

So far, so good

In 2000, two London friends were fed up with going to music gigs only to be surrounded by attendees who spent the entire show staring at their phones. They invited three bands to play in their living room and the evening was such a roaring success it sparked the global movement Solar Sounds (www.solarsounds.com), which aims to reinvigorate the live music scene through secret gigs held in living rooms. Over 178 cities – including seven in Argentina – participate, and demand for tickets in Buenos Aires is so high the Argentinians capital now hosts two shows per month. But though the shows are free, getting into a Solar event isn't so easy. Register on Solar's website, choose a date and cross your fingers you'll be one of the 50 or 60 people randomly selected to attend. Guests have no idea which three bands they'll be seeing (recent emerging local artists, though both the Magic Numbers and Dantilla have played in Buenos Aires) and receive the top-secret location just a few days before the event. Once the music starts, the rules are strict: everyone has to stay until the end, and must keep their mouths shut and their phones off. The result is a surprisingly enjoyable and intimate experience.

New in town

The Brick Hotel

What was once classic hotel Caesar Park has reemerged as a fresh, modern establishment, complete with a stunning foyer featuring works by a changing roster of artists, top-notch restaurant The Brick Kitchen and oodles of style. With 175 rooms, it would be easy to scrimp on the details, but The Brick's excellent facilities and friendly staff ensure you have everything you need for a comfortable, luxurious stay. While you might be tempted to spend all day relaxing in the spa after filling up on one of BA's better hotel breakfasts, don't forget that as well as being opposite fancy shopping centre Patio Bullrich (see p98), you're also in close proximity to some of the city's best sights. Posadas 1232, y Libertad (4819 1100/www.accorhotels.com). Bus 60, 75, 92. Rates \$\$ double. Credit AmEx, MC, V. Map E5.

Mastering the arts

CREATE YOUR OWN SOUVENIRS
AT THESE ARTY COURSES

Jewellery making at Julia

Alvarez y Catalina Semilla
At this charming showroom and workshop, you'll learn basic jewellery making techniques before starting your own project. Ask about one-day courses. AR\$600 per month. See p109.

Bookbinding at Oficina de Arte Argentino

Choose from a range of techniques to bind your own notebook at this half-day class. Other courses include tapestry and stamp making. AR\$350. Local 40, Galeria Patio del Liceo.

Embroidery at Espacio Fauna

Sign up for this four-hour workshop, and come away having mastered the ten basic stitches you'll need to embroider your own creations. The space also offers classes in origami and crochet. AR\$350. Address provided at time of booking. Almagro (espacofauna@gmail.com).

Screen printing at La Calor

Create your own designs and print them onto fabric and T-shirts at this four-and-a-half-hour course on the art of serigrafía (screen printing). AR\$400. Galeria Patio del Liceo.



Recommended

The Steve

For its central Palermo location, The Steve has achieved the unthinkable. It's trendy yet welcoming, has a range of affordable, delicious drinks and – aside from the imposing exterior – is entirely unpretentious. The friendly service, indie music and stylish, vintage touches add to the appeal, and the half-pint tankards of gin and tonic, margarita and Campari don't hurt either. Chat on the leafy patio, make friends at the communal table or sit back in your own intimate booth admiring the hipster types around you. As the bar's namesake Steve McQueen would surely agree: The Steve really is the King of Cool. El Salvador 4968, y Thames (mobile 15 6688 3655). Bus 39, 55, 140, 151. Open 6pm-1am Mon-Wed; 6pm-3a Thu-Sat. Credit AmEx, MC, V. Map G3.