



Inside São Paulo's Marakuthai restaurant, designed by the chef's mother.

## SÃO PAULO SENSATION

**BRAZIL** It seems like a cliché, but up-and-coming chef Renata Vanzetto is not only blessed with God-given Brazilian beauty; she's a prodigy in the kitchen as well. Born and raised in Ilhabela, an archipelago and beach retreat just off the coast of São Paulo, Vanzetto began working in a local Thai restaurant at age thirteen. Three years later she walked away with first prize in an island cook-off that pitted her against several established chefs. Vanzetto got her high-school diploma, then took her winnings and split for France and Spain to hone her craft; when she returned to Ilhabela in 2006, she opened her first restaurant, Marakuthai, at the tender age of eighteen. By 2008, *Guia Quatro Rodas*, Brazil's *Michelin Guide*-like bible, had awarded the phenom a star—she's among the youngest chefs in history to receive

one. With the opening of the new **Marakuthai** outpost, in São Paulo, Vanzetto, now all of twenty-one, is running the city's hottest eatery in a far more intimidating culinary market. São Paulo's Beautiful People keep coming back to the Jardins-district restaurant, with its cashmere banquettes and 18th-century portraits, to sample Thai-influenced Brazilian dishes such as sautéed shrimp with coconut-breaded banana cubes in a creamy yellow curry. Or maybe they return to see what (or who) is cooking in the open kitchen. 1618 Alameda Itu; 011-55-11-3062-7556; marakuthai.com.br. **KEVIN RAUB**



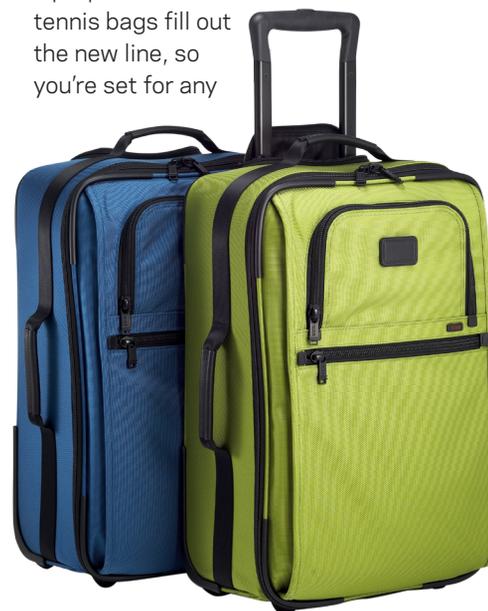
Chef Renata Vanzetto.

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**STEPHANIE WU**



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