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Inside Miami's New SLS Brickell



Courtesy SLS Brickell

Inside Chef José Andrés's Bazaar Mar, which serves up seasonal seafood dishes with a Caribbean flair.

This isn't your typical boutique hotel.

You'll notice two things the moment you set foot in the lobby of the brand new [SLS Brickell](#), which opened its doors two weeks ago. One, the hotel is understatedly stylish. With its slick Philippe Starck design and bright pops of color, it feels subtly cool rather than painfully hip. Two, there is the distinct feeling that your every move is being followed as you walk across the sleek, expansive lobby to the reception desk. And indeed, it is: when you turn around after checking in, a group of monkeys stand huddled together, watching you intently from the corner.

They're not real monkeys, of course: they're part of a digital, interactive art installation conceptualized by Starck himself. Upon arrival, the animated creatures begin to mirror your every move—strike a pose, and you'll find that they will too. It's a bizarrely fun and weirdly personal exchange that makes you feel as if you're leaving your own individual mark on the hotel itself. And unlike other hotel art installations specifically created for [Art Basel](#) this week, the piece is a permanent part of the hotel. It's just one of the many innovative ways that the SLS Brickell is working to distinguish itself from other high-design luxury boutique hotels in Miami—including its own sister hotel, the [SLS Hotel South Beach](#).

The rooms, for example, eschew the bright color palettes and edgy design of its South Beach counterparts for clean lines and subdued hues of pale pink and grey. All 124 rooms were designed by Starck himself (prices begin at \$319 per night for a standard, and \$519 for a suite) and are accented with small works of art, like line drawings reminiscent of Picasso and Matisse on the carpet and pillows. In some suites, large black-and-white photographs rest casually against the wall, the way you might leave a piece of art at home when you're unsure of where to hang it. Around the hotel at large, everything feels slightly off-kilter: furniture is left purposely unfinished, the stripes on the wallpaper are slightly crooked. And therein lies the hotel's appeal: it's so very stylish, precisely because it's not trying too hard to be.



Courtesy SLS Brickell

A room at the Philippe Starck-designed SLS Brickell.

It helps, also, that the hotel is not on rowdy South Beach, but in the up-and-coming [Brickell neighborhood](#). Though Brickell is just a quick 20-minute Uber ride from the South Beach scene, it feels like an entirely different world: it's sleepier, yes, but still vibrant, with a burgeoning restaurant scene, low-key bars, and first class museums like the contemporary Pérez Art Museum. According to Starck, it's exactly the kind of place you would stay for events like Basel. "Staying in Brickell is like being seated on a volcano of art and humanity," Starck tells *Conde Nast Traveler*. "Miami is this boiling bucket of creative energy—and the neighborhood of Brickell is right at the very center of it."

Other hotel highlights include a rooftop deck with an infinity pool and views over downtown Miami, and a luxurious Ciel Spa, the signature spa of all [SBE](#) hotel properties. But the hotel's pièce de résistance would have to be Bazaar Mar, a new restaurant helmed by James Beard Award-winning Chef José Andrés. The eclectic restaurant serves up seasonal seafood dishes with a Caribbean flair: think lobster *asopao* (Puerto Rican seafood stew) and *gambas al ajillo* (Key West shrimp sautéed in garlic, tomatoes, and spices).

Altogether, it's a strong combination that has been designed to leave an imprint—but on you, not just the city. "Everything you feel, hear, eat, and see at the SLS Brickell will hopefully leave you feeling full of energy and creativity," says Starck. "I want people to come home with revolutionary ideas, ready to build the next world."