

HalogenLife On Location In Rio For Olympics Announcement

BY SHIRA LEVINE, MONDAY OCT. 05, 2009

TRAVEL, RIO DE JANEIRO, OLYMPICS

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The samba drumming that woke me up Friday morning wasn't exactly abnormal for Rio de Janeiro. In this case, though, the good vibrations were coming from scads of revelers worked it in anticipation of the coming announcement that Rio would be the host country for the 2016 Summer Olympics. Of course, Cariocas (citizens of Rio) already have a famed reputation for partying hard and well way, way, way into the night. And anyway the workday was forgotten; everyone had taken off to shake their god-given assets in the name of an enormous Jesus Christ statue towering over the city from Corcovado Mountain.

Put it this way, it's an understatement to say it was and is a seriously big *freaking* deal to everyone and their sexy mother (it's Brazil; everyone's sexy here). Anyone with even a drop of Brazilian blood — and surrogate Cariocas — stormed Copacabana beach. Samba and techno music, paired with a steady roar from thousands of gyrating Brazilians, will push anyone to go beyond voyeur, into the thick of gyrating, glistening bodies. It was historic, intoxicating, unforgettable.



The demonstrated joy within the "Marvelous City" transcends age and class. From toddlers to teenagers, to 30-something white collar financial types, blue collar taxi drivers and cleaning ladies, all were taken by the sweet smell of victory and the samba's spell. No matter if you're that fleetingly good-looking Victoria's Secret model-type, or, the hoi polloi with an some extra junk in the trunk, you're a sexy beast when the rhythm washes over you.

(Note: There may be a treatment for hair removal named after this lively country, but I spotted follicular activity hither and thither.)

It's impossible not to notice that more than several people sported the nearly naked look — visually assaulting or not. Swatches of green and yellow — the nation's trendy flag

colors wrapped the city in a mantle of good spirits. "Rio Loves You" signs littered the city. I was one of the thousands on Copacabana Beach (which conveniently was just across the street from my lavish Copacabana Palace hotel balcony) who devoted the day to dancing, hugging and screaming. The crowd went wild when the "Fauxbamas" — a Barack impersonator carrying a cardboard Michelle and some secret service-costumed fellows came through the crowd to pose for pictures. (A tongue in cheek, thumb to the nose at Chicagoans, perhaps?) An MMA fighter named Minotauro Nogueira, gymnast Daniele Hypolito, a Santa Claus and an impersonator of the late comedian Zacarias were also game for photo opps.

The celebration never waned. First was the hoping for the vote celebration which consisted of dancing to the ceaseless samba band Revelacao, jumping around in anticipation with all of our fingers crossed, and kicking back Skol's and water (which were plentiful and free). We all had our hopes up. An eight-year-old boy reassuringly gave me an encouraging thumbs-up. Second, we rejoiced. There was screaming, crying, hugging and dancing at Rio's win. A sweet man with Down's Syndrome blew over a kiss. The "we already knew," signs waved above. Fauxbama went nuts. He crowd surfed while embracing cardboard Michelle and punched his fist into the air. Yes, we can! became *Sim, podemos!*



After four attempts, Rio secured the host country slot. To be the first South American city recognized with the honor was felt deeply and it was electric. Brazilians sports fanatics triumphed. Between the 2014 World Cup and now the Olympics the entire world may end up owning a pair of Havaianas before the Olympic torch is lit.



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