

DEPARTURES

SEPTEMBER 2

A HIDDEN HONOLULU

THE TRATTORIA NOBODY KNOWS

A HIGH/LOW GUIDE
DRINKING
WINE IN PARIS

BORNEO WILD

SHANGHAI'S
SECRET TAILOR

METRO MAN
WATCHES, CUFF LINKS
& A CLOSE SHAVE

WHAT \$500 BUYS NOW
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THE ART OF STYLE
REAL PEOPLE, REAL FASHION





Estancia Vik sits on 4,000 acres of land just two miles from the ocean.

lamb's-wool sweaters, which are perfect for the area's cool nights. And the restaurant **Parador La Huella**, on Playa Brava, is simply the best—for its location (right on the beach overlooking the Atlantic), its food and drink (grilled fish, local wine), and its clientele (happy and all ages). Reservations are essential during high season. Co-owner Guzmán Artagaveytia, who used to work with Mallmann, also has a tented beach restaurant, **La Caracola**, ten minutes away in Laguna Garzon, where tables can be booked for parties of six or more. **Marismo** is another trendy, delicious, must-reserve spot, this one in Laguna Garzon, with long wooden tables, flickering candlelight, and a great barefoot-in-the-sand atmosphere. The slow-braised lamb is divine.

IN THE COUNTRY

Back in Garzon, Mallmann's inn and delectable restaurant **Garzon** occupies the town's old general store, its five guest rooms opening onto a porch and a courtyard where life revolves around a swimming pool, an outdoor fireplace, and a table—the best in the house—shaded by a massive palm tree. Here, and in the candlelit dining room, the kitchen serves a seasonal menu of meat,

fish, and vegetables, all cooked on an iron grill in the Andean *infernillo* fashion, with a very hot eucalyptus-wood fire both above and below. The food is sublime, and service comes with a kiss on both cheeks. Add in Julio, Garzon's resident gaucho, who brings his horses to the hotel's hitching post for early-morning or late-afternoon rides up into the hills, and you have a vacation of uncommon appeal.

For shopping there's **Alium Design Studio**, which arrived on Garzon's plaza in January. Owners Mariano Piñeyría and Carolyn Prevett, graduates of Montevideo's Center of Industrial Design, have assembled a cool

selection of clothing and objects; some piece they design themselves (vibrantly printed dresses and tops, light fixtures, and ceramics), others they commission from artist friends (beachy watercolors, rustic paintings on wood, delicate jewelry). I particularly love a fanciful lamp of Mariano's own design, made from recycled plastic bottles in blue, white, or green. The 62-year-old shop **Talabartería Benítez**, meanwhile, in the very local countryside town of San Carlos 40 minutes from Garzon, stocks authentic gaucho gear like *bombachas* (loose-fitting trousers), leather boots, and wonderful woven leather belts. —LISA LINDBLAI

Address Book

Casa Zinc Rooms, \$190-\$360. Parada no. 40, Calle 9 and Calle 19, La Barra; 598-99/620-066

Estancia Vik Rooms, \$500-\$900. Camino Eugenio Saiz Martínez Km 8, José Ignacio; 598-94/675-838; estanciavik.com

Garzon Rooms, \$480-\$660. Dinner, \$100. Plaza and Iglesia, Pueblo Garzon; 598-41/02811; restaurantgarzon.com

La Caracola Dinner, \$120. 598-94/220-772; paradorlacaracola.com

Marismo Dinner, \$60. Rte. 10, Km 185, Laguna Garzon; 598-48/62273

Parador La Huella Dinner, \$40. Los Cisnes and Playa Brava, José Ignacio; 598-48/62279; paradorlahuella.com

Alium Design Studio Las Garzas and Camino a la Capilla, Pueblo Garzon; 598-99/128-672; alium.com.uy

Bajo el Alma Las Garzas and Las Golondrinas, Faro José Ignacio; 598-48/62098

Talabartería Benítez Corner of Maldonado and 25 de Agosto St., San Carlos

Trading Post Parada 40½, Rte. 10, La Barra; 598-42/770-626; casazinc.com

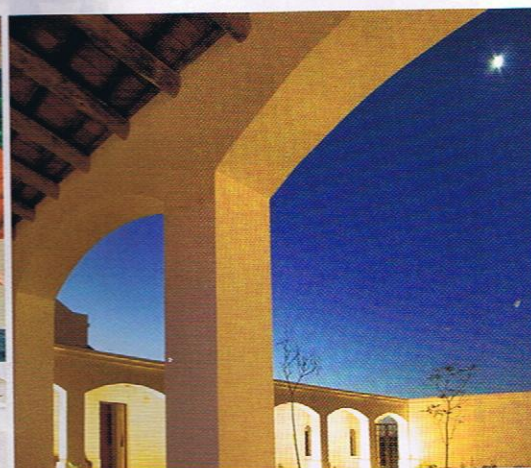
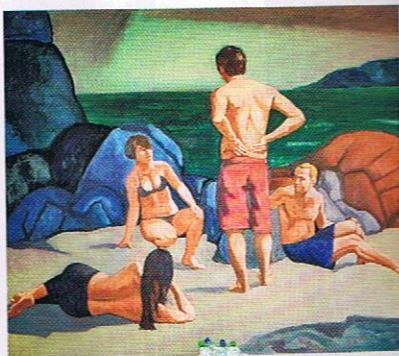
I became enchanted by Garzon's rural simplicity, nascent sophistication, and proximity to the ocean, and I bought an iconic ruin on a small piece of land. So I've compiled this insider address book—writing in my simple brick house, the huge fireplace and verandas opening to the farmland—not just as an enamored guest but also as something of a local.

BY THE BEACH

The Spanish Colonial-style **Estancia Vik** opened seven months ago on 4,000 acres of rolling hills, rivers, and lakes 20 minutes from Garzon and only five minutes from José Ignacio and its beaches. A different Uruguayan contemporary artist designed each of the 12 ample-size suites—the one by painter Carlos Musso, with frescoes inspired by those at Pompeii's Villa dei Misteri, is my pick—and all the rooms offer extraordinary views of the surrounding countryside, which, at certain times of year, is reminiscent of Botswana's Okavango Delta. There is much to do—tennis on the nearby clay courts, polo on the property's private field, golf on the adjoining green; canoeing, kayaking, windsurfing, sailing, and fishing in the lagoons and streams; nature walks, birdwatching, biking, and hiking throughout. There is even a romantic chapel, also painted by Musso and nestled in a grove of native ombu trees, that is available for weddings. Under construction five minutes away in José Ignacio is Playa Vik, a beach retreat with casitas to rent and a clubhouse for guests.

Fifteen minutes from both Punta and José Ignacio, the fishing village of La Barra offers good home-decor shops, some nice restaurants, and, not least of all, **Casa Zinc**, among the area's newest and most charming hotels. My favorite of the six rooms is the library-themed Biblioteca, but all are airy and meticulously decorated with vintage and recycled furniture and fixtures. Everything comes from the personal stock of the hotel's owner, Aaron Hojman, who also runs **Trading Post**, a shop three blocks away. Hojman frequents local auctions and flea markets, as well as those in London and Istanbul, to fill this fabulous repository of vintage furniture and objects and architectural antiques.

In José Ignacio proper, near the lighthouse, **Bajo el Alma** sells hand-knitted



SCENES FROM THE NEW URUGUAY, clockwise from bottom left: A beech-wood canoe bathtub, the covered patio, a mural by José Trujillo at the spa entrance, and the central courtyard, all at José Ignacio's Estancia Vik; a light-filled double room at Casa Zinc, in the fishing village of La Barra; in Garzon, the chic shop Alium Design Studio and a table being set for dinner at Francis Mallmann's hotel and restaurant.



BLACKBOOK

A GUIDE FOR THE SOPHISTICATED TRAVELER HERE & ABROAD

EDITED BY ANDREW SESSA



Estancia Vik's courtyard pool and deck overlook the surrounding hills, rivers, and lakes of José Ignacio.

Up Next

Uruguay's Gaucho Chic

The countryside town of Garzon and the fishing villages around the always fashionable José Ignacio are where it's at now.

Except during the weeks surrounding Christmas and New Year's—when all of beautiful South America seems to descend on the country's Atlantic beaches—Uruguay is the picture of order and quiet. These days, even during those busy times, the smart set has moved on from Punta del Este to calmer spots. First it was the fishing village of La Barra, 15 minutes north, and then José Ignacio another 15 minutes beyond. And now the still-simple towns of La Pedrera and Punta del Diablo, farther up the coast by about an hour's drive, are poised for their moment. Sweeping back from the beach, meanwhile, there's another

Uruguay altogether: gorgeous gaucho country, with gentle hills and open grassland punctuated by stands of trees offering shade to grazing cattle. In the last six years, the town of Garzon has become the inland destination. A short drive from the airport in Punta, this once-thriving pueblo went to sleep in the forties and woke up only recently with the investment of Argentine chef Francis Mallmann, who opened a five-room hotel and restaurant here in 2002. Mallmann attracts guests from all over, some of whom have gone on to buy property and renovate the town's faded Deco buildings. That's exactly what I did, in fact. A year and a half ago, scouting the area for my bespoke travel company,