PALM BEACH®
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SCHOOL OF POLO

Up your game at these exotic destinations that are home to dreamy resorts, memorable excursions, and prime polo academies

BY PAUL RUBIO

Punta del Este beach

The pool at Estancia Vik

JOSÉ IGNACIO, Uruguay

Often referenced as South America's equivalent to the Hamptons, Uruguay's Punta del Este sizzles in the summer as the place to be for Latin America's growing bourgeoisie. Occupying its own petite peninsula, the artsy beachfront hamlet of José Ignacio attracts the elite of the Americas, seeking to balance R&R and outdoor enthusiasm with a busy social calendar.

Play: José Ignacio is home to billionaire Alexander Vik's small portfolio of uber-luxury boutique properties, such as Estancia Vik José Ignacio *(estanciavikjoseignacio.com)*, a 4,000-acre destination retreat where Criollo horses roam. From November to April, polo lessons are available upon request on

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Estancia Vik's barbecue, created by artist Marcelo Legrand

The game room at Estancia Vik

Voices of a Voyage by Enrique Badaró, in Estancia Vik's Badaró Suite

Filisbirto by Carlos Musso in Estancia Vik's Musso Suite

The pool at Playa Vik

Oxtail stew with fries at Parador La Huella

the private polo grounds. For those who desire equestrian rhapsody without the stick and ball, the estate's esteemed horses are at the ready for exhilarating rides to the beach and across open landscapes.

Sleep: Fusing indoors and outdoors, the 12 suites at Estancia Vik José Ignacio are a hypermodern interpretation of a traditional Spanish colonial home: The clean-lined exteriors are coated in stark white, and each suite features colorful high design and eye-catching decor. The original murals and various interpretations of Uruguayan art—like an edgy, graffiti-stained dining room—feel like a continuous celebration of Art Basel.

Explore: Estancia Vik José Ignacio functions as a self-contained destination, so the daily agenda may include activities like polo, of course, but also canoeing, hiking, mountain biking, bird watching, or sampling some of the treats in the 5,000-bottle wine cellar. Active pursuits notwithstanding, the beaches of Punta del Este are still the region's primary attractions, where sun worshipping and surfing reign as the top pastimes. During the summer months of December to March, beach outings are best spent in the oh-so-cool, cantilevered swimming pool at sister hotel Playa Vik José Ignacio *(playavik.com)*. Also, be sure to dine at least one night at Parador la Huella *(parador lahuella.com)*, where the people watching is as delicious as the food.

Parador La Huella

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