

october 2009

recommend

helping travel agents sell travel

SPA & LUXURY issue

onsite/onboard reviews:

CAMBRIDGE BEACHES RESORT & SPA, BERMUDA

CASAMAGNA MARRIOTT PUERTO VALLARTA
RESORT & SPA, MEXICO

CELEBRITY CRUISES' EQUINOX

CUNARD LINE'S QUEEN MARY 2

ENCHANTMENT RESORT, SEDONA

GRAND VELAS ALL SUITES & SPA RESORT,
RIVIERA MAYA

HAMMOCK BEACH RESORT,
PALM COAST, FLORIDA

THE LANGHAM, LONDON

MARRAKECH, MOROCCO

ROYAL PLANTATION, JAMAICA

SINGAPORE

ST. REGIS MONARCH BEACH RESORT & SPA,
CALIFORNIA

...also in this issue...argentina...barbados...india...las vegas...mexico's colonial gems...also in this issue...argentina...barbados...india...las



chile

In South America, **Virtuoso** agent **Ann Sager** of **Provident Travel**, focuses her viewfinder on...Chile.

"Just recently, I talked one of my top clients and his wife into not going to France for the gazillionth time and sent them to South America for their first visit. They divided their time between five days in Chile, based at **The Ritz-Carlton, Santiago**, and in Argentina, five days at the **Alvear Palace**, which you can't beat for location and service in Buenos Aires. These clients used private guides to explore both cities and their surrounding areas, and they thoroughly enjoyed dining around at local five-star restaurants and shopping in boutique stores and local markets."



The *explora en Patagonia* is set in the Torres del Paine National Park.

In Santiago, says Sager, "I always use The Ritz-Carlton; however, I am eager to hear reports on the new **W** hotel, which opened this summer." Close to The Ritz-Carlton, the Bordo Rio serving Peruvian fare and the Zanzibar with delicious Moroccan specialties are just two of her favorite capital dining spots. Among choice day excursions from Santiago, Sager points her clients toward the close-by seaport of Valparaiso—a hilly city of grand views, distinctive turn-of-the-century mansions, and above all, one of the three whimsical and weird homes (the others are in Santiago and Isla Negra) of renowned poet, Pablo Neruda. "Wine-loving clients, I send to stay at the lovely **Casa Real** property in the Santa Rita vineyards," Sager reports, "and another choice would be **Viña Casa Silva** in the Colchagua Valley."

Sager admits that her real love of Chile lies beyond the capital where her personal favorite places (and "the ones I sell the most") are **explora en Patagonia** and **explora en Atacama**. "I haven't been to the newest **explora en Rapa Nui** on Easter Island, but I have stayed many times in the two mainland properties, and both

offer signature Chilean experiences in scenic beauty, informally but stylishly elegant guest comforts and amenities, and a broad program of well-planned and well-guided active excursions."

Explora launched the movement that brought the first deluxe-class and style accommodations to the remote regions of Chile. According to Jesus Parrilla, *explora's* commercial v.p., approximately 28 percent of the hotel group's bookings come from the U.S. market, and of those bookings, approximately 70 percent come from the travel trade.

"We now have three all-inclusive adventure resorts in Chile," says Parrilla and our expansion plans include the Sacred Valley in Peru and El Chalten, in Argentine Patagonia. We have been working on these plans for several years and hope to make specific announcements by the first quarter of next year."

Combining challenging activities with tastefully posh accommodations in the most fascinating and remote corners of Chile, *explora's* vacation formula is familiar to all its properties: an all-inclusive stay—generally three, four or seven nights—that means, with the exception of massages and laundry, everything is included, from airport pickup to meals, daily excursions and countless pisco sours. Always outstanding is the menu of activities: hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding and cultural touring. All excursions are offered for various lengths of time and levels of expertise, and each delivers one special site after another. Rates pp dbl at *explora en Patagonia* start at \$2,660 for a 3-night stay, and at *explora en Atacama* from \$1,920 for a 3-night stay.

Recently, *explora* introduced a special offering for its travelers that embraces the **Casa Porta Estate** in an *explora + Wine* program. Located in the Cachapoal Valley, the 6-room inn occupies a secluded colonial-style house built in 1875. There are six beautifully furnished guestrooms, a living room, dining room, chapel, kitchen and underground wine cellar, barrel room, wine bar and tasting room. Travelers who have stayed at all three *explora* properties during one trip will receive a 2-night complimentary stay at Casa Porta Estate that includes transfers to and from Santiago airport, accommodations, open bar, tour of the winery, wine tasting, tour and lunch in Viña Gracia and another nearby vineyard. Travelers who have booked two different *explora* properties receive a free 1-night stay, with transfers, accommodations, open bar, tour of Casa Porta winery and wine tasting. Guests who have stayed at one property may stay at Casa Porta Estate for the preferential rate (50 percent less than regular rate) of \$120 pp dbl.

—Carla Hunt

contact information

Explora: (866) 750-6699; explora.com
The Ritz-Carlton, Santiago: (800) 542-8680; ritzcarlton.com
Turismo Chile: visit-chile.org
Viña Casa Silva: casasilva.cl

