, the winner of a quiz receives lunch at the hotel with their parents.

Belmond Copacabana Palace also supports a number of other charities with various fund-raising events held at the hotel throughout the year.

The hotel is always looking to lighten its ecological footprint, and now uses 100% renewable energy and recycles more than 50% of its waste. It also works with sustainable food and flower suppliers.