



TRAVEL



Where to hang out...

LEBLON BEACH

The Mayfair of Rio. If you're a big hedgefunder who can choose where you want to live, you choose Rio over São Paulo because the lifestyle is better and Leblon, *left*, because it's the coolest spot by far. Here, among lovely squares, are the best bars and restaurants. Most importantly, you're at the smartest end of Ipanema Beach. Everyone bangs on about Posto Nove, but it's Leblon where the properly beautiful Brazilians hang out. Visit Shopping Leblon, the best one-stop in the city, which sells local designers Carlos Miele and the wonderful Osklen. Then drink espressos and eat cakes – all made with gloriously sweet dulce de leche – catching glimpses of the sea beyond the tree-lined streets.

Rio

FASHIONABLE TRAVEL

Where to stay...

COPACABANA PALACE HOTEL

The Copacabana Palace, *bottom right*, built in 1920, was for years the only hotel in Rio. Then a few other big swingers, as well as boutique little numbers, started snapping at its heels. But the Copa has regrouped. Over a year ago, it gave a new lease of life to its bar, which was always an institution and is once again the snazziest drinking spot in the city. With fibre-optics and a golden floor, it's old-school meets new: wonderfully expensive, very insider and the place to find Miley Cyrus, Kate Moss, *right*, Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart drinking cocktails with gold leaf and caviar well into the early hours.



Rio is going through the roof. Having just discovered the world's third-largest oil reserve off its coast, it's enjoying a once-in-a-lifetime boom. The Olympics and the World Cup are coming, the underground and the buildings are getting a facelift and everyone's feeling frisky – including the boys in the Michael Roberts white-fashion story, *above*.



Rubber flip-flops, £16, by Havaianas

Crochet-knit playsuit, £485, by Missoni, at Net-a-Porter

Panama hat, £45, by Pachacuti, at Net-a-Porter

Plastic sunglasses, £85, by Polaroid Crew, at Mr Porter

Who to know...

DEHOUCHE

In 2003, having nosed around every tiny village and driven down every dusty track in Brazil, recruitment man Paul Irvine and banker Henry Madden abandoned their day jobs and set up Dehouche, a travel company focusing on the best of secret South America. They became friends with interesting people who owned tiny hotels and had light-aircraft companies. Helped by word of mouth, they suddenly had huge clients with astonishing demands they managed to meet, and

everything snowballed.

Charming, well-connected and ahead of the crowd, they now have offices in Rio and Buenos Aires and cover Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia. The head of sales has a double first from Oxford. 'It's weird,' says Paul, 'but we find it amazingly easy to recruit for this company.'

BOOK IT *Dehouche* (dehouche.com or 0871 284 7770) organises Rio's chicest breaks. Prices from £2,142 a person, including club-class BA flights and seven nights at the Copacabana Palace.

RESEARCH PICTURES: MICHAEL ROBERTS, SOLARPIX