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more than a thorough, palate-pleasing experience: The contemporary cuisine of chefs Jared Reardon and Sonia Arias (the acronym Jaso comes from their names) mixes perfectly with the well-appointed interior—sleek leather seats, clean wood tables, and fine silver and stemware. Ask for one of the sampling menus—3 to 12 courses—which will give you a taste of diverse flavors from French to Mexican cuisine, all made with the freshest ingredients. If you're looking for an especially intimate dining experience, reserve the elegant wine cellar table, with seating for up to six, surrounded by some 500 different labels of wine. *Mon–Sat 2pm–2am. \$\$\$* 📍 88 Newton (Presidente Masaryk), 55.5545.7476, jaso.com.mx

La Mansion • Juarez • Steak House

This upscale steak house is the Mexico City Marriott Reforma Hotel's specialty restaurant. Along with its fabulous location overlooking the Stock Exchange—ideal for business lunches—it offers an excellent private room for 12, wired with a presentation-ready plasma screen and projectors. Beyond specializing in steaks in all its forms (this is the place if you're looking for a porterhouse or a New York strip, and the beef broth is superlative), La Mansion is all about service. Here you can expect just about everything done at your table, from cocktails, to mixed salads, to steaks and flambéed desserts and coffees. It even offers bibs so you don't need to head to the dry cleaners after digging in. If the weather is right, reserve any of the five outside tables overlooking the action on Mexico's most important avenue. Otherwise, ask for table 25. *Daily 8am–2am. \$\$* 📍 Mexico City Marriott Reforma Hotel, Paseo de la Reforma 276 (Sierra de la Breaña), 55.1102.7030, x2143

Nemi • Polanco • Seafood (G)



Chef Michael Mina has it all: an exquisite gastronomic touch from his Hyde Park training, international awards and accolades (including two Michelin stars), and Andre Agassi's backing—and most recently he has acquired a prime Presidente Masaryk address, at the entrance of the exclusive Las Alcobas boutique hotel (opening February 2009). Nemi holds onto Mina's West Coast gourmet roots, offering fine seafood with impeccable service and a relaxed feel. First-timers will want to go straight to the tasting menu. Those who go à la carte won't want to miss his signature tuna tartare or shrimp fritters. The house specialty is trios, single ingredients in three delicious presentations. While the restaurant specializes in seafood, meat lovers will fall head-over-heels with his fillet of beef with foie gras Rossini. Those looking for the perfect pairing need only turn to the attentive Marcos Flores, Mexico's top-ranked sommelier, who manages Nemi's 300 labels. *Mon–Sat 1:30–5pm and 7–11:30pm, Sun 1:30–5pm. \$\$\$* 📍 Las Alcobas, Masaryk 390 (Anatole France), 55.3300.3950, michaelmina.net/nemi

Zhen Shanghai • Polanco • Chinese



The most casual restaurant in one of Mexico City's most established hotels, Zhen Shanghai opened as a welcome flavor for the brand, bringing new tastes from the East, yet with Intercontinental's quality of service. Start off with a specialty martini—lychee, made with a drop of cassis, is lovely. As the food suggests, Zhen is a place for gregarious eaters who like to try a little of a lot. It's common to ask the waiter to divvy up dishes at the table so everyone can have a taste of everything. House favorites include steamed dumpling appetizers,

Hot & Cool Mexico City Restaurants



Central Brasserie • Polanco • French Bistro

Central Brasserie fuses a New York City design concept with a traditional Parisian bistro menu. The result is casual, lively, and delicious. Excellent for wine lovers, the bistro offers a spectacular wall of bottles, offering a variety of some 150 labels from 14 countries. Standout dishes include the oh-so-rich lobster bisque, a succulent filet mignon Rossini, and the fresh-from-the-sea Plateau Royale. Busiest times are 3–5:30pm and 10–11:30pm. *Daily 1pm–2am (kitchen closes at midnight)*. \$\$\$\$   [Presidente Masaryk 123 \(Francisco Petrarca\)](#), 55.5545.5628



Brasserie Lipp • Polanco • French Brasserie



Brasserie Lipp is a name of legend, evoking images of the famous Lost Generation's bohemian gatherings in Paris. It recently opened its first-ever franchise at the front doors of the JW Marriott Hotel in the prestigious Polanco hotel district to great acclaim. The Lipp offers a good selection of French classics, such as onion soup, steak frites, and Dover sole meunière. On Sundays many diners come for the popular veal fricandeau. No matter what your entrée, the chocolate soufflé with English cream and apple tart will transport you to the old continent. The formal atmosphere at Mexico City's Lipp is more inviting to the business traveler and politico than the bohemian. *Daily 7am–3am*. \$\$   [JW Marriott, Andrés Bello 29 \(Campos Elíseos\)](#), 55.5281.3434, [lipp.com.mx](#)

Gulie • Condesa • International



This wonderful chef-owned restaurant offers the best of Condesa: fantastic food, laid-back elegance, attention to detail, and a passionate and attentive staff. Situated in a spectacularly renovated California Colonial-style building, the restaurant presents a variety of seating options, including an airy deck, a foyer, a communal dining table in the open hall, and a must-see wine cellar. There is also a friendly bar, perfect for chatting up the locals. Chef del Piero's meticulous slow cooking brings out the subtleties of the foods. Expect understated sauces and simple, graceful presentations. Try the smoked pear salad, oyster mushroom entrée, apple-infused salmon, and gorgonzola ravioli. At meal's end, adjourn to the nicely appointed leather-seated lounge for dessert and digestifs. *Daily 2pm–2am*. \$\$   [Tamulipas 45 \(Juan Escutia\)](#), 55.5256.3534

Miralta • Historic Center • Mexican



Miralta (also known as Piso 41) is the second-highest restaurant/bar in the city after Bellini's in the World Trade Center. However, its view is arguably the best, offering a vertigo-inducing perspective of the Historic Center—from Bellas Artes to the Zócalo—from the 41st floor of the famous Torre Latinoamericana. Relatively quiet at night, the 60-seat bar is a perfect place for a romantic getaway (reserve the ultimate booth for two, number 65), ideal anytime from sunset to the wee hours. The 56-seat restaurant gets busy at lunch during the work week with the downtown white-collar crowd. Don't miss a trip to the bathroom, which has unforgettable stalls with floor-to-ceiling glass-window sides. Menus are also in English. *Mon 1:30–6pm, Tue–Sat 1:30pm–2am, Sun 1:30–9pm*. \$\$   [Madero 1 \(Eje Central and Francisco I. Madero\)](#), 55.5518.1710, [miralto.com.mx](#)

includes entrance to the Amapola's lively 160-seat terrace, complete with boleros and rock bands playing more-modern tunes. *Wed–Sat 9pm–3am*.   [Insurgentes Sur 953 \(Eje 6 Sur\)](#), 55.5523.3936, [amapolacabaret.com](#)

EI Encrucijada • Condesa • Wine Bar

This casual bar has become an oasis for wine lovers in service-oriented Condesa. The intimate setting comes with 40 different kinds of wine from around the world, with uncommon vintages from places such as Lebanon, Israel, and Hungary. The food service is simple; the spread doesn't go much beyond cheeses and cold cuts. Music lovers looking for a change from lounge and electronica will be pleased with the eclectic selection of funk, soul, and jazz, with the latter live on Wednesdays 8–10pm. Offering a better option than a jukebox, the owners will also hook up guests' iPods to the sound system, so you'll really feel at home. *Tue–Wed 6pm–midnight, Thu 6pm–1am, Fri–Sat 6pm–2am, Sun 6pm–midnight*.   [Atlixco 168 \(Alfonso Reyes\)](#), 55.5256.3162

Mojito Room • Condesa • Bar/Performance

You just can't miss with a *mojito*-themed bar in the Condesa. This club offers some of the city's hottest Cuban bands playing live tunes Thursday–Saturday in an open area made for dancing. Of course, the drink of choice is rum: Bartenders mix more than a dozen kinds of *mojitos*, along with the usual suspects such as Cuba libres. Given the place's booming live music and size, forget the small talk and bring your dancing shoes. *Wed–Sat 7pm–3am*.   [Nuevo León 81 \(Fernando Montes de Oca\)](#), 55.5286.6316, [mojitoroom.com](#)

Classic Mexico City Hotels

Mexico City Marriott Reforma Hotel • Juarez • Modern (322 rms)

The 322-room Mexico City Marriott Reforma Hotel offers just about everything a business traveler could ask for. Beyond its excellent location, it has top-of-the-line business amenities including a first-rate business center, a flashy lobby lounge (complete with an open bar on one side and a quiet meeting space, with an LCD screen for presentations, on the other), an impressive auditorium, and numerous conference rooms of all sizes. For those who want to kick back on their visit, it also has two restaurants, a spa, a rooftop pool and gym with all the bells and whistles, and a rooftop lounge ideal for whiling away the hours. Of course, with the Marriott brand, you can expect top-notch service and comfortable and quiet rooms, complete with iPod-ready plasma screens and sound systems. \$\$\$ [Mexico City Marriott Reforma Hotel, Paseo de la Reforma 276 \(Sierra de la Breaña\)](#), 55.1102.7030, [marriott.com](#)

Classic Mexico City Restaurants

Jaso • Polanco • French (G)

This chef-owned and operated gourmet restaurant has become a word-of-mouth hit for Mexico City's in-the-know crowd—so much so that the restaurant doesn't need to advertise or even post its name on the façade. (If you're having trouble locating it, it's hidden behind the big tree on Newton.) It offers much

Primos • Condesa • French-Spanish

Just off the tourist map, this street-side bistro on the busy corner of Michoacán and Mazatlán serves up simple, straightforward French and Spanish cuisine using high-quality ingredients. The restaurant's popularity has grown among DFeños in large part due to its good food and laid-back, authentically local feel. In fact, the place has become so popular that the neighbors recently had it closed due to the increased noise. It has reopened, and you can expect the same great flavor, feel, and fun, but with a slightly toned-down noise level. Reservations are recommended. *Mon–Sat 1pm–midnight, Sun 12:30–6:30pm.* \$\$\$ = Michoacán 168 (Mazatlán), 55.5256.0950

Segundo Muelle • Polanco • Peruvian

A seafood lover's destination, Segundo Muelle, which means "second pier" in English, is the creation of Peruvian chef Daniel Manrique. This two-floor, two-cellar, 195-seat restaurant has taken over the site of a beautifully restored California Colonial building. It's just steps away from Polanco's hotel district, and offers the city's best fresh seafood, including Manrique's award-winning *cebiches* (*ceviches* in Mexican Spanish): seafood cooked in lemon juice and bathed in a mild *ahí* chile sauce. The best seats are on the first-floor covered deck. *Mon 1–5:30pm, Tue–Sun 1–5:30pm and 7–11:30pm.* \$\$\$ = Alejandro Dumas 16 (Campos Elíseos), 55.5281.4338, [segundomuelle.com](#)

Hot & Cool Mexico City Nightlife

Blow Night • Condesa • Lounge

This two-floor, 550-person antro is the youngest of just-opened bars that are turning Nuevo León into the hottest party spot in the city. The laid-back ambience aims for the more youthful side of the scene, with most patrons on the lower end of the 20- to 40-year-old mix. Live DJs spin electronica and lounge, as well as reggaeton and hip-hop, for the university crowd. Thursdays are dedicated to electronic music. Expect impressive lighting, with lasers, LEDs, and fiber optics employed throughout. *Thu 9pm–3am, Fri 2pm–3am, Sat 9pm–3am.* = Nuevo León 92 (Michoacán), 55.3541.7565

Icebar • Condesa • Lounge

Putting the cold back into cool, Condesa's Icebar offers a spectacular scene for Mexico's club-hopping crowd. The highlight is its giant, blue-lit 10° Fahrenheit room, complete with Inuit-style furniture. It has an open bar, sofas, and love seats all made of ice, and tequila-based cocktails served in ice glasses (a free coat checkout provides polar jackets and gloves). The warm half of the bar is darkly lit and offers stylin' low-to-the-ground sitting areas, a pair of very social communal tables ripping with action, and live DJs spinning electronica and lounge. As for food, expect the best: The Gulie restaurant prepares Icebar's menu. *Wed–Sat 6pm–2am.* ☑ = Nuevo León 73 (Fernando Montes de Oca), 55.5553.0438

Hip Mexico City Hotels

Hippodrome Hotel • Condesa • Trendy (16 rms)

One of the city's newest luxury hotels, the Hippodrome (or Hip for short) offers an ideal and discreet location for those looking to get a local's feel in Mexico City's hippest neighborhood. Housed in the historic Edificio Tehuacán Art Deco building at the heart of Condesa, the Hippodrome has 16 modern earth-tone rooms, along with a popular bistro downstairs (see Hip Kitchen below). Expect all the amenities, including LCD TVs, marble bathrooms, and designer sheets. Its unassuming, tree-covered façade (there's no sign other than a floor mat), and its location on the circular and confusing-as-heck Avenida México, mean you'll have to be patient and meticulous to find this hidden gem, but that's the point. \$\$\$ Av. México 188 (Av. Sonora), 55.5212.2110, [thehippodromehotel.com](#)

Hip Mexico City Restaurants

Ch! • Polanco • Argentinean

Ch! brings casual, Palermo-style Argentinean dining to the stuffier side of town. The two-story brick restaurant seats 135 in a cozy, familial atmosphere. Most popular are its street-side seats. The full gamut of Argentinean foods—pastas, pizzas, grilled steaks, and salads—is served here, and the homemade spinach-and-walnut-stuffed cannelloni (with Ch!'s special Rossini sauce) is the house favorite. The large portions are meant for sharing. There's not much in the way of atmosphere, but Ch!'s easygoing demeanor is a reminder that less can be more. *Daily 8am–12:30am.* \$\$\$ ☑ = Euler 145 (Horacio), 55.5545.7904

Hip Kitchen • Condesa • Mexican

No doubt the owners of the Hippodrome Hotel picked the right name for their funky little restaurant/bar. The narrow but bustling 40-seat dining room serves up Asian-influenced Mexican favorites. Highly recommended plates include the *huitlacoche* (corn fungus) risotto, the spicy tuna entrée, and the bean soup with *jocoque* cream. If you're having trouble choosing, pick from the "small dishes" sampler menu. The private dining room for 10 or fewer has a pleasant (if small) garden view. The bar specializes in apple, cucumber, and *maracuya* martinis. *Mon–Wed 7–11am and noon–11:30pm, Thu–Sat 7–11am and noon–12:30am, Sun 10am–5pm.* \$\$\$ = Hippodrome Hotel, Av. México 188 (Av. Sonora), 55.5212.2110, [thehippodromehotel.com](#)

Hip Mexico City Nightlife

Amapola • Nápoles • Theme Bar

What's old is new again at Amapola's decadent cabaret-style bar. Bar-goers are in for a red-carpeted treat, with feathers and legs flashing and a live orchestra playing sounds from the Big Band Era, such as swing, cha-cha, and jazz; the cabaret show starts at 1:30am on Fridays and Saturdays. No surprise—in this 450-seat retro bar, martinis are the cocktail of choice, with the house favorite being a ginger-based cocktail mixed with orange liqueur. The cover charge also