

Manuel García, a gaucho at the Estancia El Rocio, in San Miguel del Monte, Argentina.



THE BEST OF SOUTH



**FROM THE PEAKS
OF THE ANDES
TO THE WINDSWEPT
PAMPAS OF
ARGENTINA, WE
REVEAL 15 OF OUR
FAVORITE HACIENDAS
AND ESTANCIAS,
WHERE YOU CAN
LIVE THE COUNTRY
LIFE—SOUTH
AMERICAN STYLE.
BY AMY E. ROBERTSON
PHOTOGRAPHED
BY DAVID NICOLAS**

EDITED BY JOHN NEWTON **ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY** XANDER KAPLAN
JOHN NEWTON, MATTHEW PAULSEN, SARAH PEPITONE, AND JENNIFER WELBEL

AMERICA'S HACIENDAS

At El Rocio, the main house

THE HACIENDAS OF SOUTH AMERICA ARE A varied lot. In Chile, travelers can sip a local Cabernet while staying at a 19th-century winery; farther north, llama farms are more common. At the cattle ranches of Argentina, where haciendas are known as estancias, it is possible to experience, however briefly, the world of the land barons of the pampas. Other haciendas date from the 16th century, and the earliest days of Spanish colonization.

We asked T+L contributors who live in the region, our A-List travel agents who know it well, and other South American experts to recommend haciendas that stand out for their charm, service, style, uniqueness, and value. Ecuador and Argentina dominate our highly selective and eclectic list simply because those countries have more spectacular properties, and Brazil is absent only because we are saving its fazendas for another day.

ARGENTINA ESTANCIA CANDELARIA DEL MONTE, SAN MIGUEL DEL MONTE The Candelaria del Monte sits on nearly 200 acres of the country's famous pampas, the vast pastureland whose striking topography is broken only by occasional stands of eucalyptus. The estate was bought by the Goñi family 30 years ago, and the country house was rebuilt by Sebastián Goñi, then opened to guests in 2004. The intimate four-bedroom, two-suite estancia is surrounded by grounds, first laid out in the 1850's, that are dotted with ancient oak and pine trees. Many of the furnishings in the rooms date from the 19th century. Guests can spend time relaxing in the swimming pool, taking horseback riding lessons, or playing paddle tennis. Much of the food (fruit juice, eggs, vegetables, and, of course, beef) is homegrown, but the Goñis are particularly proud of the honey they produce. **GETTING THERE** The estancia is 60 miles from Buenos Aires; the owners can arrange transportation in a private car to and from the capital for \$50 each way. 54-2271/442-431; candelariadelmonte.com.ar; doubles from \$280, including meals and most activities.

ESTANCIA EL ROCIO, SAN MIGUEL DEL MONTE The colonial five-bedroom estancia El Rocio was restored by French-born Patrice Gravière and his wife, Macarena Llambi, 12 years ago. Today, this 400-acre working farm allows guests to experience the gaucho's way of life—albeit in rooms meticulously decorated in Mediterranean hues of eucalyptus green, terra-cotta, and golden yellow, with modern amenities such as Wi-Fi and cable TV. Request the Las Rosas suite, with its blue claw-foot bathtub and corner fireplace. The experienced players at the on-site polo



green, terra

is painted eucalpytus



Pampas Pleasures
Clockwise from above:
Three gauchos on the
grounds of El Rocio; the
Cactus suite at El Rocio;
the well-furnished
terrace; flank steak and
egg salad at the
estancia's restaurant;
polo players at El Rocio;
the guesthouse's loft;
a suite at the Estancia
Candelaria del Monte, 10
minutes from El Rocio.

cotta, and golden yellow

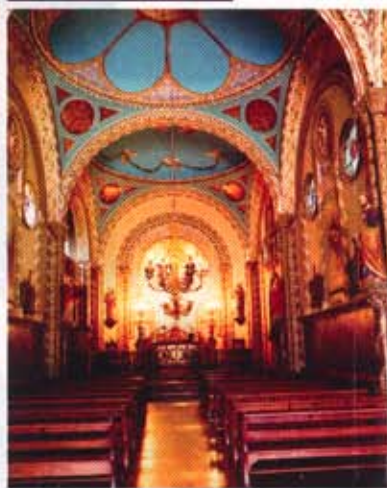
The pool at Los Lingues, a hacienda
in Chile's Colchagua Valley.





Chile Reception

Clockwise from above: A drawing room in the 19th-century-antiques-filled Los Lingues; Enrique Álvarez, director of the Los Lingues stables and a riding guide; the chapel at Casa Real Hotel, the converted manor at the Santa Rita vineyards in the Maipo Valley; Casa Real's gardens; a guest room at Los Lingues.



clinic instruct guests of all levels. Biking, shooting, and bird-watching provide opportunities to explore the pampas. Another option is simply lounging: by the pool in summer, and during cooler months in the library or *la matera*, a traditionally decorated living room where gauchos gather for maté and pastries. **GETTING THERE** El Rocio is 60 miles by car from Buenos Aires, and just 10 minutes from Candelaria. 54-2271/420-488; estanciaelrocio.com; doubles from \$500, including most activities. (See page 214 for three more Argentinean estancias.)

CHILE CASA REAL HOTEL, MAIPO VALLEY Built in 1880 as the manor house of the Santa Rita vineyards, Casa Real was converted into a luxury hotel in 1996. Some of the 16 rooms have soaring ceilings and French doors that open onto a grassy courtyard with a stone fountain at its center. Service is both attentive and unobtrusive—housekeeping manages to keep the fruit basket full and bottled water stocked without ever being seen. There are horse and cart tours to take guests through the vineyards and to the cellars and state-of-the-art

bottling plant. Wine tastings are not regularly scheduled, but the knowledgeable staff will arrange an evening of sampling upon request. **GETTING THERE** Casa Real is 25 miles from Santiago, following the Pan-American Highway south. 56-2/821-9966; santarita.cl; doubles from \$295, including breakfast.

LOS LINGUES, COLCHAGUA VALLEY Chile's oldest hacienda derives its charm from the extensive collection of extravagant antiques it houses—priceless pieces crowd each room. Sixteenth-century silver fighting cocks from Peru stand guard at the dining table; an ivory statue of Christ once owned by Pope Pius IX hangs in the chapel; ornate Mapuche necklaces sit under the glass top of the coffee table in the sitting room. The bedrooms in the main house are more lavish than those in the guesthouse. Breakfast is not included, but the sumptuous spread is worth the extra \$24, with farm-fresh eggs and an entire hock from which to carve a slice of ham. **GETTING THERE** Los Lingues is 80 miles south of Santiago, about three miles off the Pan-American Highway. 56-2/431-0510; loslingues.com; doubles from \$238. (See page 216 for another Chilean hacienda.)

Hacienda San Agustín, in Cotopaxi,



Seven Views of Ecuador

Clockwise from above: A housekeeper at Ecuador's Hacienda San Agustín; a llama on the grounds of San Agustín; the entrance to the Hacienda Zuleta, in Imbabura; flowers lining the exterior of Zuleta; inside the Inca Tambo suite at San Agustín; the hacienda's courtyard; a detail of the shaded arcade.



an Incan tambo that once lodged

i, Ecuador, was built on the ruins of



ECUADOR HACIENDA SAN AGUSTÍN DE CALLO, COTOPAXI

San Agustín de Callo lies in the foothills of the snowcapped Cotopaxi volcano and was built on the ruins of an Incan tambo, an inn that once lodged royalty traveling along the Inca Trail. The hotel's name stems from a later incarnation as an Augustinian monastery in the 1500's. The current owner, Mignon Plaza, inherited the hacienda from her grandfather Leonidas Plaza, two-time president of Ecuador. Eleven spacious suites in a newer building have frescoed walls, wood-beam ceilings, and views of Cotopaxi. The five more rustic rooms in the main house have the original Incan walls, and fireplaces in some of the bathrooms. Feeding carrots to the hacienda's llamas in the stone courtyard may be the highlight for younger travelers; the horseback riding and gourmet meals will appeal to all. The kitchen will cook up trout caught in the fish pond and serve it with the hacienda's famous *locro* (potato-and-cheese soup). **GETTING THERE** The hacienda is 48 miles from Quito, following the Pan-American Highway south. 593-2/290-6157; incahacienda.com; doubles from \$250, including meals and most activities.

HACIENDA ZULETA, IMBABURA Although Hacienda Zuleta's 15 bedrooms share some 4,000 acres, a stay here is an intimate affair. On cool days guests gather in the sitting room, where wine is served in front of a perpetually burning fire, along with cheeses made on the premises. Meals bring visitors together at a common table where affable German-born managers Christina and Thomas Ring relate the history of the hacienda and keep the conversation lively. *(Continued on page 214)*

royalty traveling along the Inca Trail