

Condé Nast Traveller

WIN
A FABULOUS
HOLIDAY IN
MAURITIUS

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

JULY 2010 £3.90

Word of mouth

Down to a fine art

URUGUAY A new beachside hotel in the St Tropez of South America mixes creature comforts with the avant garde

Just
opened

There are fewer than 400 full-time residents in the tiny coastal town of José Ignacio, but over Christmas and New Year the unpaved streets, boho cafés and sandy beaches are busy with models, DJs and music producers. Celebrity sightings include Mario Testino; Shakira has a house in the area. The new Playa Vik José Ignacio hotel reflects this creative bent beautifully, with its titanium, slate and glass exteriors, and artworks by James Turrell and Zaha Hadid. It is designed to work in tandem with nearby ranch Estancia Vik (see Hot List, May 2010); the two properties represent 'Marlboro Country meets St Tropez', says owner Alex Vik, a Norwegian billionaire investor. Playa Vik's soaring, glass-fronted main building is accessed via a massive, sculpted bronze door; the long, black-granite pool seems to hover above the beach. Eco-friendly wildflower meadows grow on the roofs of the six guest villas, or *casas*, which feature works by Uruguayan artists; Vik and his American wife Carrie designed the boldly patterned floors and bathrooms, with their sleek wooden tubs. Entirely hidden from view are a subterranean kitchen and car park, as well as two spa treatment rooms and a huge wine cellar. **PETER BROWNE**
00 598 94 605 314; www.playavik.com. *Casas* from US\$800 per night



From left: the firepit at Playa Vik José Ignacio; bedroom and living room in one of the hotel's six *casas*, which feature works by Uruguayan artists