



Landfall Living

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A Beautiful Landfall Home

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*Wine Review***MENDOZA TO BUENOS AIRES TO SAN ANTONIO de ARECO***(The final Chapter of an amazing trip)* Written By Brian Smith

We flew from Mendoza to Buenos Aires. It was about an hour and a half flight. Luckily, there were no border crossings on this part of the trip.

Did Buenos Aires meet our expectations? Absolutely and then some! It was hard not to appreciate and enjoy this complex, energetic, seductive city with over three million inhabitants who are called portenos [people of the port] because most have immigrant origins from Italy, Spain and France. The elegance of Europe and the spirit of South America are combined to make up one fabulous city. The European culture, the wide boulevards, theaters, museums, art galleries, distinct neighborhoods and outdoor cafes has earned Buenos Aires the well-deserved nickname of “the Paris of South America”.

Fortunately, the tumultuous political upheaval that has marred Argentina’s past since the republic was founded in 1816 has settled down. No question that the passion is still there but, for the most part, citizens of Argentina have made their choices through democratic elections rather than the military takeovers and coup d’etats of prior years. If you want to read fascinating history check out what Argentina has been through over the past 200 years.

Economically there is some good news and bad news for tourists. In 2001 the Argentinean peso [up to that point on par with the US dollar] was devalued which was great for tourists since the dollar bought more pesos. The current exchange rate is around 4.4 pesos to 1 dollar. The bad news is that the annual inflation rate now runs around 20%- 25%. Overall we found prices are still below what we would expect to pay in the States but at inflation levels running these high prices will quickly catch up.

The McMillans put us on to the accommodation we stayed in for seven nights. The Poetry Building, in Recoleta, has eighteen apartments which have been fashioned from a former mansion occupied for over 100 years by an aristocratic family. The flats range from studios up to two bedrooms. The Smiths and Rob-
insons each had our own apartment with bedroom, bath, living room, dining area and fully equipped kitchen. It was very nice; very much like home. Recoleta is an upscale residential part of the city combining Parisian architecture and modern apartment buildings. The area is loaded with food stores, restaurants and shopping. Kind of like the Upper East Side of NYC. Each

evening we met in one or the other of our apartments to enjoy a glass [or two] of wine and snacks prior to going to dinner. If you are interested in traveling to Buenos Aires please Google “Poetry Building”. You will be glad you did.

We did the usual touristy things with an excellent guide arranged by Angie Fanning and we did a lot on our own. Buenos Aires is very easy to get around. Taxis are plentiful. We rode the subway which opened in 1913 [the A line has old wooden paneled train cars from the Paris Metro]; went to all the museums; saw a tango show as well as tango performed on the street; visited street fairs and outdoor markets; toured the Presidential Palace [stood on Evita’s balcony]. We walked around Puerto Madero. The 1880’s era docklands have been revitalized to now become the newest upscale residential area. We watched the Giants win the Super Bowl [the game was broadcast only in Spanish but we did not need an interpreter] and experienced a blackout while we were eating dinner one night. [Had no candles but my well prepared friend Ken had a pocket flashlight and the chef was cooking with gas!] We had after dinner drinks at the Alvear Palace Hotel [the best in BA made even better by the 70 year old Armagnac], took a boat ride up river to the little market town of Tigre, walked through the famous Recoleta cemetery where Evita is buried and lots of other activities which took full advantage of this exciting city.

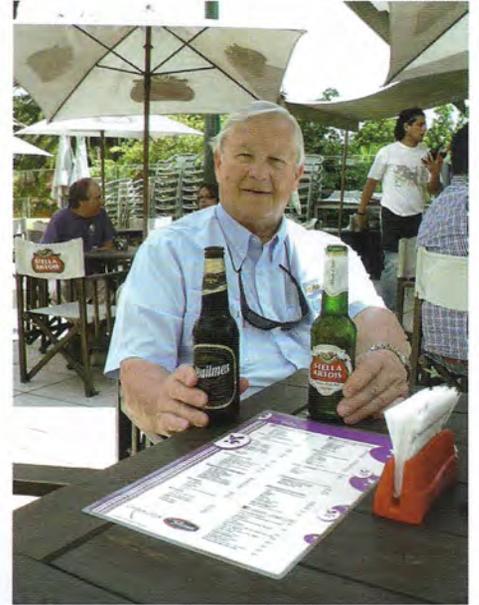
Buenos Aires offers world class dining. We had some terrific meals coupled with outstanding wines. I could write another whole article on the food we ate and the many wines we drank on this trip but I will refrain from being too boring. I will, however, mention an interesting growing trend in Buenos Aires [and many other cities] called “closed door restaurants”. It is not a restaurant at all but dinners served in the homes or facilities of private chefs. Most are open only three nights a week. Reservations are a must. Menus are fixed. We went to Casa SaltShaker at Dan Perlman’s home in Recoleta. Dan is an American and has been living in BA for the past 15 years. There were nine of us sitting at Dan’s dining room table where we enjoyed five courses each paired with a suitable wine. It was a pretty good meal with lively conversation. We also went to Casa Mun. Chef Mun specializes in Asian cuisine. He had been entertaining guests in his home but his dinners became so popular he now owns a dedicated second floor walkup which he uses just for his “closed door” functions. There were more guests [around 25] but the party atmosphere started as we all milled about on the side



"Gaucho entertainment at El Ombu"



"An outdoor market"



"Wine was not the only thing we drank."



"Puerto Madero"



"Silver worker in San Antonio"



"Gaucho horse whisperer"



continued

Wine Review
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walk in a residential area waiting for the front door to open at 9pm. Champagne helped to continue the party upstairs followed by five outstanding courses served with well matched wines. Wonder how Wilmington would respond to this kind of dining?

We decided to end our trip with a two night stay in the town of San Antonio de Areco in the pampas about 70 miles north of Buenos Aires. San Antonio dates from the early 18th century and is known for preserving gaucho traditions and exquisite silverwork. This is a charming quiet little town and met our needs to decompress before returning home. We spent the day at estancia El Ombu for a day in the country. We went horseback riding [we rode in a horse drawn cart!], had a fabulous lunch of grilled meats served with their own label Malbec and gaucho entertainment afterwards.

If you are thinking of going to Chile or Argentina the Robinsons and Smiths would be more than happy to give you any assistance we can. We have all the guide books and can recommend Angie Fanning and her Awaybug Travel company. I can also give you my under used *Spanish for Dummies!*



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