



government now home to the Academy of Sciences. Or save and stay in a B&B, a *casa particular* – private homes with interior courtyards, rooftop terraces and rooms with en suites. The '30s mansion La Rosa de Ortega, with its white linen, handmade furniture and designer exposed brick, is in a quiet street on Havana's second highest hill.

Casa Pedro Maria is a small colonial house in Chacon, a street opposite the Museum of the Revolution, with its 24-hour guard, and the Museum of the Arts, where jazz bands play on weekends. Featuring abstract art placed just so, it belongs to a sibling of the Cuban ballet icon Carlos Acosta and is but a grand jeté (or a couple of salsa turns) away from a new restaurant, Al Carbón, making waves for its traditional Cuban dishes cooked over charcoal.

You could, if you find a public Wi-Fi spot that works, download AlaMesa, an app that

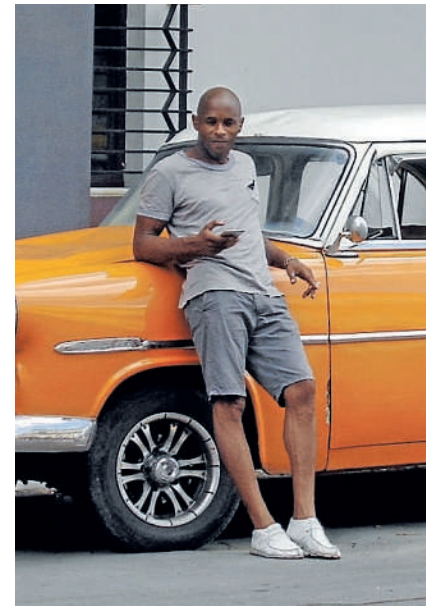
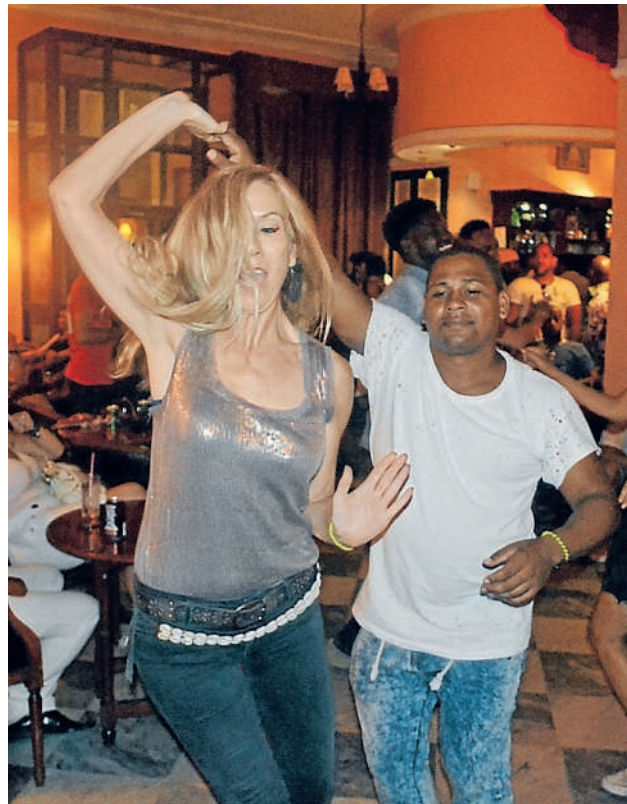
lists the best new eateries in town. Things often don't work in Cuba. Buses don't arrive. Bookings don't materialise. There are sporadic shortages of beer, milk powder, agua con gas. The electricity can go off just like that, plunging streets into darkness. All that cracked modernity will stay cracked for some time.

Best, then, to be flexible and patient. To take your cue from Cubans, who, as Ribchester states, "have this warmth, humanity and real ability to make the most of what they have and live in the moment".

Which means dancing and partying and being comfortable in their skin.

Cuban models next time, Mr Lagerfeld, please. **L&L**

*Jane Cornwell is the author of The Whirl: Men, Music & Misadventures, HarperCollins Australia, 2015*



From left: learning the steps; Jane Cornwell and dance partner at the Hotel Florida; and vintage transport. PHOTO: RUTH ESTEVEZ

### Need to know

**Summer in Havana (August)** seven nights Afro-Cuban Intensive; 11 nights Legendary Classic; 21 night Deluxe Immersion, with a three-day break.

**New Year** 11 and 15 nights New Year Celebratory trip. Champagne gala dinner and

New Year's Eve at one of the world's most glamorous salsa clubs.

**Easter/spring** 11-night Dance & Party

**Includes** 21 professional dancers, 15 to 30 hours of dance tuition at five levels,

40 hours accompanied dancing in the clubs, accommodation, flights, transfers, religious and cultural events plus an off-the-tourist-track program.

**Contact** Tel +44 7767 313168 or go to [key2cuba.com](http://key2cuba.com) and [captivatingcuba.com](http://captivatingcuba.com)



### Where to stay

**Hotel Saratoga**  
The most luxe establishment in town. Rates from \$US294 to \$US714

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