



LATA Members' Newsletter

August 2011

LATA News

Dear all,

Since the last members' newsletter in May we have been busy with a number of events and activities.

We had an excellent turnout for the AGM on the 23rd May, providing a useful opportunity to reflect on the year gone by and to look forward to future plans. Turismo Chile kindly sponsored the evening, reminding us all of the many attractions on offer to visitors whilst also updating us on their exciting plans for a UK consumer campaign to commence this autumn.

During May LATA ran a familiarisation trip for tour operators to Uruguay, supported by their Embassy and by Air Europa. Feedback from the participants was very positive, with everyone feeling that it would be invaluable in helping them better sell the destination.

On the 21st June we held a Meet the Media lunch at the Waterloo Bar and Grill in London. It was well supported by both members and press, with some 13 journalists in attendance, keen to hear more about what's new and newsworthy in Latin America.

Despite the traditional 'summer lull', we are now planning activities for coming months. The next general meeting will take place on the 21st September, this time with a Mexico theme. Please put the date in your diary – full details to follow. There is still the opportunity to sponsor the December General Meeting, so if this is of interest, please contact Claire or Kath as soon as possible. (office@lata.org)

In addition to events, your committee is currently reviewing both our PR activity and the website. Thank you to all of you who responded to the recent survey – there was some really useful feedback and ideas which we'll be aiming to build into plans for a 'new look', revamped LATA web presence.

TMLA fast approaches and both Claire and Ed are looking forward to seeing many of you there. And if there is any particular topic you'd like covered at the annual LATA seminar, please don't hesitate to let us know in advance so we can be sure to try to include it.

Future Events

LATA / Mexico Tourism Board Event. 21st September 2011, 18.30 -20.30 At the National Geographic Retail Shop, 83-97 Regent Street, London W1B 4EW.
Theme: The Mayas "A change of the Galactic era and a new beginning"

LATA Annual WTM Party will be on Tuesday 8th November, full details will be released soon.

Supporting vulnerable children in Colombia

The LATA Foundation is supporting an educational and development project run by Children of the Andes. It is the only project of its kind in the coffee-producing region and supports 170 children, all of whom come from impoverished backgrounds and dysfunctional families. Around half of the children are young offenders, having committed offences such as drug taking or petty crime. The project provides the emotional and practical support they need to return to school and offers vocational training in carpentry and in baking to prepare them for a better future.

"I have learnt many things here at the project. They treat me well. My favourite part is the woodworking. My parents are very proud of the changes they have seen in me since I started here." Sara, aged 15.

Jorge is 16 years old and comes from a broken home. He was referred to La Rayuela by the ICBF (Colombian Social Services) after getting involved in taking drugs and stealing. Jorge's family is highly dysfunctional. Their mother abandoned them a few years ago, and their father is the only role model. Until recently he was not good at controlling his temper, and often lashed out at his children. A few years ago, four of Jorge's brothers were taken into foster care and then adopted. Their father has never forgiven himself for allowing this to happen, but there is no way to get the children back now.

When Jorge came to the project he was aggressive and confrontational. He would not communicate with the project staff or other children at La Rayuela. He had no interest in going to school. Since he started attending the project however, things have changed. Jorge is no longer taking drugs or stealing; and is taking a renewed interest in his studies. Jorge's family have also been attending La Rayuela, taking part in family counselling sessions for the last six months. They now discuss things calmly rather than losing their tempers with one another.

Jorge's father says: "Since my son started coming here he has changed a lot. He no longer steals and has a new respect for other people's property. I have much more confidence in him, and I am actually excited about his future now and looking forward to seeing where life takes him. I am proud of him."

*Names have been changed in accordance with child protection protocols.

Emily Fyson, Project Development Coordinator, Children of the Andes adds; "Thank you for the wonderful support offered to this project by the LATA Foundation. The project has already had a real positive impact on some of the most vulnerable children in the coffee growing area, and on their families as well. The LATA Foundation is particularly grateful to the Drandjeaw Charitable Trust for their support for this project.

PooFest 2011 - Music Festival, Pootings, Near Westerham, Kent - 3 Sept 2011

The Pootings Music Festival has nominated the LATA Foundation their charity of the year. The festival features an eclectic mix of rock, folk and blues from The Charlie Rivers Band, Pete Shoulder, Alice Shaw, Standard Lamps and other exciting acts. There will be stalls, food and refreshments, a great day for all the family. Parking and camping facilities are available. NOTE: TICKETS MUST BE BOUGHT BEFORE THE EVENT. NO TICKET SALES ON THE DAY.

Adult tickets: £20 each. Children (under 17): £10 each.

To apply for tickets please contact www.poofest.co.uk or events@latafoundation.org

Laptop and Project Appeal

We recently appealed for a laptop, projector and educational materials to support the New Era Galapagos Foundation. This school provides extra-curricular educational classes for 100 youths and around 20 adults in San Cristobal. The school has an emphasis on conservation,

social development and language skills. Some of their former pupils are now working as tourists guides. We were introduced to New Era Galapagos Foundation by Doris Welsh of Ecoventura.

In response to our appeal, Ecuadorian Tours have kindly donated and delivered a laptop and the Fundación Galápagos in conjunction with Metropolitan Touring have pledged to provide a projector and educational materials. The Fundación Galápagos is supported by a number of boat operators. This is a great example of the travel industry working together to support our projects. Our thanks to all.

David Gilmour, Chairman, LATA Foundation.

LATA Health and Safety Update

The hotel scheme continues to make steady progress. There are now 762 properties graded green, 81 yellow and 19 red. An additional 273 properties have yet to complete the audit. Please can all members check the LATA website to verify if they still work with these hotels so we can prioritise accordingly. On the land transport scheme 414 audits have been returned (59% of overall audits issued). 385 are graded green, 28 yellow and 1 red. 31% of ground handlers have still not supplied a list of their transport suppliers. We have just circulated the report – please check if you work with any of these companies and chase accordingly. We cannot progress any further until this information is provided.

14 companies have signed up for the **Galapagos self-audit** at a cost of £85 + VAT per member per annum please email lloyd.boutcher@sunvil.co.uk if you would like to be included.

LATA Press & PR

Coverage

Recent press coverage for LATA and Latin America include – Time Out Magazine (circulation - 58,275) included an article on skiing in Chile with a LATA credit. Sean Thomas wrote a seven page article on Easter Island in the June issue of Sunday Times Travel Magazine (circulation - 66,391), Nigel Richardson wrote a feature article on Cuba – Fifty years on from the revolution - in the Daily Telegraph (Circulation - 622,719), Ian Belcher wrote an article called Lovestruck by Bolivia in The Sunday Times (circulation - 1,000,848) and Paul Croughton included a trip to Lima, Machu Picchu, Iguacu falls, Buenos Aires, Torres del Paine National Park, Perito Moreno Glacier and Santiago in an article on trips of a lifetime in The Sunday Times (circulation - 1,000,848).

Press Events

On Tuesday 21st June, the LATA Press Lunch was hosted at the Waterloo Bar & Grill. It was well attended by the following journalists – Pippa Jacks, Features & Supplements Editor – TTG; Sonia Soltani, Supplements Editor – Absolute Publishing; Alan Orbell, Management Editor – Selling Long Haul; Cathy Howes, Deputy Editor – You & Your Wedding and Cosmo Brides; Daniel Fulvio, Deputy Editor – Attitude Magazine and the following freelance writers - Nigel Richardson, Ian Belcher, Dave Richardson, Daniel Metcalfe, Sarah Gilbert and Kieran Meeke. The theme for the lunch was “what’s new for the 2011 / 2012 season in Latin America” and each of the attending LATA members discussed their news within their respective industries and geographical areas.

New Members and Membership News

We would like to welcome the following new members who have joined since the last newsletter.

Viajes Via Natura	20/7/2011	Local operators
Panamericana de Viajes	20/7/2011	Local operators
Dominican Republic Tourist Board	8/6/2011	Tourist Boards
ENIGMA	11/5/2011	Local operators
Costa Rica Inside	6/5/2011	Local operators

News from UK Members

Aerolineas Argentinas: As of 01 July we are flying 2 a week between Iguazu IGR and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. We also started flying from Mendoza MDZ to Santiago de Chile SCL. We have moved to a brand new terminal at EZE airport. All our flights now operate from Terminal C. www.aerolineas.com.ar

The Dominican Republic hails "Relaxploration" as a new concept in Tourism. The Dominican Republic is promoting a new compromise in travel called Relaxploration - where visitors get the best of both worlds: the opportunity to relax at one of the Dominican Republic's many beach resorts and then the chance to explore the country's immense natural diversity, staying at boutique hotels. The concepts of All-inclusive and Eco-tourism are shaking hands in the Dominican Republic where both vacation options can intertwine to create dynamic holiday packages. www.godominicanrepublic.com

Iberia: British Airways' Flyline in Bremen now also handles Iberia's groups for the British, Irish and Dutch markets. Contact details valid from 1st June 2011 are:
 Groups email address: groups.lon@iberia.com
 UK Groups Telephone: 020 3564 0280 - new number
 Ireland Groups Telephone: 1 407 3015 (unchanged)
 Netherlands Groups Telephone: 0202008193 (unchanged)
 UK/Ireland & Netherlands Groups Fax: 020 3564 0281 - new number

All current procedures relating to the requesting/booking of groups will remain the same.

Summer 2012 will see Orient-Express launch Palacio Nazarenas, a 55 all-suite hotel in a former palace and convent in Cuzco, and the company's most ambitious project to date. The urban retreat will encompass oxygenated suites crafted by local artisans, a full service spa offering an indigenous product range, iPads in every room loaded with insider city guides, and a 7m x 11m heated infinity edge pool has been created, a first for Cuzco. To see the latest news from Orient-Express go to www.orient-express.com/press

Senderos: Gareth from Senderos (www.senderos.co.uk) is looking forward to seeing many of you at TMLA. If you're a UK operator going to the show and would like to stay at our whale-watching partner Vida Sol e Mar, please let us know. info@senderos.co.uk

Our partner Rainforest Expeditions reports that Refugio Amazonas and Tambopata Research Center (TRC) have received the Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence, while Posada & Refugio Amazonas and TRC have now all achieved Rainforest Alliance Verification.

Steamond Journeys has a brand new website up-and-running:

www.steamondjourneys.com Clients and travel agents alike can view detailed information on each country throughout Latin America with a comprehensive A-Z travel guide combined with eye-catching images. Inspirational bespoke tours and a range of hotel descriptions are available in Brazil, Argentina and Colombia with more to follow. "Watch this space for regular updates and special offers."

Tam Airlines has doubled its capacity to Rio de Janeiro as of 02 August with the introduction of three new weekly services between London Heathrow and Rio. As well as attending to growing demand to Rio, the new services have also helped release capacity on the daily Sao Paulo service with its connecting flights to other key destinations in South America and Brazil. www.tamairlines.com

News from the Region

Antarctica

Antarctica XXI: We continue to consolidate as the leading international operator of Antarctic Air-Cruise expeditions by expanding our season from 45 to 90 days, starting from 2012-13. New itineraries, such as the "Heroic Antarctica" and "Polar Circle" Air-Cruises, will integrate the well-experimented "Antarctica Express" and "Classic Antarctica" Air-Cruises, all offered on board the modern ice-class vessel "M/V Ocean Nova". There will be 16 departures from early December until the end of February. www.antarcticaxxi.com

Antarctic Dream: We are launching our new Antarctic Polar Circle Crossing program, with departure from Ushuaia on the 06 JAN and turning back to Ushuaia on the 19 JAN, 2012, with the main goal to cross the Polar Circle at 66°33'44"S. We will be visiting places seldom seen by human beings, a true first-hand experience with Nature and its spectacular fauna, 14 days of expedition starting at GBP 4.400. www.antarcticdream.com

Antarpply Expeditions: Offers on board the M/V Ushuaia for the 2011-12 season:
Special discount of 10% - for all cabins with private facilities, categories A, Superior and Suites. **Special rates for families** - A child (under 16) accompanied by two adults will be free of charge in a triple Superior cabin or triple Suite
<http://www.antarpply.com/eng/dates-rates-11-12.php>

Our 2012-13 program will be announced shortly and will include exciting new itineraries such as Polar Quest, Weddell Sea Quest, and Classic South Georgia.
Contact: Ute Hohn-Bowen, Director ute@antarpply.com

Bolivia

Crillon Tours: Uyuni Airport was inaugurated on 11 July 2011, in this first phase - with two Bolivian Airlines: AMASZONAS on Tuesday & Saturday with a Fairchild Metro-liner aircraft for 19 passengers, and TAM on Monday & Friday with a Fokker F-27 for 30 passengers. UYUNI SALT FLATS programs will be more economic and comfortable, allowing operations of combined tours. The second phase will be ready by the middle of 2012, already qualified for larger aircraft. Weblink for news: <http://www.titicaca.com/English/ingNews.html>

Brazil

Metropolitan Touring Brasil: The vast Pantanal wetlands are growing in fame and popularity. We have developed two new programmes, combining either Pousada Mutum in the northern region or Pousada Caiman in the south. The dry season is perfect for observing wildlife while the wet provides the best bird displays. The new itineraries complement our aim to explore the country's rich natural and cultural diversity, including the Chapada Diamantina, Fernando de Noronha, or Lençóis Maranhenses. www.metropolitan-touring.com

Ponta Dos Ganchos is offering their RELAX package. Clients will enjoy a complimentary oceanfront couples massage and a relaxing butler-drawn rose bath with any stays of 3 nights or more (valid for stays between Sunday & Thursday through November 30th 2011).

For more information, please check our website:

<http://www.pontadosganchos.com.br> or contact Jennifer@jgblackbook.com

Chile

Posada de Mike Rapu / explora Rapa Nui, the first hotel in Latin America to earn LEED (Silver) Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council since it opened in 2007, has been named the #1 Resort in Central and South America in the 16th edition of Travel + Leisure's World's Best Awards 2011. Properties included in the World's Best Awards 2011 survey were rated by readers on characteristics, including rooms/facilities, location, service, restaurants/food, and value. www.explora.com

Metropolitan Touring Chile: We are delighted to offer a unique and breathtaking combination in the most far-flung region in the world: navigate through Patagonian Fjords, round Cape Horn and between impossibly-blue glaciers with Australis Cruises and then explore the wilds of Torres del Paine National Park with the team of explora Patagonia. Patagonia is one of Nature's last true frontiers – make sure your guests enjoy it with us! Rates from US\$4,000. More info: <http://bit.ly/EXPAUS>

Protours is always on the look-out for new destinations for our clients and recently we have (re)discovered the virgin Puelo Valley in the Southern Lake District. The emerald-coloured Puelo River cuts through an amazing landscape of mountains, winding gravel roads, hidden lakes and traditional farmhouses. From Puerto Montt it takes about 2 hours to get to Puelo with a hired car or by transfer and the ferry into the valley another hour: a guaranteed voyage to the past! <http://newsletter.protourschile.com/>

Construction work at **The Singular Patagonia** is rapidly coming to an end and the decoration phase is well underway. "As expected, our official opening date is set for 01 November. Our vision of Patagonia goes well beyond political frontiers; The Singular Patagonia has teamed up with Estancia Eolo in Argentina to offer complementary transfers between the properties and airports. Exploring Patagonia has never been so easy." www.thesingular.com

This October **Tierra Atacama Hotel & Spa** will host their Wellbeing Week, focused on renovating energies and revitalizing the soul! Daily activities include yoga classes, morning meditations, wellbeing themed excursions and complimentary spa treatments such as Thai massages, volcanic rock treatments and specialized salt scrubs. The hotel will feature a specialized healthy menu using local organic ingredients. There is no extra cost for guests staying in the all-inclusive program.

<http://www.tierraatacama.com/en-us/promotions/wellbeing-week.htm>

travelArt Chile: New attraction in Chile's Lake Region: Ayaltué Natural and Cultural Park, only a few kilometres from Puerto Montt, this new attraction has begun receiving its first visitors. Ayaltué Natural and Cultural Park offers enjoyable guided walks and small hikes on well-kept paths through the pristine north-Patagonian forest. An excursion to this park can easily be incorporated in any trip to the Lake Region. Read more on our website: <http://chile-reise.com/news/en/ayaltue-park-eng/>

Colombia

Colombia57: Christmas in Colombia is magical and is one of the best times of year to visit, although early booking is strongly recommended. In Cartagena & Santa Marta the climate is perfect and in Medellin the festive lights dazzle & Colombian's celebrate with their customary exuberance! Contact Brendan Rayment at Colombia57 for tailor made programmes to offer your clients on a group & individual basis. Email: brendan@colombia57.com

Colombian Journeys: Hacienda El Roble is the exclusive destination for lovers of organic specialty coffee and for those looking for accommodation and quality experiences. The small boutique house, with its typical architecture and careful decoration, is settled in the middle of 300 hectares of organic coffee being the largest growing shade in Colombia. Each corner of this Hacienda revives the history over 6 generations of coffee tradition. <http://www.cafemesa.com/hotel-mesa-de-los-santos/> www.colombianjourneys.com

Metropolitan Touring Colombia: Colombia's coffee region has been recognised by UNESCO as an area of both environmental and cultural synergy and sustainability. This acknowledgment identifies the unique landscape and traditions in the cultivation and production of Colombia's world-famous coffee in the west of the country. We have developed some great itineraries to explore this sensual world, which can easily be combined with as the "Gold Triangle" with Bogotá and Cartagena. For more, see <http://tinyurl.com/448o7tp>

Panamericana de Viajes: Santa Cruz de Mompox is a UNESCO World Heritage Patrimony that has been hidden to the world due to its precarious roads. Panamericana de Viajes is launching the new route to Mompox leaving every Friday from Cartagena, and returning on Sundays on a fast boat that will take you through Cartagena's bay, Canal del Dique and the river Magdalena. A journey full of culture and nature you will never forget. www.panamericanadeviajes.net

Costa Rica

Travel Excellence Achieves Global ISO 9001:2008 Certification. Travel Excellence has become the first and only incoming ground operator in Costa Rica, and in the region, to have a certified Quality Management System. "Being a leader-company in providing tourist incoming services in Costa Rica, we are proud to announce that all our efforts have been compensated with this prestigious certification. Our clients can be assured and confident to work with a company providing quality in services that have been internationally recognized."
www.travelexcellence.com

Ecuador / Galapagos

Ecuador Adventure with its exclusive Opuntia Eco Journeys and Hotels line of products has launched two new 5-day tours specially designed to provide the most incredible nature experience possible in the Galapagos Islands. "We invite you to be part of an amazing adventure! For more information please visit our website."

Opuntia Two Islands Multi-active Tour, 5 Days:

<http://www.opuntiagalapagoshotels.com/opuntia-tours/multiactive-tour-5days.html>

Opuntia Two Islands Wildlife Naturalist Tour, 5 Days:

<http://www.opuntiagalapagoshotels.com/opuntia-tours/wildlife-tour-5days.html>

Latin Trails is committed to improving relationships with fellow travel agencies and agents. They continue to participate in industry trade shows all over the world. The company invites you to visit them in the upcoming **Travelmart Latin America** in September and the **World Travel Market** in November. Finally, in order for to have access to up-to-date material, Latin Trails has also launched an extranet service for partners to find important information. Web: www.latintrails.com www.galapagoscatamarans.com www.galapagosodyssey.com
Web (Unbranded): www.ecuadorboutiquetravel.com www.galapagosjourneycruises.com
www.galapagosodysseyyacht.com www.galapagostravelblog.com

Metropolitan Touring Ecuador: September is definitely Yacht La Pinta's month: we are offering a 40% discount for departure Aug 26-Sep 06, and La Pinta at Yacht Isabela II's rate for the rest of September! In Quito, work progresses on the beautiful 31-room Casa Gangotena hotel and on Mashpi Lodge in the forests of the northwest. Need to get up-to-speed on the new 2012 itineraries for Galápagos? Get in touch to receive our brochures. Email: info@metropolitan-touring.com www.metropolitan-touring.com

Guyana

Wilderness Explorers will be attending the British Birdwatching Fair (19th-21st August) and will launch its new scheduled birding itinerary and give a lecture on Friday at 3.30 on *Ticking and dipping: Tourism and twitchers in Guyana*.

"We will also be holding our annual Guyanese Summer Evening on the 17th August. John Gimlette will be promoting Wild Coast, Donald Greig of Bradt will be talking about his recent expedition, and there will be presentations from Iwokrama, Caribbean Airlines and Tony Thorne". For more details contact: claire@wilderness-explorers.com

Mexico

Catherwood Travels is pleased to present a select group of Private Villas & Haciendas, exclusively for its most discerning clients. Located throughout the Yucatan, and offering luxury accommodations in extraordinary private settings, options range from in-town villas, carefully restored haciendas deep in the Yucatecan countryside, to an entire secluded Caribbean island within the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve.

<http://catherwoodtravels.com/?p=858>

Journey Mexico - International Tourism to Mexico on the Rise "Have you heard the news? International demand for Mexico is rocketing as new flights to Mexico continue to be added from cities like London, England; Lima, Peru; Sao Paulo, Brazil; and Madrid, Spain. As 2012 approaches, growing interest in the Mayan culture has travellers from around the world booking trips to Mexico. Russian travellers, specifically, grew 134% in 2010 and are projected to have increased 400% by 2012!" (<http://www.journeymexico.com/blog/russian-tourism-to-mexico-to-increase-400-in-2012/>)

Panama

EcoCircuitos Panama is offering new and exciting adventures across the Isthmus of Panama. These include our popular Jungle boat tour the Gatun Lake and Panama Canal, historical sites as San Lorenzo National Park and Portobello Forts, cultural encounters with the Kunas from San Blas, coffee tours and hikes to the Boquete highlands and more. Contact us for special packages and itineraries at: info@ecocircuitos.com www.ecocircuitos.com and for Panama news, visit our blog at: <http://ecocircuitospanama.wordpress.com/>

Peru

Amazonas Explorer is proud to have celebrated the 100-year discovery of Machu Picchu by featuring in the New York Times with an article called "The Hidden Route to Machu Picchu" detailing an expedition to all the Other sites Hiram Bingham visited during his explorations including Choquequirao, Espiritu Pampa, Vitcos and Llactapata.

<http://travel.nytimes.com/2011/06/26/travel/in-peru-machu-picchu-and-its-sibling-incan-ruins-along-the-way.html?emc=eta1>

By popular demand we have added two new dates for Choquequirao to Machu Picchu – details at http://www.amazonas-explorer.com/p4_fixed.asp?secc=2&arti=27

On the 7th July **Inkaterra Hotels** launched [inkaterra.tv](http://www.peru.inkaterra.tv) (<http://www.peru.inkaterra.tv>) - a live web channel streaming the celebrations commemorating the 100th anniversary of the rediscovery of Machu Picchu, and on its first day on-air received over 26,000 hits. "The permanent web channel will act as the first tourism-programming outlet promoting Peruvian tourism and culture. Once the Machu Picchu centennial comes to a close, it will remain on-air and will serve as an outlet for tourism partners in Peru to share educational and special interest programming."

Metropolitan Touring Peru - We recently launched a new, inspiring programme through the Peruvian highlands, discovering a vast variety of local ingredients and unique flavours, which make Peruvian cuisine one of the best and most varied in the world. In a 7-day programme, "Peru's Culinary and Wine experience" takes guests on a gastronomical and cultural journey, with outstanding cooking demonstrations, *pisco* wine-tasting, visits to fascinating Andean markets – all with the backdrop of Peru's amazing landscapes. www.metropolitan-touring.com

Mountain Lodges of Peru is proud to announce: Mr. Washington S. Galiano, Director of the Ecoteam, was honoured at the celebration of the 100 years of Hiram Bingham's rediscovery of Machu Picchu, for his wide and prolific scientific work and publications related to the biological wealth of Machu Picchu Protected Area. Our "Lodge-to-Lodge Ride to Machu Picchu" has been selected as one of National Geographic Traveller Magazine's 2011 "50 Tours of a Lifetime." Follow in the footsteps of the Incas on horseback and experience an extraordinary adventure." www.mountainlodgesofperu.com

Venezuela

Natoura Travel & Adventure Tours: In 2011 Natoura celebrates its 20th Anniversary. On this special occasion, the company has launched a new website www.natoura.com in 4 languages: English, German, French and Spanish. Besides the good old features, the new website aims to be more interactive by offering travellers and partners the opportunity to provide feedback on our trips, and on ecological or sustainable initiatives. In this way, we intend to keep on improving our performance for the years to come. www.natoura.com

The next Members' Newsletter will be published at the beginning of November 2011. Deadline for news will be 25th October.