

Conrad San Juan Condado Plaza, San Juan



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\$199 or less
 Editor's Pick

Conciierge.com's insider take:

Expect to gasp upon entering the Conrad San Juan Condado Plaza. A \$70 million renovation was completed in 2008—with the evident intention of transforming the hotel from a tattered casino-with-rooms into a tower of trendification. As far as the lobby goes, goal achieved:

The front desk is a glowing bolt of frosted orange glass, lounge nooks are stuffed with amoebalike chairs in turquoise and red, the walls shimmer with textured plastic surfaces, exotic sharks prowl a wall-size fish tank. The whole first floor emits a late-night Miami vibe, with some authentic salsa touches. The 570 rooms keep the style going in various shades of deep red (in the ocean tower) and acid green (lagoon tower). Even the hallways are beautiful, with Japanese vases arranged on sleek lowboys. The only serious lapse is the mezzanine, where the restaurants remain mired in the 1980s: an Italian cafeteria reminiscent of a Cleveland airport and a Japanese noodle shop that overlooks a row of slot machines in the dowdy central casino. Luckily, new additions are helping to salvage the dining scene: Chef Wilo Benet has relocated his famous [Pikayo](#) restaurant here, and his new restaurant Varita in the lagoon tower is a fun, casual spin on Puerto Rican barbecue. There are two pools and a small beach, and the Condado location, about 15 minutes from Old San Juan, means plenty of options for sightseeing and activities. But what draws the clientele is the style—without the nonstop nightlife of similar properties like [La Concha](#) and [El San Juan](#). If you like the mod look but not deep bass thumping through your walls at 3 am, you've found your hotel.—*Leigh Newman*

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