

The Presidential Suite

TOP-OF-THE-LINE DESIGN FROM THE CITY'S POSHEST ROOMS



Above: The Hotel Havana's Penthouse Suite features reupholstered furniture in velvet and leather, set on a Persian rug. Below: The Hotel Valencia's Presidential Suite used rich tones and textiles to create a modern haven.



Exquisitely designed for the most luxurious stays, the city's presidential suites have been a home away from home for special guests, from celebrities to presidents. Recreate the look and feel with key pieces from two top rooms.

HOTEL HAVANA

The Presidential or Penthouse Suite atop the historic Hotel Havana is a collection of hotelier and designer Liz Lambert's favorite things and unexpected touches that define the Havana today. Originally opened in 1914, the property was reborn under Lambert's Bunkhouse Management in April 2010 and included an interior redesign and rebranding. The split-level penthouse features a blend of antiques and vintage elements, dating from the mid-1800s through the 1960s, set against architectural details like the ornate peacock blue Art Nouveau railings and original dark plank wood floors.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- ▶ Lush textiles and coverings: White leather club chair, crushed velvet couch
- ▶ Pop art accessories: Art Deco Persian rug, a pastel-colored SMEG refrigerator
- ▶ Clever repurposing: Antique electrified candelabra, bright reupholstered wingchair

HOTEL VALENCIA

The Valencia's most posh suite features a villa-style balcony that overlooks the River Walk, where guests can survey the scenery from aloft. Inside, the two-room suite, by Andres Andujar of Parsons in San Antonio, has all the perks: a banquet-sized dining table set against a wall of French doors that open to a private patio; a 42-inch plasma television with surround sound, inside the spacious living room, furnished with plush sectionals; an oversized bathroom with garden tub and a king-sized bed with down comforter.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- ▶ Dark wood accents: Neutral walls and woods (in furniture and window coverings) and deep tones like mahogany or coffee
- ▶ Faux fur: A quality luxurious faux-fur throw for the living room or bed
- ▶ Natural light: Windows and doors welcome light, and complimentary coverings, such as plantation shutters and drapery, can be adjusted

GRAND HYATT

The vibe is Latin chic—that is, cool and forward-thinking yet rooted in shades of San Antonio and South Texas. Take the 3-year-old Grand Hyatt's Bar Rojo and its colorful margaritas, drinks so potent some promise they will "put hair on your chest." Or consider the Achiote River Café and its applauded Pan-Latin menu. Either is a vibrant sample of the hotel's hitting just the right tone for visitors to the saucy end of the River Walk. The tower reconfigures the skyline and is a reminder that despite SA's small-town feel, it's an urban powerhouse and one of the biggest cities in the United States. Atop the soaring hotel, a lap pool provides riveting cityscape views. It offers hypo-allergenic rooms called Respire, a fitness concierge who will encourage you through a workout, and what seems like blocks of adjustable convention space. And yes, the Grand Hyatt is green. Its organic rooftop garden, aggressive recycling program, high-energy efficient appliances and low-flow showerheads and appliances have earned it four Green Keys awards from the Green Key Eco-Rating Program—a remarkable accomplishment for such a large hotel. **Online:** grandsanantonio.hyatt.com 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

HYATT REGENCY RESORT AND SPA

Surrounded by a virtual forest of live oak trees, the resort, with its classic Hill Country architecture, blends effortlessly with the pastoral environs. The limestone structure, wood-trimmed porches and metal roof set a rustic mood. Inside, quilts, hand-carved maple beds, stencilled walls and ironwork combine to create a homespun Old West fantasy. The casual elegance combines to make guests feel relaxed and comfortable, like they have escaped to an exotic location, where swimming in a four-acre water park (three pools and a 95-foot Ramblin' River), bellying up to the Windflower Spa for some rural-themed R & R and golfing on lushly landscaped 27-hole Arthur Hills—designed greens are par for the course. **Online:** hillcountry.hyatt.com 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷



WESTIN LA CANTERA

The Westin La Cantera marked its 10-year anniversary with a \$12 million property renovation that made the San Antonio institution and recreation-lover's playground classier than ever. Perched at a high point, on lush grounds, the popular golf spot is the lone resort in South Texas to offer 36 holes. Treat yourself to one of the villa-style guest rooms in the exclusive Casita Village portion of the resort. Later, change into sneakers for a hike along the La Cantera nature trail. When it's hot, dive into any of five lagoon pools. Towel off and shuttle to the nearby Shops at La Cantera to explore Nordstrom, Neiman Marcus, Tiffany & Co. and other top shops. Don't miss the view from Francesca's at Sunset at dinner, where farm-to-table fans swoon over cuisine with a Southwestern flair and the promise that 80 percent of ingredients (from beef to game and wine) come from area ranchers, farmers and vintners. And the sunset? That's pure Hill Country, too. **Online:** westinlacantera.com 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

HOTEL HAVANA

Start in the basement of the Hotel Havana and work your way up to the Penthouse, if you want the complete experience. Underneath the boutique hotel is its historic bar—candlelit, vintage-furnished and fully stocked with enough rum to keep the mojitos flowing all night. Hop on the patent leather-lined elevator to the lobby level, where a stretch red-velvet couch looks out on picture windows and a Southern-style veranda. The renovated property is transformed from a historic inn, a B&B and a onetime boarding house to an eclectic, elegant hotel on the River Walk. The reinvention is the work of hotelier Liz Lambert, who reopened the Havana in April 2010. One of the most popular stays in the city, the hotel features 27 rooms on three levels and distinctive amenities. A breakfast basket, filled with Mexican sweet bread and Cuban coffee is delivered to your room daily. Red Flower bath amenities are nostalgic. An honor bar basket placed atop every imported Italian-made SMEG refrigerator features treats from Texas, Mexico and Cuba—the influences found throughout the grounds. And a handmade sock monkey in every basket fits snugly between gum, nuts, sweets and Catholic saint cards. Pray that you can stay just one more night. **Online:** havasananantonio.com 🍷🍷🍷



HOTEL VALENCIA RIVERWALK

If the alcove in the lobby and the red carpet leading to the double staircase doesn't do it for you, the vibe upstairs will. It could be argued that the second-floor bar and restaurant put the Valencia on the map—something special amid a string of luxury hotels along the River Walk. Vbar is a regular on city "Best of" lists, for its sleek, intimate atmosphere and upscale crowd. Citrus Restaurant, featuring Chef Jeffrey Balfour, offers a menu of innovative and seasonal choices, served in a dining room where local art micro-exhibits complement the minimalist design. Rooms at the Valencia leave no luxury unexplored, from plush beds and every modern amenity, to spacious suites and gorgeous balcony views. The real stunner is the Valencia's courtyard, a space that is evocative of Spanish architecture, with a wow factor. A two-story waterfall, with a firepit at its center and elegant arches carved out of stucco walls makes the garden plaza a favorite for weddings and events. **Online:** hotelvalencia-riverwalk.com 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷