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## 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 Sommerchild 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 Mozambique. One of his first jobs was a pantheon to the heroes of the revolution: a star-shaped 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.



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01 Fashion designer Maria Elisa Chim  
02 Art deco offices  
03 Art deco housing  
04 Fion de Vletler's house, designed by José Forjaz  
05 Foyer of Club Ferroviário 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  
11 José Forjaz at his desk  
12 Entrance to Ferroviário de Maputo, a sports club  
13 Foyer at Hotel Cardoso  
14 Home built in the 1940s