

10 Maputo Mozambique

Preface: Among its vestiges of colonialism and temples to socialism, Maputo lays claim to some remarkable heritage structures. However, as new glass-and-cement blocks rise up it is vital that these historic buildings are protected.

Maputo is a city of colonial relics. Much of its imperial heritage is modern, béton brut, angular and high-rise, and defined by Lisbon's Estado Novo regime during the Portuguese colonial period. The blueprint for the city was drawn up by military planner Major António José Araújo in 1887 but by the 1930s it had become a testbed for progressive architects.

Portuguese-born Amancio "Pancho" Guedes - a polymath inspired by the likes of Antoni Gaudí, Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright - played an essential role in shaping the city. A walk around the Sommerchield and Polana districts reveals his innovative designs: curious residential houses with ramps rather than stairs, tower blocks with indoor gardens, cantilevered staircases, artwork and sculpture. While most of Guedes' striking concrete structures are occupied some are falling into disrepair, including one of his finest: the Smiling Lion building.

Many of Maputo's buildings are in poor shape but it's a wonder that so much of its architecture has survived at all, having endured nearly 200 years of war. When Mozambique gained independence in 1975 the city's property was nationalised by the new communist government, prompting Guedes and over 200,000 Portuguese to flee.

The regime change ushered in a new era of architecture in the city: instead of Guedes' idiosyncratic private homes, severe, iconic temples to socialism emerged. José Forjaz, a Portuguese migrant who trained under Guedes, became the premier architect for the Liberation Front of Mozambigue. One of his first jobs was a pantheon to the heroes of the revolution: a starshaped monument that remains on a roundabout near the airport. Today Forjaz's concrete forms are a potent influence in the city, including government offices and university faculties.

Modern Maputo is on the cusp of a property boom, threatening its heritage. But like Forjaz's incredible white concrete Epsilon building, some of the city's new infrastructure continues Maputo's cosmopolitan architectural tradition; the progressive, poetic use of concrete still holds firm. — (M)

Why we'd live here: Maputo's streets encapsulate the capital's history: from the modernist designs of Portuguese architect Pancho Guedes to José Forjaz's socialist landmarks.



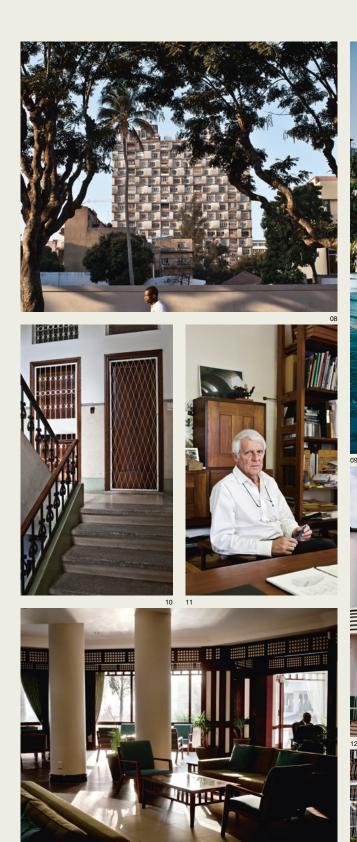


















ΟI Fashion designer Maria Elisa Chim 02 Art deco offices 03 Art deco housing 04 Fion de Vletler's house, designed by José Forjaz 05 Fover of Club Ferroviario de Maputo 06 Radio Mozambique clock tower 07 1960s bar 08 1970s apartments 09 Art deco

swimming pool

10 Staircase in a 1950s apartment block ΤT José Forjaz at his desk 12 Entrance to Ferroviário de Maputo, a sports club 13 Fover at Hotel Cardoso 14 Home built in the 1940s