

# *Tropicana nightspot*

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Since the early years in the last century, at the entrance to the Marianao municipality in Havana, next to the Zanja-Marianao railroad, stood Villa Mina, a beautiful suburban property surrounded by a luxuriant tropical forest and once owned by Regino Truffin,.

Towards the end of the thirties Truffin's widow decided to rent her property to a group of entrepreneurs headed by Victor de Correa, who wanted to setup a nightclub. It became a legend in the history of world musical and variety shows known as the "most attractive and sumptuous nightclub in the world": the mythic Tropicana.

The presentation of Congo-Pantera musical revue in the '40s was a milestone. The surrounding shrubbery was for the first time linked to the show in the hunt for an African panther; dancers appeared among the rich foliage. The panther herself, Tania Leskova, descended from an enormous tree. David Litchin, who as well as Leskova had come from the celebrated Montecarlo Russian Ballet, was the director of this production. Cuban musician Chano Pozo was also part of the ensemble

Famous foreign performers like Josephine Baker, Tongolele, Xavier Cugat and Los Chavales de Espana were soon on stage. No less famous Cuban entertainers like Rita Montaner, Bola de Nieve and Alfredo Brito were there too.

In 1949, Martin Fox started to transform the place with the help of architect Max Borges Recio, The first fruit of that union was the stylized ballerina cast in artificial stone by the renowned Cuban sculptor Rita Longa and placed at the entrance.

Fox, aware of Tropicana's role as the most notable casino in the country, built a new roofed hall, The Glass Arches or *Arcos de Cristal* for rainy or winter nights. The Nymph Fountain, a delicate group of sculptures by Italian artist Aldo Gamba, which since the beginnings of the century had been at the door of the also famous Gran Casino Nacional, was moved to Tropicana in 1952.

The Arcos de Cristal in the Tropicana nightclub, awarded the Golden Medal by the National School of Architects in 1953.

Tropicana has also been declared a National Monument.

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