

# Landfall Living

A SOCIAL MAGAZINE FOR THE RESIDENTS OF LANDFALL · JUNE 2012



Spencer, Ava and Harrison

cookies

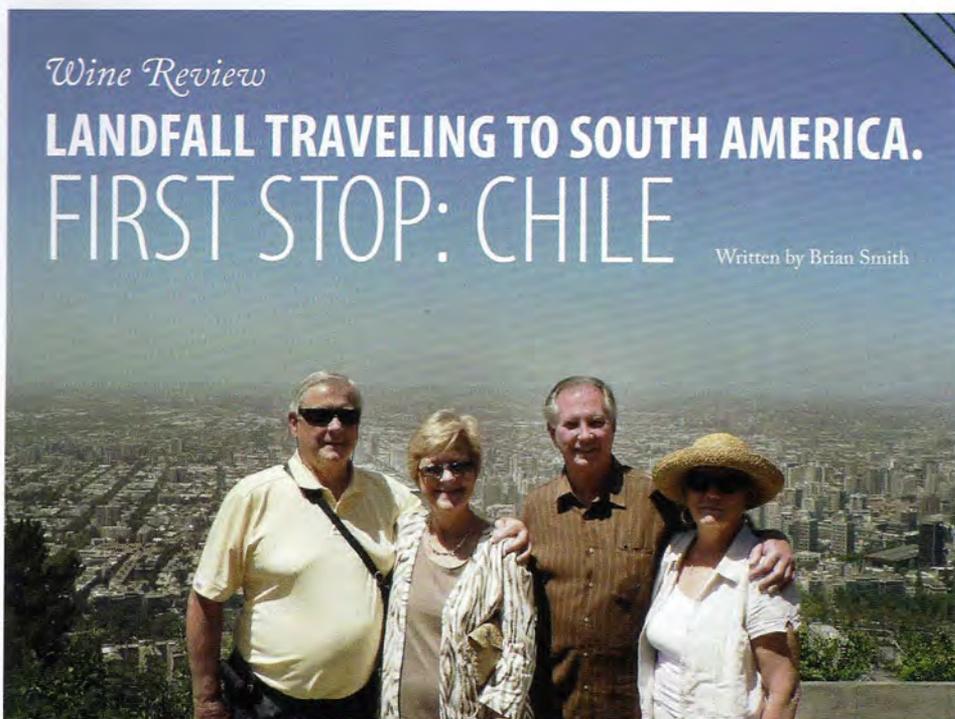
50¢

ALL  
Profits GO  
to the

Humane Society

lemonade

50¢



Bon Voyage to the McMillans, Robinsons and Smiths along with Angie Fanning and Nicole Saunders

About a year ago Peggy and I were out to dinner with our good friends and frequent traveling companions, Barb and Ken Robinson. Invariably, our conversations always drift toward our wish lists of faraway places we want to visit. It turns out both couples have had our sights on "the Paris of South America," Buenos Aires which, that evening, led to a unanimous decision that we should definitely start the planning process. I must admit I really enjoy the pre-trip planning: when to go, hotels, sights to see, restaurants and most importantly [for me at least] wineries to visit.

The 'when to go' part is relatively easy to figure out for this trip. Winter in North America is summertime in South America, so we focused in on January and February. While we could adequately plan our trip from Wilmington using the usual guide books and the internet we all wanted something more than just adequate.

Enter Angie Fanning and her AwayBug Travel Company and Nicole Saunders. Angie works in Country Club of Landfall's administrative office and, of course, Nicole is in charge of Landfall's Wine Club. Travel expertise is right in our own backyard! Angie and Nicole have been putting together traveling programs for the past several years for CCL members and non-members alike. Angie and Nicole were a great team and we could not have been more pleased.

But wait. Turns out six others were having Angie and Nicole planning basically the same trip: The three McMillan brothers [Bill, Tom and Bob] and their wives [Francis, Toni and Tia] were also going to be heading down to South America at the same time. The Robinsons and Smith's started in Santiago, Chile and ended up in Buenos Aires while the McMillans did just the opposite. Both groups took flight from Wilmington on January 24th and returned February 11th. We ran across each other wearily snaking through the immigration line in the Atlanta airport on the 11th after our overnight flights back to the States.

The week prior to our adventures, Angie and Nicole thoughtfully arranged for a bon voyage cocktail party and dinner for all ten travelers in CCL's main dining room. Chef Bobby put together a wonderful five-course South American



themed menu which Nicole paired with appropriate wines including wines from two of the wineries we were scheduled to visit. Nice send off.

For us, the Chile part of the trip was somewhat of an afterthought. Our original intention was only to go to Argentina [Buenos Aires and Mendoza] but during our initial planning Barb Robinson suggested that, since we were going to be down that way and close to Chile during our time in Mendoza [the western part of Argentina], why not start in Santiago before we went to Mendoza. Great idea! I do not think any of us had any expectations about Santiago one way or the other. Certainly not like the anticipation we had about Buenos Aires. Turns out that Santiago was a pleasure to visit. Chile has had steady economic growth [as well as political stability] over the past number of years leading to today's strong economy. They even managed to pretty much bypass the recent worldwide economic downturn. Santiago with almost five million people is the hub and we found a bustling, vibrant, sophisticated city with impressive high rise architecture along with first class restaurants. Seafood is a specialty. I think we had genuine "Chilean sea bass". I think I do know we had real Conger eel which was quite good. As I mentioned, it was summer in South America and we experienced daytime temperatures in the 90's but the humidity was comfortable. Interesting to look off to the distance and see snow on the Andean peaks. I do not think I have been in any other major city in the world with as much open green/park space as Santiago.

Through her excellent connections in South America, Angie



arranged for a terrific guide [Marcelo] and driver who were with us from airport pickup our first morning to depositing us in Mendoza after a drive over the Andes four days later. In between, we had a city/sightseeing tour and a full day touring wineries in the Colchagua Valley just south of Santiago.

Chile is now the 9th largest wine producing country in the world and ranks 5th in exports. The conditions for grape growing are described as midway between the best growing areas of California and France. Sounds and is ideal. We tasted some wonderful wines: Cabernets, Merlots, Syrahs, Malbecs, Chardonnays and wines made from Carmenera which is considered Chile's signature grape. At one time Carmenera was one of six red blending grapes used to make wine in Bordeaux. For whatever reason Carmenera was dropped and this grape is now rarely found in France. Chilean wine makers have made it their own. When picked late [fully ripe] these wines are deep red in color with aromas of red fruit, spices and berries with gentle soft tannins which make for enjoyable early drinking. Did I mention that Carmeneres are relatively inexpensive for the quality? For less than \$20 these wines are all available locally: Carmen Gran Reserva, Vina Tabali and Montes Alpha [rated 91 by Parker].

In next month's issue of Landfall Living we drive over the Andes into Mendoza for three nights, fly to Buenos Aires for a week and wrap up our trip with two nights in the gaucho town of San Antonio de Areco with a visit to an estancia.

Try a Carmenera. They are kind of like Malbecs and I have not had a bad one yet.