



This former fishing village has become a prime summer spot for the jet set.

& Restaurant Garzón in nearby gaucho territory) is credited with establishing the region's simple haute cuisine with impeccably prepared seafood and grilled meat seasoned with olive oil and sea salt. At Casa Suaya's new restaurant Butia, chef Clo Dimet serves up fresh local catches like merluza, corvina, brótola, and shellfish. (A second, sand-floored eatery, El Brasero, serves mostly beef under the cover of a nearby forest.) Just a short walk down the beach sits José Ignacio's most famed eatery, Parador La Huella, an open-air restaurant next to a lighthouse in a Santorini-esque village, known for sashimi and caipiroshka cocktails (paradorla.huella.com).

WHAT TO DO: Brava Beach, a choppy Atlantic Ocean inlet on the eastern side of Punta del Este, has great waterskiing and kayaking, and wind gusts there create waves ideal for surfing. Just five minutes west is Mansa, a calmer river beach known for spectacular sunsets and fishing excursions, where you can catch your next meal and eat it too; clay shooting and wild boar hunting are also nearby. Kitesurf with El Pato (598-099-905-308), a guide service that offers lessons for both novices and experts, or rent a bike or 4x4 from Todoterreno for an offroading adrenaline fix (598-99-87-3988).

—NORA ZELEVANSKY

SOUTH AMERICA'S HOT SPOT

FOR YEARS ARGENTINA'S ELITE HAVE TAKEN THEIR SUMMER VACATIONS (DECEMBER TO MARCH) in Uruguay, at beachfront enclaves in areas like Punta del Este. But as Punta's center has developed, Buenos Aires's tastemakers have discovered the relaxed but refined pleasures of José Ignacio, a tiny fishing village an half-hour drive from Punta and, more crucially, the airport there. You'd do well to follow their lead.

WHEN TO GO:

Uruguay's cooler spring months, October and November, are quiet, but at the onset of high season (December 24–January 10), tens of thousands of jet-setters descend upon the unlikely town for an exclusive party scene. Afterward, from mid-January through March, José Ignacio settles back into a perfectly secluded escape with ideal weather and no crowds.

WHERE TO STAY:

Having vacationed as a child in Punta, L.A. hospitality guru Adolfo Suaya (Geisha House, Goa) expanded his new, chic private vacation home into a luxe resort called Casa Suaya. Across a palm tree-peppered beach, the hotel (along with Suaya's home) is made up of three upscale rustic-style buildings of earthy raw red stone, stucco, and glass. In Suaya's

backyard, visitors feel like guests at a wealthy benefactor's estate (as opposed to the oversize casino resorts in Punta). Sixteen suites with ocean views have white walls and stucco fireplaces with exposed ceiling-high chimneys (from \$600; casasuaya.com).

WHAT TO EAT:

Famed Argentine chef Francis Mallmann (who recently built Hotel



POLO LOSES AIRS, TAKES ON WHEELS

Most people know polo as the sport of country club preps fitting some riding in before teatime. But in bike polo, lush grass fields are traded in for asphalt playgrounds and steeds for cycles, as teams of three try to knock a street hockey ball with makeshift mallets crafted from ski poles into opposing goals. The one overarching rule is that players' feet can't touch the ground, which is difficult when bodychecking, crashing into opponents' bikes, and knocking mallets out of players' hands are all considered fair play. "We call it polo, but it's really more like hockey on bicycles," says Brian Whitmore of Ottawa, Ontario, one of about 30 cities home to fledgling bike polo clubs. Seattle bike messengers bored between shifts, started playing the game in 2000, and tournaments are now popping up throughout the U.S. and Canada. The bike polo championships, which debuted with just a few teams in Seattle in 2003, had 28 teams competing in Toronto this past June. "Bike polo is where skateboarding was in 1986," says Whitmore somewhat ambitiously. "It's just about to explode." The next big tournament is at the end of December, in frigid Madison, Wisconsin. Or man up and organize your own (bikepolo.ca). —BRENDAN SPIEGEL

FROM TOP: S. ERSTEIN/AGUACARA.COM; UY. ANDREW GOBERT; MAP: ALAN KRUGH



FREE AS A BIRD

The A5 has a 34-foot wingspan, but can be folded into a 22-by-7-foot package to fit in your garage. It also has GPS and an MP3 dock.

YOUR OWN PRIVATE AIRLINE

THANKS TO A 2004 FAA RULING CUTTING the requirements to get your wings (20 hours of training, plus \$2,800-\$3,500 for a sport pilot license versus \$8,000 for a full pilot's license), sport planes like the **ICON A5 Amphibious Light-Sport Aircraft** are now rolling off the assembly line. Apart from size, what separates a light-sport from a full-on plane is minimal: You can't fly above 10,000 feet,

go faster than 138 mph, or carry more than one passenger. But who cares? The \$139,000 100-hp A5 has a 345-mile range, gets an astounding 18 mpg, runs on regular unleaded, and fits in your garage (optional upgrades include a safety parachute and retractable landing gear). With a \$5,000 deposit, you can own an A5 by 2012 (iconaircraft.com).

—MELINDA CARDOZO

THE GREAT RACES

McCain and Obama aren't the only ones racing long distances in harsh conditions. Three big races starting this month may be ridiculously difficult, but they're also thoroughly compelling.

LA CARRERA PANAMERICANA

South of the border on October 24, one of those auto battles that seem to only exist in legend is revived: a seven-day, 2,000-mile road race across Mexico. Originally held from 1950-'54, the race was canceled in part due to high fatalities. Although today's race is tamer (racing only in designated areas), it still has that unbridled spirit (panamrace.com).

SAHARA RACE

Starting October 26 a seven-day, 155-mile race through hell begins with a single step into the world's most punishing desert. About 150 runners, from 21 to 75 years old, are taking on the Sahara, where temperatures can rise to 120 during the day and fall to around 50 at night. Daily updates will be available online (4deserts.com).

VENDEE GLOBE

In terms of bravado, not much can touch the only unsupported nonstop around-the-world yacht race. On November 9 some 30 solo skippers will launch 60-foot monohulls from France to try to be the fastest to circumnavigate the globe. They'll have no outside navigational help for three lonely months. If history holds, many won't finish (vendee-globe.org). —LINDSEY MILLAR



WHALE WARS
airs on *Animal Planet* November 7 at 9 PM.

SABOTAGE AS REALITY TV

CAPTAIN PAUL WATSON HAS NOT MELLOWED WITH AGE. A WILDLIFE ADVOCATE who left Greenpeace in 1977 because it wasn't radical enough, Watson sails under his own Jolly Roger, and claims to have sunk eight whaling ships as a self-appointed, vigilante enforcer of a 1986 moratorium on commercial whaling. For his trouble, he has been accused of being a terrorist by three sovereign nations. This fall, he brings his sea-faring brand of monkey-wrenching to Animal Planet. —INTERVIEW BY PETER HELLER

How do you justify your extreme methods?

Japan is targeting endangered whales in a sanctuary in violation of an international moratorium. We chase them; as long as they're running they aren't killing whales.

You claim you were shot by the Japanese.

They had military personnel onboard with rifles. I was out on the bridge wing when a bullet hit my bulletproof vest, then hit my medal, and the pin stuck in my chest.

The Japanese say the story is fabricated.

A doctor on board checked it out right away. I did an interview on camera right before, then right after there's a bullet hole in my Mustang suit, and the badge was dented. It would've been quite a feat to engineer.

Was your campaign successful?

The Japanese got zero endangered fin whales and only 583 of their planned 935 minke whales — about a 50 percent loss.



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