

→ day, the agency **La Heroica** will hand you the key to one of these atmospheric old gems — some of them complete with Spanish-tiled pools, lushly planted stone courtyards and a small army of attendants.

**DINNER AND DRINKS** In the late afternoon, those in the know head to **Café del Mar**, a funky open-air bar spread out atop the old 40-foot city walls, where, with a mojito to keep you company, you can watch the sun sink into the harbor. Then on to the contemporary Colombian offerings at **El Santísimo**, like *chango* (red snapper stewed in coconut milk, cilantro and lime) or octopus filet in red curry sauce. **La Vitrola** favors Old World style, with black-and-white photos and high ceiling fans that hark back to Hemingway's Havana. Dine there on squid carpaccio, ceviche and curried prawns. Reservations are a must.

Late in the evening, the trend-

conscious and free-spending head to **BaBar**, the “it” lounge and dance club featuring top DJs. But the sidewalk cafés and nightspots around Plaza de San Diego and Plaza de Santo Domingo are far dreamier.

**EXURBAN ESCAPES** Day trips to nearby islands and sheltered beaches within a speedboat ride of the city make for easy sun worship. In 40 minutes you can ferry over to **Playa Blanca** on Isla de Barú, where tables-in-the-sand restaurants serve lobster, crab, oysters and whatever else the resident fishermen have pulled out of transparent Caribbean waters.

A few miles further southwest lie the Rosario Islands, a string of coral-fronted outposts that form the Corales del Rosario National Park. Hop on one of **Las Tortugas Dive School's** full-day dive or snorkel tours, which depart from Cartagena every day.

— Nicholas Gill



**INSPIRED SETTING** Although set in an unnamed city, for many Colombians last year's film version of Gabriel García Márquez's 1988 novel *Love in the Time of Cholera* could not have been shot anywhere but Cartagena. Filmmakers used 83 locations, many of them standard stops on the **PASEOS EN COCHE** tour. Guides on the 20- to-60-minute, horse-drawn carriage tours of the historic center — some of which include a singer and wine — are quick to point out the writer's sometime home at the corner of Calle del Curato near the Convent of Santa Clara (which is now a Sofitel). *Of Love and Other Demons*, based on another García-Márquez novel, began filming in Cartagena in the spring. — N.G.



LOCAL TALENT

**NATURE'S BOUNTY**

Resplendent in a towering headwrap and her own stunning creation — a choker crafted of donkey's-eye and carved bamboo — Trinidad artisan **AKILAH JARAMOGI** is a walking advertisement for her bold designs. “I started making jewelry with anything I could put my hands on,” says the artist, who finds inspiration in the textures and colors of natural materials. A zealous environmentalist, Jaramogi takes shells, bone, pods and seeds (often reaped from trees she has planted), polishes them and fashions one-of-a-kind pieces that make a statement. Her earrings are priced from \$10, chokers from \$25 and necklaces from \$50; sold at Kapok Hotel and Hotel Normandi in Port of Spain. 868-689-7794 or 791-8860; [facrp.org/akilahs\\_jewelry.htm](http://facrp.org/akilahs_jewelry.htm) — Joan Tapper



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: STEVE SIMONSEN (2); ALEX SEGRE/ALAMY