

**For immediate release**

**At one with Astronomy at explora en Atacama**

**\*\*With 90% of nights cloud-free, there is no better place to stargaze than in the Moon Valley\*\***



*1 July 2009:* Star light, star bright? That goes without saying, but star light in focus? That's another story! Thanks to the South American company explora's recent investment into one of the world's most advanced private astronomy projects, explora en Atacama Hotel de Larache is the proud owner of one of the largest, most powerful 'aficionado-level' telescopes in Chile.

Light years above the desert, the night sky burns with thousands of astronomical highlights of the Southern Hemisphere, including the Southern Cross, the Southern Milky Way, and even points far to the North. Set amid the most arid desert in the world, explora's remote outpost is perfectly situated for the finest stargazing on the South American continent. Together with the installation of a Meade 16" f/10 LX200R advanced RC telescope, located in one of the gardens of the hotel's terrain, explora offers guests yet another tool for exploration.

With a sky whose beauty and clarity compete with those of Hawaii and 'Los Domos' in Antarctica, it is unsurprising that the Atacama Desert of northern Chile has become one of the most attractive night skies in the world. The high altitudes and sparse settlements nullify the effects of distracting light pollution and radio interference, making the Atacama Desert a dream destination for stargazers. Due to the continual investment from the ALMA into radio astronomy, the desert will soon become the proud owner of the largest telescope in the world, which will only further its chances of achieving worldwide acclaim for being the capital of astronomy.

The explora observatory is located just 100 metres from Hotel de Larache. Beneath the observation dome, guests can take part in both interactive and rewarding astronomy lessons, including an interesting array of explanations and demonstrations on using a telescope, mapping the cosmos, and pinpointing stars and planets above the Atacama sands. The top of the range 'piggyback bracket' enables guests to mount digital cameras directly onto the telescope; thus offering endless astrophotographic opportunities.

explora have not only opened their astronomic doors to guests, but also reached out to local communities from the neighbouring towns, notably those of San Pedro and Rio Grande, welcoming groups of local children to learn and experience all that the observatory has to offer. Depending on the time of year, the observatory will provide opportunities for local and foreign explorers to see and take shots of the moon, Saturn, and hundreds of galaxy bodies.

*"We don't want to be astronomers; we just want to assure explorers a unique experience of observing the wonders of the finest skies in the world."* explains Maurice Dides, General Manager of Hotel de Larache. *"Guests can look forward to identifying constellations, planets, stars of multiple colours, globular clusters, misty nebulae, and galaxies thousands of light-years away."*

For reservations at explora en Atacama, please call explora +56-2206-6060, email [reservations@explora.com](mailto:reservations@explora.com) or visit the website at [www.explora.com](http://www.explora.com).

**Notes to editors:**

explora is not so much a hotel group as a revolutionary travel experience. It is an enterprise, founded in 1989, to encourage a new attitude towards travel for those who have a passion for discovering new places and new people, in remote and relatively unexplored regions of the southern tip of South America.

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