

The Faena Experience

Carole Edrich visits the Faena Tango Salon in Buenos Aires

I walk through a discreet entrance guarded by two immaculate bouncers and into a tunnel of a hall. Along its centre, long benches lined with plush black velvet are punctuated with shiny, deep red resin-covered bowls. Through half-open doors I catch glimpses of exclusive shops, softly lit bars and lavishly appointed restaurants. I'm tantalised by snatches of conversation, moody jazz and the smell of clean, fresh lemons.



The gorgeous maitre d' shows me to a small, round table by the piano. Laid for one, there's a single white candle burning in a glass of crimson and an elegant straight-backed chair upholstered with blood-red velvet. The stunning sommelier (they're all incredibly good looking here) offers a choice of Argentina's best wine or champagne, and a waiter pours my water.

The Faena Tango Salon is intimate and well designed. While 120 people can dine here in comfort, it feels as if there are less than 60. With Piazzolla playing softly in the background, this exclusive room could have been plucked from a gothic novel or *fin de siecle* romance. There's a no-photography policy and guests are notably different to other audiences I've seen in Buenos Aires. They're neither overdressed nor flash and appear sufficiently self-confident to dress casually and talk softly. As the only single

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