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Top spots for design lovers

These venues, from hip hotels to a 'Bond villain's lair', offer more than good looks

2 — Playa Vik and Bahia Vik, Uruguay



The once sleepy fishing village of José Ignacio has been Latin America's epicentre of cool for several years now, thanks largely to the efforts of financier and art collector Alexander Vik, whose trio of hip hotels has become the destination of choice for the A-list crowd. His two architecturally avant-garde beach properties, Playa Vik and Bahia Vik, were personally recommended by no fewer than five members of our panel.

"The central building of Playa Vik is aptly nicknamed 'The Sculpture' for its gravity-defying structure comprising titanium and floor-to-ceiling glass that captures José Ignacio's magnificent coastline," says Tom Marchant of Black Tomato.

Meanwhile Frances Geoghegan of Cleveland Collection praises sister property Bahia Vik, which opened three years ago: "Not only is the wild rugged beach a knockout, the property is spectacular — lots of glass and wood to bring the outside in, and all rooms are individually designed."

Playa Vik (pictured above) doubles from \$600; Bahia Vik doubles from \$550;
vikretreats.com