

# CUBA

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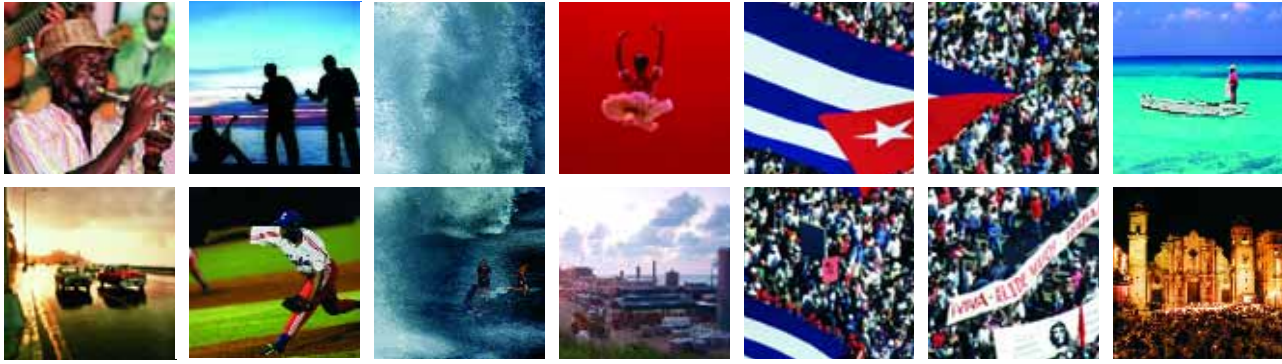
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The renaissance of Latin America's  
best-preserved colonial city

As cool as a Cuban fridge

A gallery of rogues  
but no devil  
at the 14th NAM summit in Havana





2007

# CUBA ABSOLUTELY

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*by Stephen Gibbs (BBC Havana correspondent)*

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## THE 14th NAM SUMMIT HAVANA, CUBA September 11-16, 2006

by Stephen Gibbs  
(BBC Havana correspondent)

Photographed by Sven Creutzman



## A GALLERY

>> HUGO Chávez did not have to complain of a whiff of sulphur in Havana. The United States, (led, Mr Chávez, believes, by the devil incarnate) declined to send even a low-level observer delegation to the 14th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit, held this year in Havana.

But for anyone who is anyone in the developing world, the city was the place to be that September weekend. 56 heads of state and government attended. The NH Parque Central Hotel can now boast that 19 Prime Ministers and Presidents stayed there at the same time.

The NAM cast list includes some of the least popular men in Washington. As Presidents Ahmadinejad of Iran, Chávez of Venezuela, Lukashenko of Belarus and Mugabe of Zimbabwe gathered for the final group photo, plenty of US commentators were already dismissing the meeting as nothing more than a gallery of rogues.

But the reality was more complicated. Alongside the veteran America-bashers were plenty of close US allies, including representatives from Colombia, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, India and Pakistan.

The name "non-aligned" is perhaps unfortunate. It begs so many questions. The first, obvious one, is who, or what is this group of 118 nations not aligned with? The answer used to be a little simpler.



# OF ROGUES BUT NO DEVIL

When the term was first coined by India's Prime Minister, Nehru, in 1954, the cold war was in full swing, and the developing world was feeling squeezed out. Leaders, including Nehru, alongside Tito of Yugoslavia, Nasser of Egypt and Nkrumah of Ghana, pledged that it was time to carve their own path. They wanted to found an organisation which was not ideologically tied to either the United States, or the Soviet Union. The first non-aligned summit was held in Belgrade in 1961. Twenty-five countries attended.

The following years proved that being non-aligned is not easy. As the movement grew, and the cold war strengthened, there were plenty who questioned whether members really were as ideologically independent as they claimed they were. Notoriously, in 1979, the last time the summit was held in Havana, Cuba declined to condemn the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, another non-aligned member.

By the time the Soviet Union broke up in the early 90s, more questions were being asked. This time, whether the NAM was a cold war irrelevance which should be quietly disbanded. If, the critics suggested, the world only has one superpower, what does being non-aligned mean? Being anti-American?

For some, the NAM is certainly an opportunity to resist a world they see dominated by the US. Cuba, which holds the Presidency for the next three years, hopes the organisation can be a balance to what it views as US double standards and the inequities of neo-liberal globalization. It would like to expand the role of NAM into a South-South trade and co-operation block along the lines of the model it is already creating for trade with Venezuela and Bolivia.

"A new, bi-polar world is emerging," declared Venezuela's leftist President Hugo Chávez at the summit. North Korea also joined the call for a revitalized NAM to raise a united voice against what it characterised as American bullying. South African President

Thabo Mbeki pointed to neo-liberalism as the cause of the marginalization of the underdeveloped nations.

Other countries, including Pakistan and India, took a more cautious line, and ensured that the final summit declaration was only implicit in its criticism of US foreign policy. The document also condemned what members saw as Israel's disproportionate military response in Lebanon, and called for the United Nations to be more representative of all of its members.

The vast majority of NAM members are from the smaller nations of the world. For them, the three-yearly meetings are a real opportunity. A chance, in terms of votes and podium time, to be on an equal footing with major players in the developing world. They can make their voices heard, and press the flesh with usually inaccessible leaders.

In almost all world summits, the real deals are often struck on the sidelines. In Havana, the most significant of these was between nuclear-armed neighbors India and Pakistan. In a Cuban government protocol house, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf agreed to resume formal peace negotiations, which were frozen after the July train bombings in Mumbai.

And what did Havana's residents and tourists get out of it? In the weeks before the NAM meeting, the capital, to quote one habanera, "put its makeup on" with roads being re-laid, buildings being painted and pot plants out in force. The Cuban government has said that the thousands of computers imported for the event will be donated to Cuban schools.

And the benefits for other visitors? Well, you might notice that your hotel has been a little spruced up. And if you are lucky enough to hire one of the fleet of BMWs which was specially imported for the event, you can wonder which President last sat in that passenger seat. ■



Silvia Martinez Rivas

# HAVANA



Sven Creutzman

➤ VISITORS to the Cuban capital frequently remark on how busy the city seems to be, how the life of the city is inescapable and either delightful or irritating, depending on their disposition and expectations as a tourist in a socialist Caribbean island. The fabric of the city is often crumbling, yet Cuban life goes on with a kind of cheerful self-absorption and confidence despite (or because of?) the lack of material trappings and 'advances' that we are used to in western cities.

The very fabric of Havana within a socialist state is a paradox. How can a city that is so spectacularly stocked with rich architectural examples from the 16th century onwards, built with the fruits of Spanish colonialism, Cuban capitalism and then an insidious new form of American economic colonization, become part of the new socialist order? Is not every C18th palace, every art deco apartment block, every 1950's hotel a reminder of past abuses of the people of Cuba by a wealthy elite at home and exploitative forces from abroad? How can the modern habaneros inhabit the city so blithely and embrace it with such confidence and affection?

The Revolutionary Government had no interest in the wholesale demolition of the beautiful city that they had taken control of in 1959, not least because of the amount of resources that would be needed to build some 'other' Havana in its place, resources needed to make other pressing social changes in the country. There would be no symbolic new architecture that would speak of Cuban nationalism, such as the adoption of functionalist/modernist architecture by the new Czech Republic during the inter-war years in opposition to the C19th architecture of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Instead, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara made a number of clever inversions of the uses of existing buildings and spaces, re-assigning them in a way that 'neutralised' their associations



Charles Barclay's first visit to Havana was in 1993 at the height of the Special Period and when he had just qualified as an architect in London. He has returned to the city seven times since, most recently bringing a group of students from his old school of architecture.

# an intensely inhabited city

by Charles Barclay

with foreign capital and made them useful to the people. They started by appropriating the newly-completed Havana Hilton, now the Habana Libre, and making it the revolutionary headquarters. The huge blank facing in the centre of the main elevation became the backdrop to an enormous Cuban flag; it looked as though it had been designed for the purpose. A high-rise bank in Centro Habana was converted into a hospital for the people and, most famously, the grounds of the Country Club in Cubanacán were ear-marked as the site for the new national school of art. The playground of the rich was to become an incubator for the creative talents of the youth of the nation, an experiment that was only partially completed.

Ordinary Cubans took part in this city-wide appropriation too, notably in the run-down Old City, where many of the historic palaces were being used as warehouses by middle-class Cubans who had more recently built fine houses in the leafy western suburbs of Vedado or Miramar. A palace originally built for one aristocrat and his family and slaves might house a dozen or more Cuban families, with the high-ceilinged rooms ingeniously partitioned and mezzanined to provide maximum accommodation. The Old City certainly had people living in it pre-1959, with barrios such as San Isidro providing labour for the docks and the industry associated with them, but the area was dominated by the financial institutions and commerce, which used the old buildings with little regard for their historic value or erected new banks, bombastic and heavily corniced in the American style. Post-Revolution, more people came to live in Old Havana than at any time in its history and this gave it a unique social imperative.

What is most striking about this new occupancy of the old historic centre of Havana is the ingenuity and energy with which ordinary Cubans have re-shaped the city to suit their needs. Whether building makeshift partitions out of packing cases in a ▶

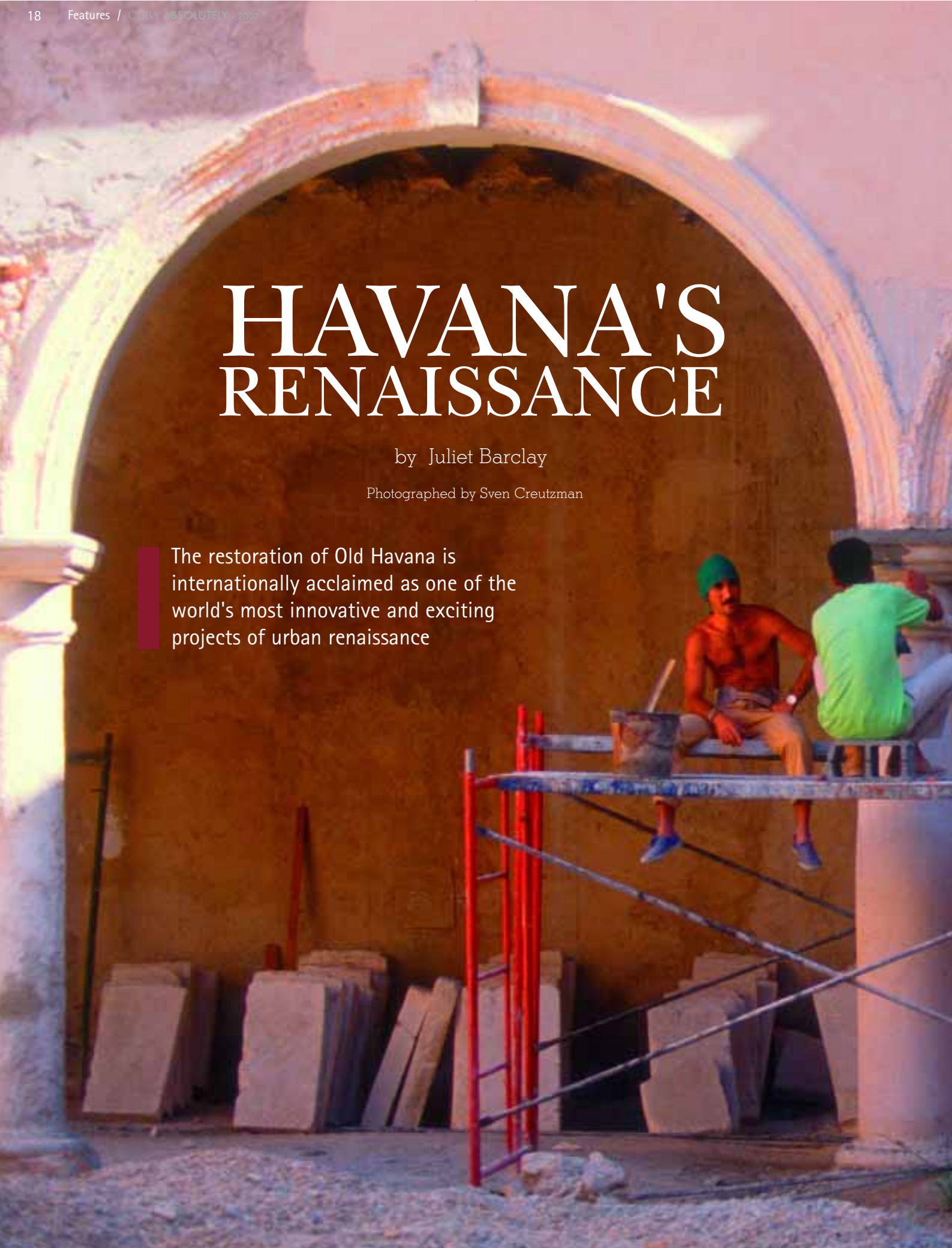


# HAVANA'S RENAISSANCE

by Juliet Barclay

Photographed by Sven Creutzman

The restoration of Old Havana is internationally acclaimed as one of the world's most innovative and exciting projects of urban renaissance



# HAVANA BLUE

The colour blue is one of the city's strongest visual leitmotivs



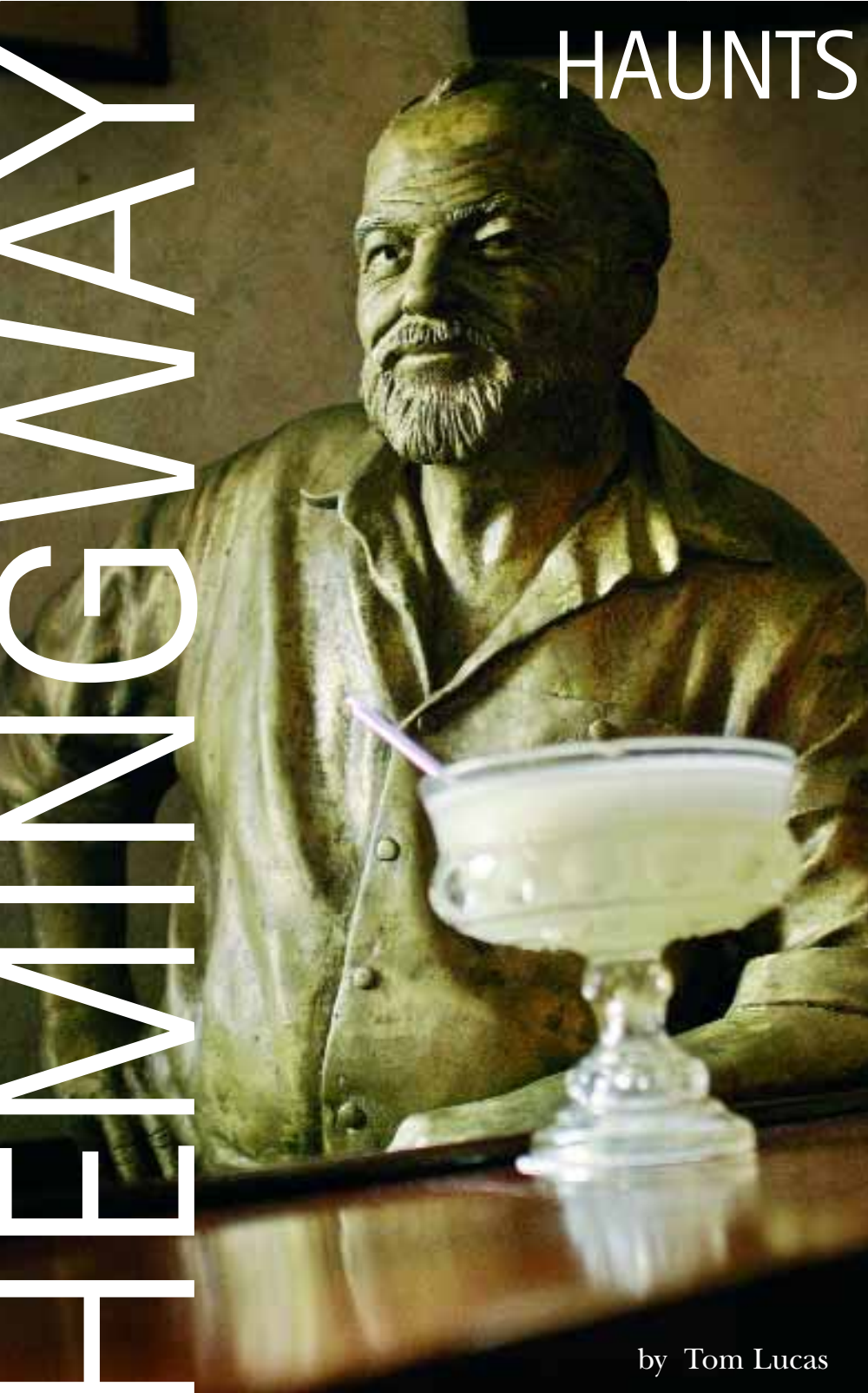
'Havana is a window to the sea  
The blue air of Havana sings in my lungs...'  
*from Habanera by Jesus Orta Ruiz*



# Hemingway

## HAUNTS

## HAVANA



by Tom Lucas



IN April 1932, Ernest Hemingway and his friend Joe Russell sailed from Key West to Havana for a two-day trip which ended up lasting for four months. Amongst Cuba's principal attractions were excellent marlin fishing and the company of beautiful women.

Hemingway had his fair share of wives and girlfriends both before and during his Cuban sojourn, but the great love of his life was the Gulf Stream. He wrote 'this Gulf Stream you are living with, knowing, learning about, and loving, has moved, as it moves, since before man, and it has gone by the shoreline of that long, beautiful, unhappy island since before Columbus sighted... That stream will flow, as it has flowed, after the Indians, after the Spaniards, after the British, after the Americans and after all the Cubans and all the systems of governments, the richness, the poverty, the martyrdom, the sacrifice and the venality and the cruelty are all gone.'

Complementary to his love of the sea was his obsession with marlin-fishing. Hemingway invested the pursuit of these majestic fish with a romantic, swashbuckling sense of adventure and chased them from his boat Pilar day after day, frequently sailing back and forth off the mouth of Havana harbour where the coast juts out to meet la Corriente, the Stream, and the marlin often stop to feed. He even went as far as collaborating with the Smithsonian Institute in the classification of marlin species and in 1950 he instigated an International Marlin Tournament. After the Revolution the contest was named after him, which didn't particularly please him; he called it 'a lousy posthumous tribute to a lousy living writer'. First prize that year was won by Fidel Castro.

Sven Creutzman

Whether in his favourite bars, at his secluded country house or among the fishermen and boatbuilders of Cojimar, Hemingway's presence in Havana is still almost tangible

Courtesy of Flickrperla





Living room at la Finca Vigia



Sven Creutzman

Sven Creutzman

Jack Kenny



Gregorio Fuentes



IX

Festival del

**Habano**

*La Habana 2007*

*del 26 de Febrero al 2 de Marzo*

Once again the Island of Cuba provides the scene for the biggest international gathering of enthusiasts for the world's finest cigars: Habanos. As previously, guests at the IX Festival del Habano will have the pleasure of tasting the latest Habanos vitolas, which will be launched in 2007 by Habanos sa, as well as the chance to learn, at first hand, about the secrets of a tradition accumulated over centuries.

Habanos s.a., the company that markets prestigious brands such as Cohiba, Montecristo, Partagás, Romeo y Julieta and Hoyo de Monterrey, amongst others, invites you to enjoy an unforgettable week in Havana, during which it will be possible to witness the harvest on the best tobacco plantations, visit Havana's famous cigar factories and to participate in a remarkable auction of humidor, signed by President Fidel Castro, at the traditional Gala Dinner that puts a golden seal on the Festival.

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 **Habanos**

# Holy Smoke

## Heavenly Habanos

by Dora Randall



Photographed by Sven Creutzman



THE unique contemplative pleasure of smoking a Havana cigar should never be taken lightly. Whilst the lucky few indulge in this luxury on an enviably regular basis, they never allow familiarity to breed contempt. However many cigars one smokes, one never tires of the gentlemanly—or ladylike—anticipation of extracting one's chosen cigar from the humidor. Gently, one tests it between one's fingers and catches the first whiff of that splendid scent, before tenderly decapitating it and setting it smouldering on its aromatic way with a satisfying punch of flavour while a pale blue, gently undulating swirl of smoke rises from it when in repose.

When Columbus came to Cuba in 1492 he encountered enlightened Indians smoking what he described as 'perfumed herbs'. Their name for cigars was *cohibas*, and they rolled them in much the same manner as the superb cigars of that name are currently produced in Cuba. To the untrained eye there seems hardly any difference in colour and texture between the different leaves that are used in the process, but cigar rollers swiftly and expertly select the necessary



Sven Creutzman

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# Editor's Message

This section dedicated to the economy and business in Cuba has been provided by Ernst & Young Caribbean Professional Services Ltd who have provided an updated and summarised version of their Guide to Doing Business with Cuba.



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## Introduction

It has been our pleasure to provide this updated and summarised version of our guide Doing Business with Cuba to be included in Cuba Absolutely's 2007 edition.

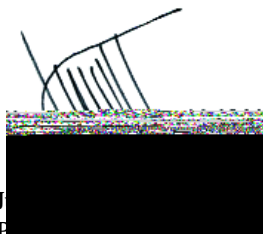
Cuba is without a doubt an interesting and challenging place to do business and there remain a number of compelling investment opportunities as well as certain pitfalls.

The last few years have seen a number of very significant changes made to the Cuban economy in terms of organizational structure and regulation, as well as with respect to the key sectors and drivers of the economy. This follows from but also contributes to certain key political relationships between Cuba and the outside world.

If you have any feedback, comments or observations, we would greatly appreciate you getting in touch with us with these so that we can ensure that we are reflecting the present day reality

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With best wishes,



J  
Partner  
Ernst & Young  
Caribbean Professional Services Ltd

15 November, 2006

# AN INTERNATIONAL HEAVYWEIGHT

Cuba has repeatedly pointed to the double standards of the US in its war on terror...

Despite Cuba's relatively small size it has played a significant geopolitical role

**>>** DURING the past 5 decades Cuba has played an important role in many international forums, including the Non-Aligned Movement which held its most recent summit in Havana (see article). Cuba has used its international profile to critique many aspects of US foreign policy and put forward its own development agenda.

## The US elephant in the room

The George W. Bush White House remains firmly committed to maintain and strengthen sanctions (the most commonly known of a body of an extensive body of legislation are the Helms-Burton measures) and his administration has taken actions in recent years to increase economic pressure on foreign companies doing business with Cuba.

On July 10, 2006 the second report of the US Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba (CAFC) was published which confirmed the general US policy stance, including an insistence on transition not succession and measures aimed at a renewed tightening of sanctions. A classified annex was interpreted by the Cuban authorities as containing plans for the overthrow of the government.

US attempts at isolating Cuba have sometimes backfired as in

Any discussion of Cuba's international role has to deal with the actions, influence and position of the US administration.

February 2006 when pressure exerted on Starwood Hotel & Resorts to expel Cuban officials from its subsidiary, Sheraton María Isabel in Mexico City was widely interpreted as a heavy handed infringement on Mexican sovereignty. Similarly, attempts to exclude Cuba from the inaugural World Baseball Classic drew widespread opposition. In October 2006, Nikon, citing the embargo, refused to give a Cuban 12-year old boy a prize he had won in a UN-sponsored painting competition in Algiers.



Sven Orelutzman

During 2006 OFAC increased pressure on several overseas financial institutions involved in Cuba. The specific institutions targeted (including ING) had actually been financing trading with Cuba. This had the result of making other banks somewhat skittish in terms of their compliance and resulted in HSBC shutting down the US dollar accounts of Banco Metropolitano, and Canadian Scotiabank closing the accounts of Canadian businessmen working in Cuba.

While in the last two years the US anti-sanctions campaign has remained relatively muted there remain some legislative support for a change of policy. On June 14, 2006 a number of Cuba amendments were added to a House of Representatives spending bill. The first one, easing payment for US products, passed while the amendment to ease student exchanges lost 236-187 and the one calling for the end of all sanctions was defeated 245-181.

Now that the democrats have a majority in both houses it is likely that the embargo will be chipped away at with at least a reduction made in the funding for enforcement and the tantalising prospect (although less likely) of attempts to exempt oil exploration. Going forward all eyes will be on the 2008 Presidential election with a democratic win heralding the prospect of fundamental change in US policy.

Politically Cuba has repeatedly pointed to the double standards of the US in its war on terror, highlighting the treatment of the 'Miami Five', five Cuban agents imprisoned in Miami (who were allegedly trying to prevent a further wave of bombings in Havana), and Luis Posada Carriles who is wanted for extradition by Cuba and Venezuela for his alleged role in the bombing of a Cuban airplane in Barbados in 1974.

## Canada - A good friend

Cuba has historically maintained a good working relationship with Canada which has been one of the country's key trading partners, sources of foreign direct investment and number one source of tourists visiting the island.

## EU [Cuba] relations

Cuba's relationship with the EU has been problematic over the past few years. While the EU supports constructive engagement it has sought to impose political conditions on deeper co-operation. A review of EU policy was followed by an EU-US summit in Vienna on June 21, 2006. The joint statement from this summit drew sharp criticism from a 'Granma' editorial which portrayed the EU as US 'lackeys'. Additionally wide differences between member countries on Cuba policy make consensus difficult, with the Czech Republic supporting a particularly tough line.



Sven Creutzman

In November, 2006 a UN resolution condemning US sanctions was passed for the 15th consecutive year with a record number in favor (183) and 3 against

## Closer relations with China

China is now Cuba's second-most important trading partner. As well as exporting electrical products and importing sugar, China established two joint production biotech facilities in 2005 and signed a new agreement to develop new research together. Interest in the exploitation and expansion of Cuba's nickel reserves through significant Chinese investment in new plants and the upgrading of existing ones is ongoing.

## Caribbean solidarity

There is a growing interest in developing stronger relationships with other Caribbean islands and Caricom.

During a Caricom-Cuba summit on Dec 8, 2005 in Barbados, Caricom leaders recognised the support Cuba had provided them in healthcare and education and issued the 'Bridgetown Declaration' condemning the US embargo.

During 2006 visits were made to Cuba by senior figures from St Lucia, Haiti and Jamaica and agreements signed with Antigua and Barbuda. Additionally Bahamas opened a new Embassy during July.

## Cuba's role with the UN and other developing countries

Cuba has maintained its social and economic aid programs to developing countries. The focus of those programs has become more commercially based recently although substantial healthcare is still donated.

March 21-23, 2005, saw the summit in Havana of the Group of 77 (a caucus of developing countries), offering a high-profile showcase for Cuba against globalization, debt and the US.

The 14th NAM summit held in Havana (see article) was attended by 56 heads of state from 118 countries.

## A leftward tide in Latin America

Election victories for Luis Inacio Lula da Silva in Brazil (2002 & 2006), Evo Morales in Bolivia (Dec 2005), Michelle Bachelet in Chile (2006), Martín Torrijos in Panama (2006), Néstor Kirchner in Argentina (2004) and Tabaré Vázquez in Uruguay (2005) have brought a broad spectrum of left of centre and/or nationalist parties to power in much of Latin America's. Recent victories for Felipe Calderón in Mexico (Aug 2006), Alvaro Uribe in Colombia (2006) and Alan García in Peru (2006) have shown the limit of this leftward tide although Daniel Ortega's recent win in Nicaragua shows that there is still strong support for leftist parties.

The presidents of Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia on April 29, 2006 signed an agreement for their countries' participation in the "Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas" (ALBA) and a "People's Trade Agreement (TCP).

ALBA is a free trade, investment and social integration accord, which was launched by the respective presidents of Cuba and Venezuela in 2005. This is reflective of an increasingly close relationship between the two countries. While the centrepiece of bilateral trade is still the oil-for-doctors program, broader economic links have also been developed including the redevelopment of the Cienfuegos refinery by PdVSA and commercial trading transactions.

Cuba and Venezuela have also worked closely on the founding of a new Latin American television station, Telesur and the extension of 'Operación Milagro' to 15 countries.

On 21 July 2005 a trade agreement was signed with the Mercado Común del Sur (Mercosur), a Latin American trade block, at the organisation's Argentinean summit attended by Mr Castro and a high level delegation.

Cuba has been the location for recent talks between representatives of the Colombian government and the ELN (Colombia's second largest rebel group). ■



Sven Creutzman

# PROSPECTING FOR OIL

Exploration in the Mexican Gulf offers opportunity - at a price



UNTIL 1990 Cuba imported 12 million to 13 million tonnes of oil per year from the Soviet Union in exchange for sugar at favorable terms of trade. When Soviet supplies stopped, Cuba had to source oil on the world market.

Today Cuban total consumption is approximately 8 million tonnes of oil equivalent per year of which approximately 40% is produced in Cuba. This amounted to around 65,000 barrels per day in 2005 and is expected to increase by 5% in 2006 as investment in secondary recovery methods to extract more oil from existing wells as well as some production from new wells comes on stream.

Since 2002-2003, PDVSA has supplied a significant part of Cuba's consumption requirements. In 2006, these imports reached approximately 105,000 barrels per day. Prices have an upper ceiling of US\$ 28-32 per barrel and approx 50% of the import bill is to be paid on credit over 17 years.

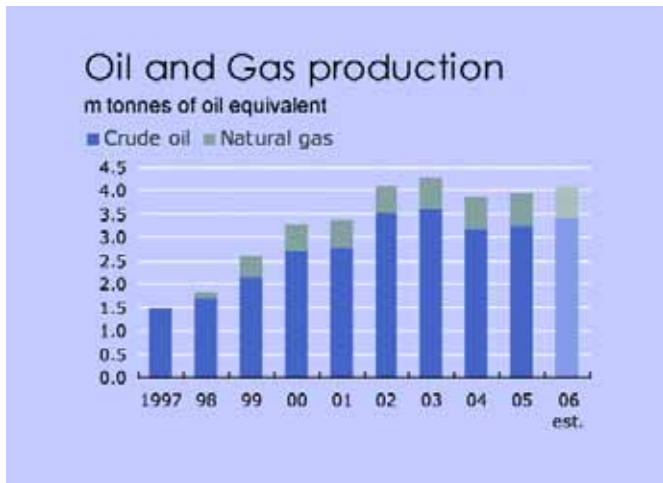
Cuba's current oil production is mainly (though not exclusively) heavy oil laden with sulfur and gas, which has been found onshore or in shallow waters, especially around the North coast of the Matanzas province.

Oil production is benchmarked to a world price index for this type of oil (Gulf Fuel Oil No. 6). The higher international price of oil has encouraged further investment and exploration in and around current fields, although the type of oil produced does not have its price closely correlated to more common oil types, such as IPE Brent crude.

A contract was signed on April 11, 2006 to create a joint venture company, PDV-CUPET between the Venezuelan oil & gas company (PDVSA) and CUPET which will develop and modernize the Soviet-built refinery in Cienfuegos. Initial investment will be US\$ 80 million with output estimated to reach 70,000 b/d within 2 years.

## Sherritt's major investment

The expansion of domestic oil output has been facilitated by over US\$500 million of foreign investment since 1990. Sherritt produces 30,000 bpd at present and has budgeted US\$ 140 million to support an expansion and enhancement plan for 2006. Montreal junior Pebercan is also gearing up further development of its Santa Cruz field in Cuba's Block 7 after positive results from initial wells.



Courtesy of Sherritt International

## Exploration in the Mexican Gulf

Repsol YPF contracted one of the world's largest deep-sea drilling rigs to perform deep sea exploration in July 2004. They found oil, but not in commercial quantities. During 2006 Cuba's exploration activity in the Gulf of Mexico attracted significant attention in the US. At its closest point drilling activity could take place within 50 miles of Key West raising commercial concerns from the US oil industry at being shut out of potentially lucrative contracts and raised the possibility of an oil exemption to the embargo. A large recent find on the American side by Chevron and Devon Energy highlights the potential rewards.

*\* Experts see vast potential in the deep waters of the Gulf. "one of the great oil and gas provinces of the world...".*

Given that an international maritime conference established Cuba's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in 1977 (see below) the ability for US to interfere seems limited. Cuba has split its EEZ into a 69 blocks (see below) of which 16 have been taken up by oil companies from Spain (Repsol YPF), India (OLV), Malaysia (Petronas) Norway (Norsk-Hydro) and Sherritt with further interest reported from Petrobras. ■



*\* CEO of BP as quoted in the Dallas Morning News -2002*

# Cuba's Nickel and Cobalt windfall

Booming international nickel prices have boosted export earnings and stimulated international interest in Cuba's large reserves of nickel and cobalt

**>>** FOREIGN partners have entered the industry providing financing, technology and markets. A deal made in 1994 with Sherritt International Corporation has been the biggest single factor in reactivating nickel and cobalt output so far.

High international prices (see below) have encouraged a greater level of investment and exploitation. Total production for nickel & cobalt in 2005 was reported as 77,000 tonnes, representing a 4% increase on 2004. Initial reports for 2006 suggest a potential fall to around 74-75,000 tonnes.

Total revenue for nickel mined in Cuba in 2005 was estimated at US\$ 1.1 billion. This is consistent with 2004 (US\$ 1,022 million) and significantly higher than 2003 (US\$633 million) or 2002 (US\$426 million)

2006 has seen international nickel prices reach a record US\$ 35,000 per tonne representing a +100% increase on 2005 and suggest that revenue could increase to US\$ 2bn if the commodity boom continues. ■



Courtesy of Sherritt International

Nickel and cobalt reserves in the north-east of the island are among the world's largest. Cuba has about one-third of the world's nickel resources (proven reserves of 800 million tonnes and 2 bn of probable reserves), and is the fourth largest nickel producer. Cuba's cobalt production is about 10 percent of the world total and the nation has the world's second largest reserves.

## Nickel production & revenues 2001-2006



## Nickel cash price

London Metal Exchange  
US\$ per metric ton



### Expansion Plans

The high price of nickel has stimulated significant expansion plans in the nickel sector in Cuba. The stated Cuban investment plans envision raising total production to 120,000 tonnes within 5 years.

### Pedro Soto Alba

Moa Nickel S.A. is a joint venture with Sherritt International Corp. It produced approx 34,000 tonnes of nickel plus cobalt in 2005. Brownfield expansion plans should lift production by nearly 50% to 49,000 tonnes. Commissioning is planned for 2008. Total expansion costs are approx US\$ 450m

### San Felipe

Plans for a Chinese entity to explore and develop an unexploited nickel reserve in Camagüey. Industry analysts suggest that the investment would cost around US\$1.3 billion and output could reach 50,000 tonnes of nickel a year.

### Las Camariocas

Plans for a Chinese entity to form a JV with a Cuban company, in order to complete and modernize an unfinished Soviet-built ferronickel plant in the Moa field, Holguín province. This has a capacity estimated at 22,500 tonnes of nickel a year for 25 years. This project is understood to have stalled pending the outcome of an international arbitration between a Cuban state company and the foreign party which completed a feasibility study during 2004.-

### Business issues in mining

There is a severe lack of infrastructure and support services which are able to support a mining operation. In general, most machinery must be brought in from overseas and there is an almost complete lack of service companies which are able to handle even basic support functions.

# Art and Culture

Jorge V. Cavallardo



Rolando Pujol



Jorge V. Cavallardo



Rolando Pujol



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# COOL AS A CUBAN FRIDGE

Photographed by Jorge V. Gavilondo

by Silvia Gómez



WHAT have you got in your fridge, right now? Prosciutto, black olives, clotted cream, Parmesan, smoked salmon, strawberries, Dom Pérignon? A long-forgotten, green-furred can of something that ceased to be fit for human consumption decades ago, a bottle of vile-smelling solidified milk and some distressing-looking wizened objects, obviously organic but now unrecognisable? Your clothes? (this is quite likely in Cuba where sensible souls chill their apparel before getting dressed on sweltering summer mornings). And your shoes? (doubly cool to run in frozen trainers). Nothing but beer?

Whatever it is, you can bet it isn't as interesting as what was in the 52 fridges exhibited during the Ninth Havana Biennial in the Convent of Santa Clara. These dinosaursque appliances, soon to be rendered extinct by the sweeping measures being applied to outlaw electrical inefficiency in this, 'the Year of the Energy Revolution', were given to a crowd of world-renowned Cuban artists to use as they pleased for the Biennial.

This year's event went far beyond traditional exhibition spaces, making use of walls, streets, squares and even buses to attract both those in the know and to lure a number of somewhat bemused passers-by. Since its inception in 1984, the Biennial has gone from strength to strength and is now attended by artists from all over the world. Initially conceived as a competition, the event's policy was fine-tuned from the Third Biennial onwards to focus on contemporary art in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, with European, American and Japanese participants gradually being incorporated to arrive at the wide-ranging presentation that now takes over all the city's principal exhibition spaces and spills out of them into numerous public arenas.

Themes of past Biennials have included *The Traditional and the Contemporary in the Fine Arts*, the *Third World Environment, Art and Society*, *The Individual and His Memory*, *Nearer to One Another*, and *Art with Life*. This

*Espacio de amparo,*  
de Irene Sierra



# RAÚL CORDERO

## A CREATOR OF IDEAS

Photographed by Jorge V. Gavilondo

by Silvia Gómez



IT was a great surprise when we walked into Raúl Cordero's studio, whose location in a central avenue of El Vedado offers a splendid panoramic view of a district where art nouveau, art deco, grandiloquent eclecticism and sober rationalism blend together in a nonconflicting shape—in the words of novelist Alejo Carpentier—'the style of a styleless city'.

While our photographer surreptitiously observed areas and calculated light, I couldn't stop looking at unexpected stains on the floor and half-finished canvases leaning against the bare walls, while the smell of oils mixed with the aroma of fresh-made coffee, inevitable prelude to our chat. The fact is that finding paintings and canvases in the workshop of Cuba's video art guru is as unusual as an umbrella or sewing machine in the dissection table imagined by Count Lautréamont, or a pair of boxing gloves in the entrance hall of Alicia Alonso's house.

Optional title series. 2005  
Oleo / tela 200 x 140 cm



## PAINTING FOR PLEASURE

# Alicia Leal

by Silvia Gómez

Photographed by Jorge V. Gavilondo

As I look through the window at my workshop, I can fly into houses, hear what my neighbours say, I can feel their breath, their weep, their joy. I can hear my eighty-year-old neighbor singing; I can see her naked, waving her fan as I watch her from my window.

I have a piece of canvas on my easel. I think that I am going to paint. I feel anxious. There is an image of la Caridad del Cobre on the wall which seems to be using words that come from mystery, approaching from love, from death, from the very art.

Why should I attack the whiteness of this canvas?

Is it because of a need for possessing, a need for creating, a need for accomplishing my daily work?

I wonder if painting from inside of me, inspired by whatever is at my reach and, in some way, related to the history of my life; if painting by finding the hidden power which is directly connected to a real life event, is the right way or tactic to reaffirm the role I should play in the world.

I still hope. I hope to unravel memories that float in the air, details of daily routine. I hope to paint for pleasure.

A basic -sophisticated human- artistic pleasure

As an ex voto, I shall give shape to a dream or any life event.

I shall find the right poem, the appropriate phrase, the highest expression of art. I shall have myself from the deepest of me. Will strength and encouragement survive?

A child draws for hours, immersed in his own world. Time has stopped for him.

(Everything is calm and in silence...) (That is the first reason. The first speech.)

Doesn't matter which color I use, whether I draw a fish or a cloud, a man or a woman to be naïf or expressionist; I keep getting closer to myself, telling my own stories with no hold barred. It may be an African tale of a counter story.

Doesn't matter indeed. Why should I stop being a child.

As I look through my windows, I can see the night falling and many stars...

All around me. I sense it as a spiritual island and...It feels so, so good, I wish it would never end. I am part of the universe and every single change, every seasonal change, every event around me I want to experience intensely.

Alicia Leal.



Caridad y Ochún  
acrílico, tela / 51 x 41 cm  
2002

La guagua  
acrílico, tela / 55 x 65 cm  
1999

# HAVANA

*good time*



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# The best of



Photographed by Sven Creutzman

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# Top 10



Sven Creutzman

## NH Parque Central (Old Havana)

Great for business trips if you need to be near Old Havana or Vedado; pretty disappointing if you want to feel the heart of Havana. A large, polished establishment with good service and food, big comfortable rooms, a huge air conditioned lobby bar/restaurant area and an excellent (and mercifully quiet) rooftop pool. It's a perfect place to recuperate after long, hot working days in Havana but can be a little soulless.

## Saratoga (Old Havana)

The Saratoga's the coolest. Its elegant facade overlooks all the other nineteenth century architectural splendours along the Paseo del Prado, including Havana's exquisite opera house. It's got a mudejar-inspired restaurant, a Maugham-ish courtyard bar, the city's best rooftop pool and fabulous rooms, many of which have long cushioned window seats from which to watch the frenetic local street life in air-conditioned bliss. The mountain murals behind the bar with their multicoloured light display are the last word in trendy urban kitsch.

## Meliá Cohíba (Vedado, Havana)

This is the quintessential business hotel in which great facilities and impressive service take you away from the hustle of Havana. The fantastic buffet breakfast and attractive pool, and choice of 5 restaurants, are great advantages. Do not expect any real indication whilst languishing in these marble halls that you are actually in Cuba, but if you want service and efficiency it's a good option.

Sven Creutzman



## Santa Isabel (Old Havana)

Originally built by the Countess of San Juan de Jaruco who subsequently sold it to the Count of Santovenia, this grand eighteenth-century palace overlooks Havana's oldest and most beautiful colonial square, the Plaza de Armas. The pretty central courtyard has a fountain which is often filled with fresh tuberoses. Some of the beds are pretty squeaky so it's perhaps not the best place for nuits passionelles, but the cocktails are among the city's best and we defy you to get up from the mahogany and leather armchairs in the courtyard after more than 2 mojitos. Stay in the Santovenia Suite for a serious aesthetic treat.

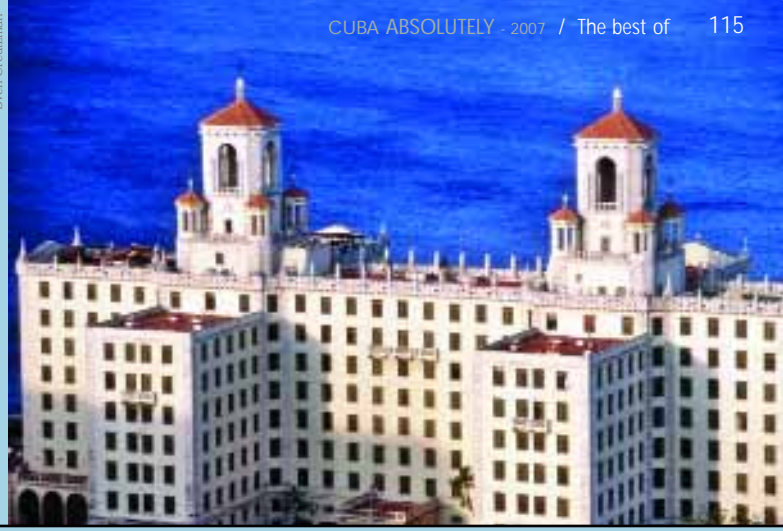
Jorge V. Gavilondo

Rolando Pujol



# hotels in Cuba

Sven Creutzman



(Excluding all-inclusive beach hotels)

by Tom Lucas

## Xanadu (Varadero)

If you wish to see Varadero's white sands and yet avoid the all-inclusive beach resorts then Xanadu's the place for you. This is the beautifully finished former DuPont house which boasts the best bar, a great restaurant and offers you as much free golf at the adjacent 18-hole course as you can play. What more could you ask for?

## Moka (Las Terrazas)

Reached by a winding road through thickly-wooded hills in a UNESCO biosphere, a little over an hour from Havana. A haven of cool in summer with lots to do: rowing on the lake, swimming in the river, frolicking in waterfalls, riding or hiking through the hills, birdwatching or just chilling out up to your ears in nature. The hotel isn't luxurious but is agreeably designed around the natural features of the site, including a huge tree which grows rather startlingly straight through the lobby and out through the roof.

## Los Jazmines (Viñales)

Those who only do day trips to the Valley of Viñales are missing out. The best moments there are at dawn, when the royal palms are wreathed in milky mist, and dusk, when the strange rock formations are bathed in rosy sunset light. The pool at Jazmines is unbeatable and makes up for the average rooms. The main building is painted an apparently incongruous pink which rather strangely complements the landscape.

## Hotel Nacional (Vedado, Havana)

The Nacional is a magnificent hotel, fully deserving the ranking that places it amongst the world's best hotels. Unfortunately, the shabby rooms, patchy service and unexceptional food do not do justice to the general ambience. [For business visitors the executive floor is better.] Savour the beautiful gardens, enjoy the history and relax by the pool but don't try and get a dry martini with a rocket and walnut salad delivered to your room in the early hours of the morning.

## Conde de Villanueva (Old Havana)

Delightfully small and intimate establishment in what was once the mansion of Claudio Martínez de Pinillos, Count of Villanueva, the leader of Cuban Creole society in the nineteenth century. A great favourite with cigar aficionados and useful for private weekend parties. One of Old Havana's best cigar shops, with private humidors to rent, is tucked away in the old slave quarters on its mezzanine floor. The suite overlooking the junction of Lamparilla and Mercaderes Streets is probably the most inviting hotel room in Havana.

## Casa Granda (Santiago de Cuba)

Attractive neoclassical edifice with comfortable rooms furnished in colonial style, facing the house of Diego Velázquez, Cuba's first governor. Superb views from the rooftop bar over the city, the harbour and the mountains. The only real option for discerning visitors to Santiago; the city's other hotels are vilely ugly. ■

Sven Creutzman



Sven Creutzman





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Look out for a Spanish version to be published early in 2007. Our next completely new issue will be ready for late 2007 and will include some of the following:

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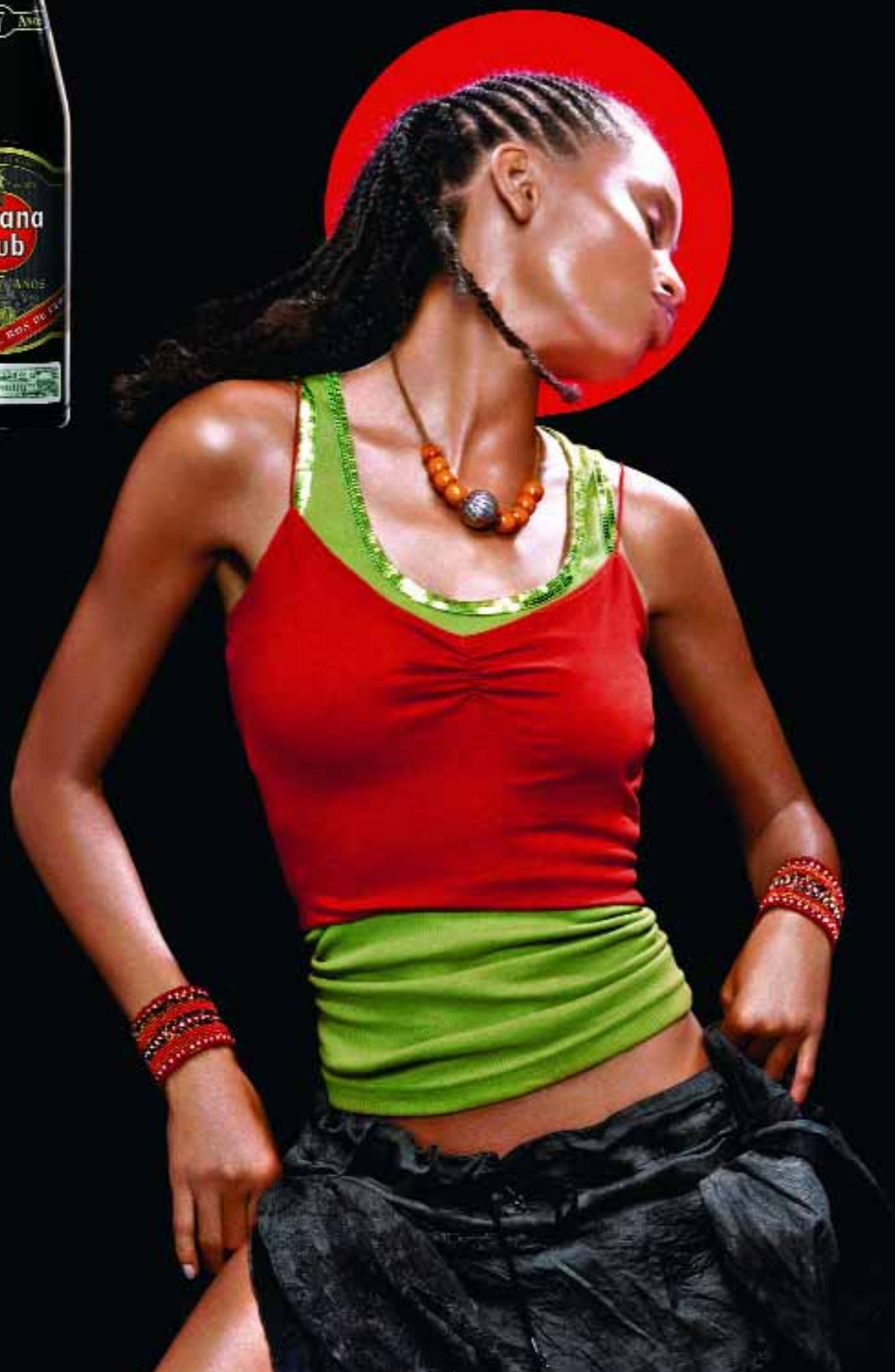
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