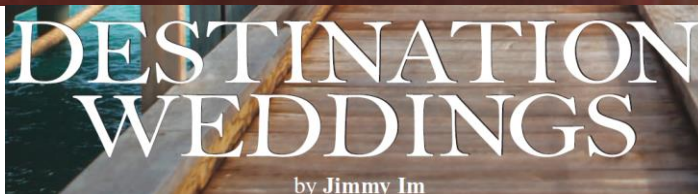


PASSPORT



URUGUAY

The small country of Uruguay is a surprisingly underrated gem that doesn't get the well-deserved attention as its neighbors, but therein lies its beauty. Uruguay is not overrun with tourists and still feels genuinely exotic. In addition to Argentina and Brazil, Uruguay is the only other country in South America that allows same-sex marriage, which reflects the country's welcoming attitude toward the LGBT community. While it's not huge, Uruguay packs a lot of punch. The wine country here is one of the most tantalizing on the continent, where many vineyards practice sustainable agriculture and green farming. The new **Bodega Garzon** is the first winery in the world seeking LEED certification for the entire facility and produces fantastic wines (from Pinot Noirs to Sauvignon Blancs) as well as delicious olive oils. Naturally, a trip to Uruguay isn't complete without visiting the chic beach towns of Punte Del Este and Jose Ignacio. The jet set-approved, unspoiled beach getaways are home to art galleries, museums, excellent restaurants and a bona fide, South American beach vibe. **Playa Vik**, considered the most luxurious hotel in the country, is a design-driven remote hideaway right on a deserted beach that's perfect for private weddings. The views of the sea (from the villas and infinity pool) are unrivaled. Couples are quick to book rehearsal dinners (and social nights out) at **La Huella**, an institution in José Ignacio known for its sea bass and octopus as well as its prime people watching. Just a short distance from José Ignacio, **La Caracola** is a dinner club where up to 30 guests take a boat across a lagoon to a private beach for a daytime picnic. The sheer beauty of the day trip, and the pure authentic nature of this gay-friendly wedding destination, makes for an unforgettable experience. ■

URUGUAY

Playa Vik, Calle de Los Cisnes, Tel: 598-94-605-212.
Stunning hotel in the trendy beach town of José Ignacio. Rooms from \$750. www.playavik.com