

ENCHANTING CHILE

by **Nora Walsh**

Chile is a wonderland of natural beauty nestled on a thin stretch of land between the Pacific Ocean and the Andes Mountains in South America. From the Atacama Desert's breathtaking lunar landscape to Patagonia's soaring peaks and legendary glaciers–and the lakes, beaches, volcanoes, vineyards and cosmopolitan cities in between–Chile has it all. It's also safe, affordable, bursting with culture, and offers the flexibility to combine peaceful relaxation with high-adrenaline adventures, making it an unparalleled honeymoon destination.

Image Credit: Michael Stolp-Smith

Just as a wedding planner knows the best vendors, negotiates great rates, alleviates stress and saves a couple's time handling the legwork and logistical matters, so too does a full-service tour operator when it comes to planning a honeymoon. Boutique travel outfitter Upscape is the definitive choice for custom journeys in Chile.

Founded by New York native Brian Pearson, the company is located in Santiago and has been operating for over a decade. Pearson and his bilingual staff have longstanding relationships with the top airlines, boutique hotels, chefs, wineries, and a myriad of specialists who have exclusive access to authentic experiences that are far off-the-beaten path. Upscape manages every detail from start to finish and provides expert guidance on where to go and when, what to do, what to pack and how to personalize a trip to make it truly unforgettable.

CAPITAL CITY, *SANTIAGO*

What was once a stopover city has since evolved into a sophisticated cosmopolitan destination with top-flight restaurants, a thriving arts and music scene, and a spate of new boutique hotels catering to Santiago's upsurge of international travelers. Bound by the mighty Andes and the coastal cordillera, the city is dotted with tree-laden hills where it's not uncommon to find local couples enjoying the panoramic views. The home of Pablo Neruda, Santiago's most famous poet, has been transformed into a museum that is a great place to buy a book of his passionate poems. Strolling through the city's neighborhoods, parks and plazas, it's easy to feel Santiago's old-world charm with its Neo-Baroque museums and mansions, and its contemporary spirit with modern skyscrapers, haute cuisine, sidewalk cafes and wine bars. There's a lot to see and do, and since Santiago is a central transportation hub, most travelers pass through more than once providing additional time to explore the city.



Luxury boutique hotels are popping up all over Santiago. Many have planted roots in the city's fashionable neighborhoods of Barrio Lastarria and Bellavista. Barrio Lastarria is a well-preserved cultural neighborhood with cobblestone streets, top museums and locally-loved "restobars". Styled after a neoclassical residence, The Singular Santiago has a rooftop pool and terrace bar, and a unique menu of spa treatments. Nearby, Lastarria Boutique Hotel and Luciano K are two 1920s properties that have been meticulously restored by the same owners. Both have original architectural details, swimming pools and historic charm. The bohemian district of Bellavista is flush with funky places to eat and drink, live music and colorfully-painted townhouses. Here, couples can stay at The Aubrey, an impressive Tudor Revival estate with honeymoon suites, a piano bar and a backyard oasis with a lap pool and city views. Equally chic and intimate is the neighborhood's iconic red mansion, Castillo Rojo, whose castle-inspired stonework, unexpected nooks and antique furniture ooze romance.



The towering granite pillars of Torres del Paine have been beckoning outdoor enthusiasts for decades. While trekking is a huge draw for most travelers, Torres del Paine National Park and the surrounding steppe offer exciting excursions for every fitness level including boat rides to the glistening Grey Glacier, biking around turquoise lagoons, strolling through old-growth forests, horseback riding, kayaking and fly fishing. A declared UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the park is great for spotting wildlife including flocks of flamingoes, ostrich-like rhea, guanacos, foxes, huemul, pumas and the Andean Condor. Declared the Eighth Wonder of the World by popular vote, travelers to Torres del Paine must pack a sense of adventure as Mother Nature is fickle in this rugged corner of the world, but the region's undeniable beauty far surpasses its unpredictable weather.

WBM FAST FACT

Chile's weather seasons are opposite of the Northern Hemisphere's



Long-necked rhea and grazing guanacos welcome guests to this striking low-slung retreat constructed almost entirely of native Lenga wood, allowing the hotel to seamlessly blend with its extraordinary natural surroundings. Located on a bluff within Torres del Paine National Park, every room overlooks magnificent views of Lago Sarmiento and the looming monoliths of Paine Massif. Expert guides lead guests on scenic voyages to the park's glaciers, ice floes and feathery forests and on exhilarating hikes including the world-famous trek to the base of Torres del Paine. Tierra Patagonia subscribes to an adventure spa philosophy, where guests spend their days pursuing once-in-a-lifetime adventures and their evenings relaxing in Uma Spa's glass-walled swimming pool equipped with jets and water cascades to massage aching muscles. Body treatments, a sauna, steam room and an outdoor hot tub are also available. All-inclusive packages are perfect for honeymoon travelers as they include a wide-range of guided activities, three gourmet meals per day, cocktails, Chile's finest wines, and airport transfers. And with no televisions or WiFi in the rooms, there's more time for romance. Upon checkout, honeymooners have a tree planted in their honor, a symbol of their love to watch grow over time.



The Singular Patagonia experience begins with a funicular ride that takes guests down to the lobby. Housed in a century-old restored refrigeration plant near the charming fishing town of Puerto Natales, the hotel is a family-owned National Monument steeped in history and character. Daily tours wind through The Singular's industrial-chic interiors passing old-fashioned machinery and faded photographs that provide a vivid depiction of the area's sheep farming past. Built along the Last Hope Sound, The Singular's two high-speed boats take guests on private expeditions to explore Patagonia's scenic fjords, channels and islands. With over 20 curated excursions, honeymooners can visit nearby attractions like the pre-historic Mylodon Cave, horseback rides to local estancias, kayak in the bay or trek farther afield to Torres del Paine National Park. Staying put is also an attractive option with the hotel's 3,000-sq.ft. eco-spa, whose floor-to-ceiling windows overlook the fast moving waters of the sound, or head to the gourmet restaurant to feast on Patagonian lamb, South American king crab and locally grown white strawberries.



Flying from southern Patagonia to northern Patagonia's Lake District lands travelers in Puerto Montt, a 25-minute drive from Puerto Varas, one of Chile's first Bavarian German settlements established in the mid-1800s. Today, it is a thriving resort town overlooking Lago Llanquihue and the twin volcanoes: Osorno and Calbuco. Fairytale churches, gingerbread-style houses shingled with ancient cypress trees, dairy farms and locally brewed beer reveal the region's alpine influence.

Often referred to as the Switzerland of South America, Chile's Lake District offers a spectacular road trip through the area's shimmering lakes, snowcapped volcanic peaks and dense forests. Driving from Puerto Varas to Pucón takes anywhere from four hours to a full day depending on traffic and pit-stops at scenic overlooks and quaint villages. Set on the southern shore of Lago Villarrica and surrounded by national parks, Pucón is a postcard-perfect playground for thrill-seekers and nature lovers offering a myriad of outdoor activities from trekking volcanoes and rafting to fly fishing and sailing.



Pucón may already be the adventure capital of Chile, but Vira Vira Hacienda Hotel is putting it on the luxury map. The all-inclusive, impeccably designed lodge is owned by a Swiss couple who offer warm hospitality at every turn. Built from sustainably-sourced native wood on a grassy expanse overlooking the Liucura River, the hotel is a holistic retreat surrounded by 100 acres of pristine wilderness, protected parkland and imposing volcanoes. Vira Vira, which translates to "herb of life" in the indigenous Mapuche language, operates a small-scale farm and uses its own fruits, vegetables, honey, grains, eggs, yogurt, milk and artisanal cheeses in its harvest-to-table restaurant. Cooking classes are a popular activity, as are guided excursions to old-growth forests with 1,000-year-old monkey-puzzle trees, waterfalls and natural hot springs. Other favorites include treks to Villarrica Volcano's smoking crater and hikes to breathtaking peaks at Huerquehue National Park that end with swims in a freshwater lagoon.



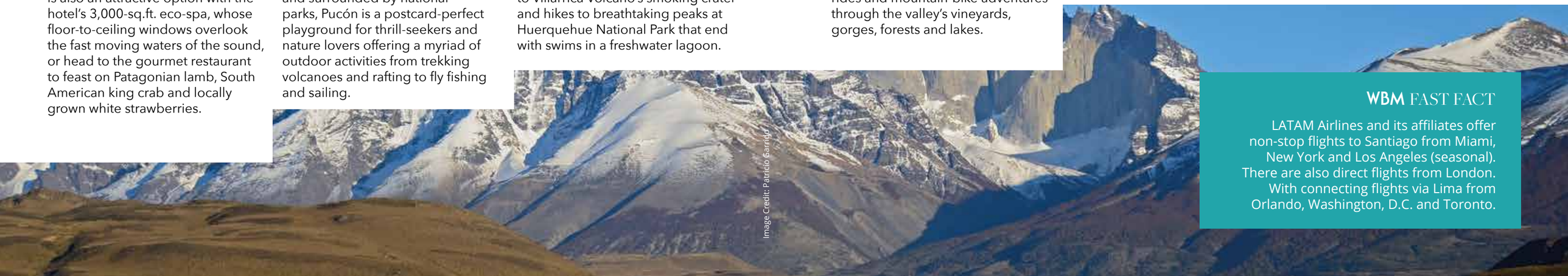
Chile is a wine lover's dream. Its mosaic of climates and terroirs produce some of the highest quality red and white wines in the world. Cradled in the lush, sloping hillsides of Chile's Central Valley—a two-hour drive south of Santiago—the Millahue Valley has become one of the country's hottest wine destinations thanks to Norwegian entrepreneur Alexander Vik. Millahue, translating to 'place of gold' in the native Mapuche language, offers 11,000 fertile acres composed of 12 distinct terroirs and six micro-valleys. Vik purchased the land over a decade ago to pursue his dream of producing Bordeaux-quality wine. Cultivating the land and constructing a high-tech winery soon followed, yielding his signature vintage: a complex blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Carménère, Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Visitors can enjoy winery tours and private tastings, as well as horseback rides and mountain-bike adventures through the valley's vineyards, gorges, forests and lakes.



There's nothing more fitting for a romantic getaway than spa and wine, even more so when combined in one sublime location. The 22-room hotel at Viña Vik is the ultimate wine retreat, perched high above an emerald sea of vineyards with 360-degree views of rolling hills and valleys. Owners Alexander and Carrie Vik have blurred the lines between an art gallery and a luxury resort by inviting 35 artists to design site-specific artwork, leaving a surprise behind every door. Glass walls are topped with an undulating Ghery-inspired titanium roof that glints gold in the sunlight. The open-air dining room stocked with VIK wines sits above a cantilevered infinity pool overlooking the vineyard. A half day spent luxuriating in the wine spa is a true highlight. Couples are renewed with antioxidant-rich wine baths, grapeseed scrubs, warm mud wraps and rosehip oil massages.



The Atacama Desert is a surreal tapestry of magical landscapes. Star-scattered skies glitter with constellations that can only be seen in this part of the world. Salt flats are sprinkled with pink flamingos grazing in vibrant lagoons. Fields of geysers spout steam into the early dawn. Rust-colored ravines are covered with towery cacti. Volcano-hemmed horizons spontaneously billow with smoke. Hot springs gurgle. And candy-colored sunsets cast a rose glow across lunar-like valleys. San Pedro de Atacama acts as the region's central hub. This lively bohemian village is home to a historic adobe church, an archaeology museum, craft shops and scores of restaurants and bars to reminisce the day's adventures.



WBM FAST FACT

LATAM Airlines and its affiliates offer non-stop flights to Santiago from Miami, New York and Los Angeles (seasonal). There are also direct flights from London. With connecting flights via Lima from Orlando, Washington, D.C. and Toronto.



Blending into the jagged terracotta-hued ridge of the Salt Mountain Range, the Alto Atacama Desert Lodge & Spa is a stunning oasis. The sustainable property features a one-of-a-kind "Andescape," complete with Inca baths, native flora, a mineral rock garden and a llama corral. Professional guides lead guests on half and full-day excursions from hiking through river canyons and soaking in thermal springs to mountain biking and 4x4 expeditions. By day, the resort offers six outdoor plunge pools for sunbathing and by night, guests can stargaze from the lodge's private observatory platform. The Puri Spa's treatment menu inspired by ancient rituals kindles romance with a candlelit couple's massages under the stars, while Caur Restaurant hosts weekend asados where guests can experience an authentic Andean barbeque.



Tierra Atacama Hotel & Spa is as visually striking as its surroundings. The high-design hotel pairs Scandinavian-inspired furnishings with natural wood, stone and adobe elements. Every room has a private terrace, open-air shower, handwoven textiles and spectacular views of Lincancabur Volcano. Experienced guides lead guests on a variety of expeditions to picnic at turquoise-tinged Altiplanic lagoons, sandboard dunes in Death Valley, explore ancient Petroglyphs or climb Toco Volcano for a bird's-eye-view of Bolivia. There's also an impressive infinity pool with an adjacent spa featuring volcanic mud and desert salt therapies, a steam room and a Turkish bath. In the evening, honeymooners can linger around fire pits sipping Pisco Sours or take a private fireside soak in an outdoor bath filled with rose petals and aromatic oils with a side of sparkling Chilean wine to savor as Atacama's famous night sky comes alive.

WBM FAST FACT

Chile and the East Coast have similar time zones, which means less jet lag and more time for adventures like hiking Torres del Paine National Park.

