

Living It Up **at the Bottom of the World**



or What I Did For My Summer Vacation

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Forever Winter

During the month of August most people choose to bask in the sunshine, stream sand between their toes, and enjoy everything summer fables stereotype it to be. Then again there is me, myself and I (trust me - my 3 personalities are more then grammatical)... Whether it's been all my head injuries or closet albinoism – I decided to do the reverse migration and head far south to the windy winter wilds of the Patagonia.



Chile – Seasonally a Double Entendre

My misadventures started in the wonderfully polluted city of Santiago. Wonderfully polluted? Diesel does offer a fragrance (although not related to jeans) and it's free! Anyway, Santiago is a chic city westward of the snow capped Andes. The inhabitants are delightfully friendly, hardworking, and ingenious. They make fantastic hosts too! Case in point my good friends Maria Paz, Cristian and their little Elisa - who between the conversations & attractions/ wineries & museums/ restaurants (including a meal of abalone... felt guilty however had no indigestion) & beaches/ avocados & penguins showcased Chilean hospitality to its ultimate warmth. Now if only I purchased that Alpaca wool sweater – my body temperature would have been synchronous.



Patagonian Prowl

Catching up with friends and sightseeing is all nice – but really isn't that what Facebook and the Discovery Channel are for? The main driver for blowing my income tax refund (first time in my life this did not go towards savings or investments) was to chase the elusive dream of skiing - gaucho style in the Argentine Patagonia.



Joining a backcountry/ radonne tour (What we have to hike uphill?), we ventured around a few distinct locations for 10 days of pure powder pleasure. The Andes are a whole new experience in terrain, weather, scenery and snow. The skiing is not necessarily better than that of North America or Europe - just different. The only constant is gravity, whose energetic pull propelled some of the most memorable turns I have ever had.



For me ¾ of skiing is the adventure and touring through this landscape is a rapturous Valhalla. The earth embraces the eternal sky in a dance of clouds, mountain tops, volcanic spires, pampas foothills - all populated with soaring condors and wild guanacos (little llamas). When no critters can be found, a comfort in the vast solitude is a surprising bliss.



Photo by Me (Skier Not Me)

The nights were just as unforgettable, accented by fantastic company, epicurean provisions, the divinest of wine, and for some unknown Patagonian cultural phenomena the timeless sounds of Bob Marley and Rock DJ himself Robbie Williams. Ski, Eat, Drink and Be Merry may seem to have one too many words to be poetic – but an accurate description nevertheless.



Theory of Relativity: *Hell Hath No Fury...*

Relationships are like traffic patterns: Sometimes people run parallel, sometimes opposite and other times they collide. Relationships are also all a matter of relative perspective and in my 10 days with my travel partner it is surprising acts of road rage did not occur. But this is a blessing as given the circumstance; my stellar empathy, flexibility, politeness, and class (surprisingly not a misspelling for crass) will factor into my future nomination for sainthood.

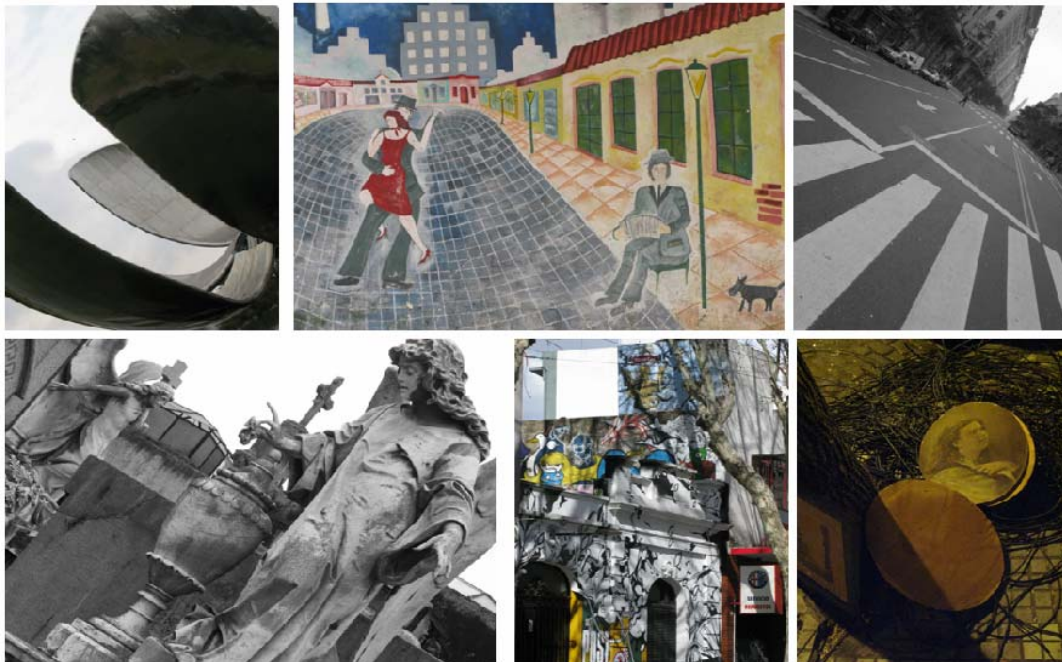


Atlantis, Shangri-La

Between visiting significant friends, sampling the scenery, and even witnessing how McWorld has tainted Buenos Aires since my last visit; I could (and have) scribe volumes on this wondrous place. But to keep it simple: (akin to Montreal – but different) it's a astounding city that does not quite belong in the Americas or possibly anywhere for that matter.



Any guidebook will tell you that Buenos Aires has 1 psychologist/ 30 people. One could say this is even evident in the urban design of the city as when flying over it (both in an airplane or the ethereal plane of our collective unconscious) you cannot help but notice the city is a giant Rorschach inkblot ;) And if this interpretation is reflective of the ultimate psychological state of self actualization – my days in Buenos Aires made it a great place to reconcile perspectives, personalities, passions, purpose, past, present and possibly future. SC



PS

After rereading my last paragraph I realize I may need to stop watching David Lynch movies.

