

BOLIVIA

# CRILLON TOURS

*Celebrates Golden Anniversary  
1958 - 2008*



LATIN AMERICA  
TRAVEL WORLD NEWS - SECTION THREE - MARCH 2008

# Crillon Tours Celebrates Golden Anniversary 1958 - 2008

Crillon Tours Titicaca-Hydrofoils – the pioneer of incoming tourism in Bolivia – celebrates their 50th anniversary and looks ahead to a brilliant future.

JENNIFER M. LANE

**T**he decade of the 50's saw the world recovering from the destruction of the Second World War, the launch of the first musicals and cinemascope, the boom of the most romantic music ever composed, and NASA joining the space race in 1958. That same year, the great Pelé became the youngest world champion footballer at the age of just 17, and Charles de Gaulle was proclaimed President of France.

In Bolivia, on April 9, 1958, a young European named Darius Morgan was obstinately converting a dream – born on the shores of Lake Titicaca – into reality. He opened Crillon Tours and became the pioneer of incoming tourism in Bolivia.

Mr. Morgan understood from the very beginning that all countries have their unique beauties and own attractions, but four elements were necessary to build up a new destination: to work from sunrise to sunset; to develop proper infrastructure; to follow international trends; and to start a permanent and professional worldwide promotion. Crillon Tours started the Hydrofoil operation on Lake Titicaca and has created countless exceptional programs. Now they are offering special adventure experiences at the "Uyuni Salt Lake" and programs for seniors, as well as regional itineraries with the neighboring countries.

Crillon Tours is now celebrating its 50th anniversary and Darius Morgan's dream is now a successful tourism reality. The second generation of Morgan's now heading Crillon Tours is still able to rely on the vision and wise counsel of its founder. During these last 50 years, they have always been able to count on the unwavering support of friends and colleagues around the world.

On April 9, 2008, our friends at Crillon Tours will have many reasons to celebrate, because they are looking forward into a brilliant future of receptive tourism in Bolivia and their commitment to excellence in services and full satisfaction of their visitors.

## Half a Century of Achievements

**FACTS:** As pioneers and leaders of incoming tourism in Bolivia, Crillon Tours have always adapted to the dynamic of a changing world, elaborating on new products while updating their local and regional programs. Crillon Tours also counts on the committed, experienced and creative support of 130 professionals, willing to turn tourists' dreams into reality.

**TRENDS:** New trends focus on adventure with comfort programs, and a wide range of special interests. Security, sanitary control and assertive information on the social and polit-



Crillon Tours started the Hydrofoil operation on Lake Titicaca.

ical situation in Bolivia are the best complements to ensure efficient and reliable service. Three new departments have been created: Incentive MICE Bolivia, Adventure, and Crisis Management.

**ECOLOGICAL POLICIES:** "Sustainable Tourism with Social Responsibility is our sincere and deep commitment to the country and to our customers," assures Darius Morgan Jr. Since 1978, he has been implementing the first environmental policies in Bolivia, based on the necessary entailment between environmental and social problems.

**OWN INFRASTRUCTURE:** The company features a fleet of 16 transport units, seven Hydrofoils and two unique hotels on Lake Titicaca, as well as "Posada del Inca" Eco-Lodge on Sun Island, and the "Inca Utama Hotel & SPA" in Huatajata, a different hotel concept, aimed at visitors interested in cultural contents.

## The Andean Hub

Crillon Tours offers the widest range of tourism possibilities throughout Bolivia, as well as Regional Fixed Departures in South America. They became an Andean Hub and the "Reservation Center" of the most successful selling areas in the continent. International programs with the neighboring countries are what worldwide Tour Operators are now looking for.

## A Glimpse at the Most Exciting Bolivian Highlights

Crillon Tours has crystallized many natural highlights of

Bolivia into appealing programs, which are now included in most of the Continental itineraries. When they started the Hydrofoil service on Lake Titicaca and developed a complete infrastructure of buses and hotels, Bolivia became a reliable and promising destination.

Lake Titicaca is reached from La Paz by a road running parallel to the royal snow-crowned peaks of the Andes. A Hydrofoil cruise will take travelers to the gorgeous and peaceful Sun Island.

The charming "Posada del Inca" Eco-Lodge is located on the top of the Island, in the middle of a bucolic setting. At Moon Island, visit the "Inca Uyu" Ruins, the Temple of the famous "Virgins of the Sun." The Urus Iruitos Floating islands, Pariti and Kalauta Islands, are also part of their exclusive circuits on Lake Titicaca.

In Huatajata on the shore of Lake Titicaca is located the "Inca Utama Hotel & Spa," a different hotelier concept which introduces guests to the Andes cultures. It offers complete relaxation, health massages, the Andean Roots Eco village, delicious food, gorgeous scenery and impacting night Museums.

This city of La Paz transports travelers to a mysterious past where any corner on any street is a hidden treasure with traditions and magic rites. The Indian Markets, Witch Doctor's Market and breathtaking panoramas are all framed by the majestic "Illimani" mountain. The Moon Valley is a clay formation resembling the face of the Moon.

At Tiwanaku, discover Aymara ruins dating back to 1580 BC. The Sun Gate, the Temple of Kalasasaya and the Pyramid of Akapana are samples of a glorious past. Tiwanaku was an agrarian based economy, with outstanding achievements in agriculture, hydraulics, architecture and medicine, as well as in social organization.

The largest salt lake on Earth at Uyuni Salt Flats offers unmatched stunning sceneries. The noise of silence makes the heart beat faster and the surreal pentagons of crystalline salt, the pure sky, the color lagoons, the cacti and the flamingos will certainly make you feel that there is not another place like this in the whole world.

Other highlights in Bolivia include Sucre, the seigniorial colonial and constitutional capital of Bolivia and Potosi, the historical city of Bolivia. It is said that "Cerro Rico" in the hub of the town produced so much silver during the Colony, that it was possible to build a solid silver bridge from Potosi to Madrid.

Santa Cruz de la Sierra is the exuberant tropical area of Bolivia, and offers unlimited possibilities and fabulous hotels. Enjoy orchids and a butterfly park, fabulous panoramas, the Jesuit Missions and the Ruins of Samaipata.

Many National Parks at the High Plateau as well as in the tropics are also offered by Crillon Tours. Their website, [www.titicaca.com](http://www.titicaca.com), showcases their most popular tours, incentive tours, and special interest programs.

**Crillon Tours, [www.titicaca.com](http://www.titicaca.com)**

## KER & DOWNEY'S BEST OF PERU NAMED BEST ADVENTURE TRIPS FOR 2008

Following on the footsteps of recent accolades by *National Geographic Adventurer Magazine* as a Top 5 Luxury Travel Outfitter on Earth, Ker & Downey have announced their luxury, new Best of Peru itinerary has been selected as Best Adventure Trips for 2008 by *Concierge.com*, *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine's online counterpart. This luxury 14-day itinerary invites visitors to explore the highlights of Peru, including Cusco, the Sacred Valley, and Lake Titicaca. Explorers will climb aboard the luxury train, Hiram Bingham for a brunch and a romantic rail tour high into the Andes for an overnight luxury stay in Machu Picchu. On the return, the Hiram Bingham serves an elegant dinner, complete with local musicians to entertain guests. Next, guests take an unforgettable tour over the Nazca lines and see this region by helicopter. This journey ends with a rare opportunity to explore the mighty Amazon River aboard the 12 cabin luxury *M/V Aqua*. This newest luxury vessel allows guests to experience the solitude and remoteness of this region where mankind has rarely traveled. The vessel is spacious and luxurious allowing guests to be indulged from the moment they board. Stops along the river include the Pacaya Samiria Nature Reserve, a protected area that teems with wildlife such as the three-toed sloth and the pink freshwater dolphin. Visit native villages and meet the River People whose world exists in a place where time appears to stand still. Finally, stop at a butterfly farm for guests to readjust gently to the modern world.

Ker & Downey, 800-423-4236, [www.kerdowney.com](http://www.kerdowney.com)


Arequipa - Cusco - Lima - Puno - Trujillo - Urubamba  
Colca - Máncora - Tambopata - Valle Sagrado



RELAX



HISTORY



ELEGANCE



JOY



AMAZING



**HOTELES  
LIBERTADOR**  
PERU

**The Best Of Our Culture.**

INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS Las Begonias 441 Of. 240 San Isidro, Lima 27, Peru  
T (511) 442 1995 F (511) 442 2988 Email [hotel@libertador.com.pe](mailto:hotel@libertador.com.pe) Web [www.libertador.com.pe](http://www.libertador.com.pe)

# Big Nature in Peru and Brazil

Four points of entry to the heart and soul of a continent: InkaNatura, The Pantanal Wildlife Center, The Jaguar Research Center, Explorama Lodges.

MARK ZUSSMAN

**W**ould be interesting to poll North Americans on what they think of when they think of South America.

Glamorous cities, a world-class sound track of tango, samba, bossa nova, cumbia and a thousand other big and little musical genres, and dancing till the cows come home? Or people living on the equivalent of a couple of dollars a day cash income and whatever else they can barter for and grow in their backyards?

Do Americans, when they think of South America, immediately visualize scantily clad hedonists drinking coconut milk or exotic cocktails on palm-studded beaches? Or do they visualize an endless carpet of forest-green vegetation as seen from a low-flying light aircraft in a National Geographic television special?

Do they feel a measure of confidence that they can buy into a South American tour and stand a relatively decent chance of coming home in a single piece? Or are they pretty sure that if they escape the gunfire in urban shantytowns then they will surely be eaten alive by alligators or mountain lions or ten-foot-long snakes?

Having lived myself on the South American continent for the better part of a decade now and with no intention of returning permanently to the U.S. unless in leg irons, I can testify that there is a measure of truth in even the most extravagant fantasies that North Americans harbor as to the lands to the south — forget that on any given day time passes so uneventfully that there is not necessarily fodder for even a diary entry.

One thing for sure about South America, though: Whereas the average high school-educated North American can pretty well hack it anywhere in Europe with a rental car and a map, no further orientation required, if that same average high school-educated North American wants to have some experience of South American nature more than just breathing the air, he is going to need backup aplenty at least from some local suppliers, probably from a travel agent and probably from a tour operator intermediary.

A story that caught the imagination of people here in the Rio de Janeiro area, where I live, in the last days of Carnival in February: Three American tourists, all guys, all in their 20s, went hiking in Tijuca Forest, larger, admittedly, by a considerable order of magnitude than London's Kensington



Jaguar Research Center boat makes its way in the vast Pantanal wetlands.

Gardens, say, yet still wholly within Rio city limits.

They got lost. They spent a night in the cold and in the wet — it's been a strange summer down this way, folks. They were hungry, they were thirsty, they were scared. The Fire Department rescue squad didn't haul them in until 6:30 of the morning after.

## This brings us to cases

For travelers who want to experience South American nature — forget for now the other issue, which is the cities — in an environment more extensive than a metropolitan park however large and wilderness-y, who want to use their safari clothes and canteens and mosquito repellent yet still enjoy security as nearly absolute as human life allows, a handful of operations stand out both for the quality of their services and the high-mindedness of their approach and their objectives.

One, InkaNatura, has a variety of locations and programs that take advantage of the resources within Peruvian national parks and at Peruvian archeological sites. InkaNatura also now promotes a pair of new sister enterprises, the Pantanal Wildlife Center and the Jaguar Research Center, in the vast Pantanal wetlands of Center Western Brazil.

The other, the Explorama Lodges group, offers numerous programs and, in their sleeping quarters, various degrees of comfort and various degrees proximity to raw, unmediated, undiluted nature, all more or less in the

environs of the high Amazon base city of Iquitos, Peru.

## InkaNatura

For no particular reason, InkaNatura first. InkaNatura is an odd bird among travel companies for the simple reason that it operates on a not-for-profit basis. Its goals are education and preservation of the environment, through tourism. (InkaNatura is wholly owned by the conservation group Peru Verde, or Green Peru, and Peru Verde is in turn an associate member of the international entity Tropical Nature, which provides some technical support.)

Have you been to the top of Machu Picchu and looked down into the Amazon jungle that starts so abruptly on the slopes to your east? It is in these forests that InkaNatura operates its principal lodges — but not all of them. InkaNatura also operates innovative trekking programs to Machu Picchu and excursions to extraordinary and relatively little known archeological sites in Northern Peru.

The Pantanal Wildlife Center, one of InkaNatura's new sister enterprises in Brazil, rebranded under its present name in 2006 after a lengthy previous life as the Hotel Fazenda Santa Tereza, offer programs, reasonable in price, of three nights and four days or of seven days or longer amidst the exotic wildlife of the world's largest freshwater wetlands. The *vochysia divergens*, a tree unique to the Pantanal and known there as the *cambará*, blossoms an extravagant yellow in July. The *tabebuia* goes yellow and pink in August. Giant otters are to be seen. So are capibaras, the huge rodent, in fact the world's largest. (Don't worry, some of these guys may weigh more than many a human being does, but they're food preferences run to the vegetarian.) Similarly caimans — these creatures, similar to alligators, are thought to number around 10 million in the Pantanal. The species of reptiles in the vicinity are said to number around 80, the species of fish to run to around 400, the species of birds to around 650.

Charles Munn, the owner and operator of the PWC, testifies, "I kid you not, we are the number one lodge in the entire Pantanal by birder-bed-nights. Simply by number of birder-bed-nights. I have counted. For a variety of technical reasons that work well for birders, roughly 90 percent of the world's serious bird tour companies have used our lodge, and that will never change, as we have the first and most accessible riverbank and gallery forest habitats on the only raised road that penetrates the core of the Pantanal. I am myself a Ph.D. ornithologist. I have led bird tours for the world's leading bird tour company, Victor Emanuel Nature Tours. Believe me, I know what birders like!"

The Pantanal Wildlife Center has ten double occupancy guest rooms, each with air conditioning, each with a hot-water shower and with space in the larger rooms for some extra single beds for visitors with children or for visitors otherwise not inclined to sleep side by side and, if the air-conditioning is not an absolute first among the still small number of lodges in the region, it must surely come close. The PWC



Manu Wildlife Center, one of many InkaNatura offerings.

employs one resident bird guide adept at the use of tape/Ipod playback to get the winged creatures singing. PWC is also the only lodge in the Pantanal to accommodate photographers with both terrestrial blinds and guyed photo-hide towers; they are all moved periodically.

In addition, the PWC operates a couple of extremely quiet catamarans with customized photo blinds for getting up close to creatures along the river banks.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

**Ceiba Tops**  
Luxury Lodge

**Ceiba Tops**  
Luxury Lodge

**Nature • Comfort • Adventure**

"Luxury On The Amazon" Adventure

- 40 Km From Iquitos, Perú
- Air Conditioned Rooms
- Swimming Pool, Jungle Water Slide
- Hydromassage
- Hammock House
- Buffet Style Dining
- Guided Excursions
- Internet (free Wi-fi)
- Phone
- Conference Room

**AMAZON**  
RETIRES  
LUXURY

**Amazon Explorama Lodges**  
IQUITOS, PERU

e-mail: amazon@explorama.com Web: www.explorama.com USA/CANADA: 1 (800) 707-5275

The most comfortable facilities on the banks of the Amazon River! Also available from this Luxury Lodge is a full day excursion to the spectacular Canopy Walkway almost 40 meters high and more than 500 meters long providing an extraordinary "bird's eye view" of the Amazon Rainforest.

## Big Cats

Passengers on longer visits to the PWC have the option to drive to the Cuiabá River at the end of the Transpantaneira Highway and get on to boats for a ride upstream to Mr. Munn's all new Jaguar Research Center in the 270,000 acre Meeting-of-the-Waters State Park. As for those with a passion for big cats — and the jaguar is the third largest feline on the planet — people such as these might possibly want to bypass the PWC and buy the four-day/three-night stand-alone program at the Jaguar Research Center all by itself. The Pantanal is thought to be home to something between 4,000 and 7,000 of these magnificent animals and, though sightings can not be guaranteed (a passenger could conceivably go home without having seen even a single specimen), the record so far has been extremely undisappointing. Let's repeat that for anyone who's reading fast: Undisappointing.

Again Mr. Munn, who in addition to his qualifications as an ornithologist has served as a senior field scientist for the New York Zoological Society, which all by itself has funded more jaguar research since 1980 than all other conservation groups in the world combined: "Before we opened officially in July of last year, we offered some experimental jaguar tours in the area and never missed a jag in any three night itinerary. Now, though, we have upped our average jag sightings to 1.5 per day, and we expect to get close to 1.9 or 2.0 jags per day in the 2008 dry season as our techniques of tracking and finding jaguars continue to improve."

Accommodations out here in the jaguar wilderness consist of eight rather spacious walk-in tents, all of them sealed, all with wooden floors, private, hot-shower bathrooms, and electricity for lights, fans, and recharging cameras and laptops. Believe it or not, there is even wireless Internet service available. There is also a twin-deck houseboat with two air-conditioned cabins and an equal number of hot-shower bathrooms.

## The Explorama Lodges

The Explorama Lodges are probably the best choice there is for those passengers who have made up their minds that South American nature is coextensive with the Amazon, if the Amazon in its unparalleled grandeur isn't simply the epitome of all nature everywhere. The equation in question may not even be so very off the wall. Are you aware, for example, that the Amazon river system is home to something like 4,000 species of fish and that that's more species than there are in the whole of the Atlantic Ocean?

For passengers in search of a soft-adventure version of the Amazon experience, a good option nowadays is the Ceiba Tops Lodge, Explorama's newest, at a distance of only about 25 miles from air gateway city of Iquitos. In addition to more nearly standard rooms, Ceiba Tops has suites designated Presidential and Ministerial, it has junior suites as well, a swimming pool, a water slide, elaborate gardens, and free wi-fi service. Air-conditioning? For sure. There are easy hikes nearby in the primeval forest, boat rides for dolphin spotting,



Co-mingle with nature at The Explorama Lodges.

a visit to a small village of Yagua Indians. After dinner, listen to guitar or Andean flute music in the El Toucan Bar.

I believe that it is no disservice to naturalist Peter Jenson, who founded the Explorama Lodges now over 40 years ago, to say that the Ceiba Tops owes its existence above all to market forces. The Ceiba Tops is popular not only with soft adventurers from North America and Europe and other continents, it has also become extremely popular with diplomatic personnel and business people, Peruvian and foreign alike, who are based in Lima but every once in a while feel the need for a weekend getaway to a spot that is kind of savage but civilized at the same time. Mr. Jenson's own heart is deeper in the back country.

Adventuresome travelers in search of this same back country might head for the Explorama Lodge, founded in 1964, and about twice as far out from Iquitos as the Ceiba Tops. Here lodging is in thatched huts with shared toilet and shower facilities and lighting as provided by kerosene lamps and torches, not electricity. Activities here include a walk along the Bushmaster Trail, where scientists from the Missouri Botanical Gardens believe they have discovered the world's greatest diversity of trees per acre. The Explorama Lodge is also a jumping off point for a day visit to a third-of-a-mile-long walkway that winds its way from tree to tree, 14 of them in all, at a height of around 115 feet above the forest floor. The logic of this is that much of the "action" in the forest — wildlife and vegetation alike — takes place at what is called the canopy, or treetop, level.

Explorama's ExplorNapó Lodge, now 100 miles out from Iquitos, kicks the adventure level up, as Emeril Lagasse would say, another notch. Visitors are kept busy at night with open boat excursions up the Sucusari Stream in search of

caiman, listening to the strange sounds of the Amazon night, reveling at the clarity of the Southern skies. Daylight takes visitors along the immediately adjacent (and previously mentioned) Canopy Walkway, to a black water oxbow lake often covered with enormous Victoria Regia water lilies, to see a local school, to the ReNuPeRu Ethnobotanical Garden for a look at plants that local shamans have long exploited for their medicinal properties and that are just now beginning to be exploited as well by modern medicine.

The ExplorTambos Camp is reached only at the end of a two hour hike from ExplorNapó. The setting now is deep virgin forest, and the sleeping facilities are primitive. Is it worth it? Apparently it has been for botanists, zoologists, entomologists and the like. To name just primates, red titi monkeys, yellow-handed titi monkeys, tamarins, squirrel monkeys, monk sakis, pygmy marmosets and howler monkeys have all been spotted in the environs. If you are a travel agent reader, do you book in your elderly clients? Probably not. Do you book in younger folks? Just make sure that you — and they — know what they're getting in for.

**Explorama Lodges, 800-707-5275,  
amazon@explorama.com, www.explorama.com;  
InkaNatura Travel, postmaster@inkanatura.com.pe,  
www.inkanatura.com;  
The Jaguar Research Center,  
www.jaguarresearchcenter.com;  
The Pantanal Wildlife Center,  
sales@pantanalwildlifecenter.com,  
www.pantanalwildlifecenter.com**

## LIMA TOURS INTRODUCES PERU GOURMET

Peru is positioning itself more and more as a gastronomic destination for food lovers. This noteworthy development allows Peru to differentiate itself among other renowned culinary destinations around the world, because of its variety and originality.

With Lima Tour's Peru Gourmet, discover the treasures and pleasures of Peru in a six-day program visiting the main cultural highlights of Lima and Cusco, and enjoying special tastings of Peru's world-renowned cuisine.

*Travel Weekly* writes about Peruvian Cuisine in its January 2008

issue: "New niches and trends will provide opportunities for growing tourism in Peru.... Lima Tours is capitalizing on an increased interest in Peruvian cuisine. This year the company will introduce Peru Gourmet, in collaboration with Gaston Acurio, one of the country's best known chefs. Peru Gourmet offers culinary tours, individual dine-arounds, cooking classes with celebrated chefs, family dinners in private homes, pisco (a distilled liquor made from grapes) and wine tastings and personalized dining."

Lima Tours, [inbound@limatours.com.pe](mailto:inbound@limatours.com.pe), [www.limatours.com.pe](http://www.limatours.com.pe)

## CONDOR TRAVEL PLAYS HOST IN PERU TO PASSENGERS OF PACIFIC PRINCESS

The luxurious Pacific Princess transatlantic liner arrived back at the port of Callao with nearly 700 passengers who visited Peru and left amazed at its countless attractions. Condor Travel, the largest tour operator in Peru and Latin America, was responsible for the care of the distinguished visitors to Peruvian territory, as it had been during the previous visit a month ago.

The imposing ship of the Princess Cruises fleet arrived at Callao, where Condor Travel personnel were immediately at the bidding of the passengers who enjoyed a varied program of activities in the nearby Peruvian capital city of Lima.

The visitors toured the colorful Indian Market, the ruins of Pachacamac and the National Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. They also enjoyed an exhibition of Peruvian Paso horses with a traditional lunch, sampled a Creole buffet at the "Brujas de Cachiche" restaurant, and were served a private dinner at the exclusive Garcia Alvarado House. In addition, 73 passengers flew to the imperial city of Cuzco, taking a charter from Ecuador.

Thanks to Condor Travel, another contingent of passengers undertook a tour of Quito, taking in its colonial monuments and churches, while a second group visited the Galapagos Islands and was impressed by its natural beauty.

They didn't miss a stop in the town of Montecristi, one of the handicraft centers where tourists were able to observe the intricate process of making the famous Panama hat. They also enjoyed a delicious lunch at the Santo Domingo Convent, as well as a private handicraft fair.

Condor Travel, [www.condortravel.com](http://www.condortravel.com)

Discover the world's richest rainforest, only 40 minutes from Cusco

Manu Wildlife Center

"The most intense wildlife experience in the Amazon" (Condé Nast Traveler). Includes Macaw Lick, Tapir Lick, Giant Otters, Spider Monkeys, Emperor Tamarins, canopy platforms, scientific trails, private hot-water bathrooms. Fixed departures from Cusco. Manu National Park also available.

InkaNatura Travel  
[www.inkanatura.com](http://www.inkanatura.com)

## RIO, AMAZON & IGUASSU FALLS WITH SOUTH STAR TOURS



South Star Tours, Inc., who guarantee a 11 percent commission to agents, is offering a journey to Rio, Amazon & Iguassu Falls. The gateway to the Amazon, the largest river basin in the world, the city of

Manaus will impress travelers with its bursting port activity and central market with exotic fruits. One of the city highlights is the Opera House, built during the Belle Époque at a time when fortunes were made in the rubber boom. Visit beautiful Rio de Janeiro and its famous beaches, such as Copacabana, Ipanema, Leblon, plus Sugar Loaf, Corcovado Mountains and the wonders of Iguassu Falls, creating a splendor of beauty. The waterfall system consists of 275 falls along the Iguazu River. Some of the individual falls are up to 269 feet in height; the Devil's Throat, a U-shaped 490 ft. wide and 2,300 ft. long cliff, is the most impressive of all, and marks the border between Argentina and Brazil.

Dates are March 16-23, 2008 and September 21-28, 2008. Land Price is \$1,699. Air out of MIA is from \$1,025.

South Star Tours, 800-654-4468,  
sales@southstartours.com,  
www.southstartours.com

## RADISSON HOTELS LATIN AMERICA SIGNS THREE NEW HOTELS

Radisson Hotels and Resorts Latin America (RHILA) has announced the addition of three new hotels. These include the Radisson Decapolis Hotel Miraflores and Radisson Hotel & Suites San Isidro in Lima, Peru; as well as the Radisson Summit Resort and Spa in Panama.

The 105 room Radisson Decapolis Hotel Miraflores in Lima, Peru is scheduled to open on February 15 under the management of Gerardo Camacho.

Camacho previously served as the General Manager of the Radisson Decapolis Hotel Panama City. The new hotel is located in Miraflores, a highly desirable business and residential district of Lima.

Radisson Hotel & Suites San Isidro is also slated to open in Lima in mid-February. Formerly the Hotel Las Palmeras, this 35-suite property will see the addition of a 69-room tower which will also incorporate food and beverage and banquet facilities. On a quiet residential street in San Isidro, the most exclusive area of Lima, the hotel is poised to strongly compete for the up-scale corporate market.

Located near the Miraflores Locks and

the Puente Centenario in Panama, the Summit Resort and Spa is expected to open in December 2008. The resort will feature 103 rooms in a newly-built, ecologically-friendly tower on the grounds of the existing Summit Golf Club.

Denise Estefan, president of RHILA, noted that the addition of these three hotels and the ever increasing pipeline of hotels in South America is a result of a new development strategy and a re-energized effort to carry out the new strategy over the last two years.

"We anticipate that by the end of 2008 we will have signed between six and 10 properties in two years. Our team is focused on establishing business relationships with the most reputable ownership entities and ensuring that the Radisson experience is a superior one for them. Although we have exclusive franchise rights to the Radisson brand in Latin America, we are more determined than ever to further enhance the product quality offering to ensure financial success for all our constituencies."

Radisson Hotels, 800-333-3333,  
www.Radisson.com

## EXPLORE SANTA CATARINA, BRAZIL WITH SITA

SITA World Tours is presenting two programs to Santa Catarina, Brazil. Spectacular Brazil with Santa Catarina is 11-days/10-nights.

The vibrant energy of Rio de Janeiro awaits with the exotic beaches of Ipanema and a visit to Corcovado. Revel in the breathtaking panorama as you gaze from the hill, which is dominated by the statue of Christ the Redeemer. Marvel at the sight of the thundering Iguassu Falls.

Enjoy leisure time in the island of Santa Catarina with its beaches, blue lagoons and green hills. Daily departures are from \$2,590 per person sharing.

Santa Catarina five-days/four-nights has daily departures from \$1,290 per person sharing. This five day exploration of Santa Catarina includes a city tour of Florianopolis, beach trips, a tour of Blumenau in the 'European Valley' and time to explore independently.

SITA World Tours, 800-421-5643,  
www.sitatours.com

COLOMBIA • ECUADOR • PANAMA • PERU





International Hotel Chain



GHL has the key factors...

- Market Viability and feasibility analysis.
- Architectural and interior design advising.
- Engineering specification and brand standards consultants.
- Real state project management and Promotion.

GHL Hoteles consolidates its leadership in the Andean Region Hotel Industry.

GHL Hoteles Portfolio

 <small>Bogotá • Quito • Guayaquil</small>	 <small>Medellín • Cali • Panamá</small>	
		

Informes: PBX 57-1 313 9333  
 desarrollo@ghlhoteles.com • www.ghlhoteles.com

1447776020426126.06.00

## THE HOTELES LIBERTADOR AND STARWOOD TEAM UP IN PERU



The Hoteles Libertador, the largest hotel chain in Peru, is about to get larger. Thanks to a franchise agreement with Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, the Libertador Palacio del Inca in Cusco will undergo a substantial renovation and then, in the first quarter of 2009, reemerge as the Libertador Cusco Luxury Collection Hotel.

The property's present room count of 254 will drop to 187 rooms, including 15 suites. Some rooms will be substantially enlarged. The new hotel will also house two restaurants, a spa, and meeting space, and the changeover will take place while the hotel remains open for some business as usual.

Cusco was for several hundred years the capital of the fabled Inca Empire. What is left of the old Inca Temple of the Sun and Temple of the Virgins of the Sun, as well as other pre-Colombian antiquities and the religious and secular structures the Spaniards built on top of the earlier ones have made Cusco an important destination in its own right.

But Cusco has also come to serve as a kind of base camp for excursions to the archeological site of Machu Picchu, now one of the New Seven Wonders of the World.

The Libertador Palacio del Inca, soon to be the Libertador Cusco Luxury Collection Hotel, is located a short walk from Cusco's main square, the Plaza de Armas.

Early 2009 will also witness the opening of the Libertador Urubamba Luxury Collection Hotel in the town of Urubamba in the

Sacred Valley about one hour by car outside of Cusco. Here the room count will be 128, and there will be a spa and meeting space.

Another Starwood brand, the Westin Hotels & Resorts, will make its South American debut in the first semester of 2010 when the Westin Libertador Lima opens in the Peruvian capital's upscale San Isidro neighborhood. This 30-story tower will feature 311 guestrooms, two restaurants, a lobby bar, a gym, a pool and nearly two acres of meeting space.

Hoteles Libertador, [reservas@libertador.com.pe](mailto:reservas@libertador.com.pe), [www.libertador.com.pe](http://www.libertador.com.pe)

## EXPLORA LAUNCHES NEW SALES & MARKETING TEAM TO CAPITALIZE ON EXPANSION IN LATIN AMERICA

The pioneering travel company explora has announced the creation of a new Sales & Marketing team to lead efforts in key markets throughout Latin America and beyond. Rather than search for qualified sales professionals, the Santiago, Chile-based company has filled its new team from within, promoting talented sales and marketing staffers with extensive knowledge and compatibility with explora's unique take on travel to remote regions of South America.

The key focus of the new Sales & Marketing team will be promoting Posada de Mike Rapu, the new lodge for explora en Rapa Nui, which opened on Easter Island on December 15, 2007. The Sales & Marketing staff will further work to solidify explora's business relationships in key markets, increase occupancy at explora properties during the off-season, and grow consumer and special interest bookings while making inroads into new markets.

Daniela Orellana has been appointed Alliances and Business Development Manager, responsible for coordinating global efforts to reach and influence consumers, and manage current alliances as well as develop new ones. Raul Buenaventura has been appointed Sales Manager West Coast North America and Mexico with responsibilities including working with Virtuoso, Signature and non-affiliated agencies throughout the western United States and Mexico.

Helen Nodland has been appointed Head of Strategic Development Director in North America with a focus on tour operators, affinities and specialty travel. Greg Fraher has been appointed Sales Manager East Coast North America and Canada with responsibilities including working with Virtuoso, Signature and non-affiliated agencies throughout the eastern United States and Canada.

The launch of the team is one of many steps toward a new organizational structure for explora's sales efforts. "I am pleased to be able to promote four superb professionals from within to lead explora's sales and marketing efforts, and I look forward to a seamless transition as we move forward," said Jesús Parrilla, Commercial Vice President of explora. "Together, the Sales & Marketing team brings impressive experience as well as familiarity with explora's unique travel culture. This development should prove invaluable as we promote explora en Rapa Nui to the world." explora, 866-750-6699, [reserve@explora.com](mailto:reserve@explora.com), [www.explora.com](http://www.explora.com)

# Honduras' Roatan, A Sleepy Island Paradise Wakes Up To a Major Tourism Explosion

Cruise lines and hotel developers have big plans for this hot new Caribbean destination.

GAIL P. DUBOV

**W**hen the New York Times listed Roatan in its "53 Places to Go in 2008," it sent a clear message to consumers and industry professionals. Roatan is finally on the radar screen, so take a closer look.

The largest of eight islands in Honduras that are known as The Bay Islands, Roatan is 40 miles off the coast, a popular vacation spot for divers and fishermen since the 1960's. Its fringed coral reef system, the second largest in the world, offers the most spectacular underwater life in the western Caribbean. It's a diver's paradise with a casual, laid-back beach vibe. Sarong-clad women stroll the sandy main street of West End, locals hawk their wares in stalls in Coxen Hole, and a reggae beat fills the air in restaurants on West Bay beach. But cruise lines, hotel developers, and private investors have big plans on the drawing board for Roatan. Multi-million dollar deals have been struck and the island is poised for a tourism boom. All signs point to the coming of age of this small, English-speaking island, tucked away in the corner of the Caribbean.

Discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1512, Roatan still has a primitive feel with its steep jungle-covered hills and long stretches of white powder beach. Just 35 miles long and 3 miles wide, its many deep-water inlets have made it a refuge for sailors and pirates for centuries. With the British occupying the island most of the time, it carries the British legacy in language and culture. Though the pirates and the Brits are gone, the deep-water inlets remain, perfect for cruise ships. They're already there—but hold your hats—because what's about to come will make Roatan the busiest cruise port in the Caribbean.

Discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1512, Roatan still has a primitive feel with its steep jungle-covered hills and long stretches of white powder beach. Just 35 miles long and 3 miles wide, its many deep-water inlets have made it a refuge for sailors and pirates for centuries. With the British occupying the island most of the time, it carries the British legacy in language and culture. Though the pirates and the Brits are gone, the deep-water inlets remain, perfect for cruise ships. They're already there—but hold your hats—because what's about to come will make Roatan the busiest cruise port in the Caribbean.

## Cruise Lines With Ambitious Plans

Over the next two years the world's largest cruise ship companies will invest over \$70 million in two ports on Roatan. Carnival Cruise Lines and Royal Caribbean are breaking ground on the most ambitious development projects ever undertaken on the island. Cruise ship arrivals are expected to quadruple.



Carnival Cruise Line has embarked on a \$50 million terminal at Dixon Cove, on Roatan's south shore.

Royal Caribbean is planning a \$25 million extension to the cruise terminal in Coxen Hole, the island's largest town. A terminal contract went into effect in February 2007 and will last for 30 years. Ernan Barteaux, General Manager of the Royal Caribbean Cruise Ship Terminal, predicts an increase in daily cruise ship passenger arrivals to 6,000, in less than six years. Royal Caribbean's master plan hit a few snags with permit troubles and environmental concerns delaying construction. Now that these have been resolved, the terminal and three buildings housing stores and offices are underway, to be completed by May 2008, according to the Honduras Institute of Tourism. In 2010 the company plans to inaugurate a marina and a community of exclusive condos.

Carnival Cruise Lines has signed an agreement to build and operate a cruise terminal in Dixon Cove, east of Royal Caribbean's terminal on the southern shore. Work on "Mahogany Bay – Roatan" is expected to begin early this year, with completion at the end of 2009. The cost is projected at \$50 million. Carnival's cruise facility will be situated on 20 acres of Dixon Cove waterfront, and consists of a two-berth cruise terminal bringing in up to 7,000 passengers daily, according to an article in *Bay Islands Voice*, a regional magazine. There will be a 35,000 square foot Welcome Center with retail shops, restaurants, and bars, along with a lighthouse, lagoon, and waterfalls.

Mahogany Bay will surpass in expense and scale Carnival's biggest terminal in Grand Turk, which in its first year received nearly 300,000 passengers. Within five years, Mahogany Bay is expected to host 225 cruise ship calls and 500,000 passengers annually. Adding that number to the 500,000+ Royal Caribbean passengers, it's likely that Roatan will be receiving more than a million passengers per year in the near future.

### A Major Flag Hotel Soon To Arrive

An island long known for its small dive accommodations—until recently—Roatan has yet to boast a major flag hotel on its shores. But that will soon change. 2009 will see the opening of Roatan's first international flag hotel, Starwood's Westin Mystic Harbour, a 5-star resort and spa. Bolstering its presence in Central America, The Westin brand will unveil a 162 room hotel, the first in Honduras.

Phase 2 will include a Marina and 9 hole golf course. Ricardo Suarez, Vice-President of Development for Starwood Latin America, told *Travel World News*, "Roatan is an important emerging resort destination and the planned Westin Roatan will complement our existing base of Westin resorts in Mexico and the Caribbean." The hotel will be part of a village-style mixed-used development, offering individual residences and villas.

According to the Honduras Institute of Tourism, with expan-

sions and new development, the island will see the addition of 400 more hotel rooms by January 2009.

### Sustainable Growth A Key To The Future

Roatan, with a population of just 75,000, accounted for more than 40% of Honduras' \$450 million in 2006 tourism revenues. An impressive number for a tiny island off the mainland. Tourists this year exceeded 250,000—a number that will grow as more resorts and cruise ships establish themselves, further encouraged by the island's recently declared Free Trade Zone status. But its reef is delicate, its waters vulnerable. A considerable effort is now being directed towards new environmentally friendly septic systems as well as energy and water conservation programs. "We are very pleased with the growth in tourism the island of Roatan, and all of Honduras, are experiencing with arrivals from the United States and beyond," noted Mr. Aguirre of the Honduras Institute of Tourism.

"At the same time, in order to conserve all of the island's natural beauties and protect its coral reefs, we are also implementing strategies for preservation of our natural resources. We understand and appreciate that sustainable growth is key in order to assure a quality experience in Honduras and the Bay Islands for generations to come."

**Ministry and Institute of Tourism Honduras,**  
**[www.letsgehonduras.com](http://www.letsgehonduras.com)**

**The COSTA RICA TRAVEL MART**  
San José, Costa Rica  
May 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**expotur 2008**  
COSTA RICA TRAVEL MART

*You may think you know Costa Rica already...  
You can even think you have tried every single dish or drink ...  
or even more, that you have all your memories collected in your mind...  
But there is something that goes beyond that....Costa Rica offers new attractions each year. We want to share them with you and the right place to do it is EXPOTUR: a consolidated marketplace that lets you get in touch with more than 280 travel suppliers from Central America  
So we invite you to rediscover the new products of Costa Rica and this warm Region...  
Register now at: [www.expotur.com](http://www.expotur.com)*

**COSTA RICA**  
No Artificial Ingredients

Please contact: Alexandra Guasch, [alexandra@acoprot.org](mailto:alexandra@acoprot.org)  
Toll free USA & CAN: 1-866-627-5651 or 1-888-EXPOTUR

## A BIRDWATCHERS PARADISE AT CHAA CREEK



The varied topography and vegetation of Belize produces a variety of ecosystems that provide sustainable habitats for an enormous number of local and migratory bird species.

Chaa Creek is quietly tucked away in the foothills of the ancient mountains along the forested verges of the Macal River Valley in Belize's Cayo District. The 365-acre Chaa Creek Nature Reserve is a sanctuary for almost 300 species of the world's most spectacular birds. This abundantly rich natural environment is also home to a multitude of tropical plants and animals.

A typical day of birding at Chaa Creek is always rewarding. As the first rays of the sun slice through the dense forest canopy, a symphony of bird song begins. Birders on the daily guided early morning walks can observe the spectacular beauty of parrots, toucans, and busy little humming birds as they begin the search for their first meal of the day.

Other inhabitants of the Chaa Creek Nature Reserve include the Collared Aracari, Violaceous Trogon, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Blue-gray Tanager, Ivory-billed Woodcreeper, Red-lored Parrot, Masked Tityra, Squirrel Cuckoo, Esmerald Toucanet, and Great Curassow. The Collared Forest-Falcon, Swallow-tailed Kite, Roadside Hawk and the Black-and-White Hawk-Eagle also call Chaa Creek their home.

Birdwatching at Chaa Creek is great all year round but avian activity especially heats up during the nesting months of April and May. Busy flocks of brightly colored birds begin the fascinating task of building their nests. This is the time of the year when bird lovers will have the best opportunity to see baby fledglings as they become the newest inhabitants of the Belizean rainforests.

Expert and casual bird watchers alike can join trained naturalist guides and enjoy a memorable experience while viewing an extraordinary mixture of tropical bird species. Chaa Creek provides guests with quality Nikon binoculars and Leica spotting scope to enhance viewing.

Chaa Creek is committed to sustainable tourism development and has initiated and supported many local conservation projects.

**The Lodge at Chaa Creek, 877-709-8708,  
reservations@chaacreek.com, www.chaacreek.com**

## INN AT ROBERT'S GROVE WINS "HOTEL OF THE YEAR" AWARD

The Inn at Robert's Grove won the Belize Tourist Board's coveted "Hotel of the Year" Award, at the 8th Annual National Tourism Awards Ceremony on January 25, 2008, held at the Best Western Biltmore Hotel in Belize City.

The "Hotel of the Year" award, states the Belize Tourist Board, is given for "Service excellence; positive attitude and attentiveness of staff; value for money, availability of outstanding facilities and services, ambience, innovation and the ability to provide visitors with a memorable stay."

Owned by New York natives, Risa and Robert Frackman, Robert's Grove opened 10 years ago with just three rooms. Today the Inn, which is located in Placencia in southern Belize, boasts 52 luxury guest rooms and suites and has impressive distinctions: the most modern, well-equipped and best staffed PADI dive center in the area, complete with 48' PRO dive boat for daily two-tank dives and diving for whale sharks (during Whale Shark Season, April through June); two private islands for "Swept Away" get-away-from-it-all-vacations or day outings; and a sport fishing center with new 23' skiffs, licensed guides and instruction and a chance for a "grand slam." All of the tours are resort operated so it is possible to book in late afternoon for the following morning's outing.

On 22 acres with its own marina, the Inn offers hacienda style accommodations, all beachfront or beach view. Rooms feature air conditioning, ceiling fans, telephones, cable TV, wireless Internet service, private baths and terraces, and rooftop Jacuzzis. Other resort facilities include three freshwater swimming pools, guest Internet and computer center, and Sea Spa.

Guests can choose from two restaurants, the Seaside, which features local and internationally inspired dishes and Habanero Mexican Café and Bar overlooking the Inn's marina. The new Dockside Café is found at the end of the Inn's 200-foot pier.

**The Inn at Robert's Grove, 800-565-9757,  
info@robertsgrove.com, www.robertsgrove.com**

## SOUTH STAR TOURS OFFERS BELIZE SOUTHERN ADVENTURES

South Star Tours, Inc. is offering fully escorted tours with departures limited to a maximum of 12 passengers to assure individual attention and the feeling of a private tour at a cost effective rate.

Their Belize Southern Adventures is a soft adventure journey, exploring Mother Nature's best kept secrets while canoeing, swimming and trailing.

Explore the intriguing mix of tropical forests rich with wildlife, majestic mountains, mysterious Maya temples and the longest barrier reef in the Western Hemisphere. Hike the trails of beautiful waterfalls, pools and caves. The experienced tour guides will take guests on a most memorable adventure. Dates are May 4-10, 2008 and June 8-14, 2008. Land Price is \$1,798; air upon request.

Travel agents enjoy 11 percent commission guaranteed.  
**South Star Tours, 800-654-4468, sales@southstartours.com,  
www.southstartours.com**

# Ballum-Na (*House of the Jaguar*) Enters Resort Race With a Roar

New adventure lodge lets guests stay next to resident jaguars.

JAMIE GRIPICH.

If you've ever dreamed of staying right on nature's doorstep, with the flora, fauna and wildlife you're not going to get any closer than this. Belize Lodge and Excursions (BLE) Ballum Na (*House of the Jaguar*) will offer guests the opportunity to stay in the comfort and safety of their beds, while live Jaguars prowl the jungle floor below.

Ballum Na – or, *House of the Jaguar*, is BLE's fourth exclusive lodge to come online, featuring the lodge's main attraction, and only long-term tenants, a set of adult jaguars for guests to observe. Ballum Na, located two miles south of BLE's Indian Creek Lodge, engulfed within an exotic jungle habitat, is home to two male jaguars, Bosch and Xupi, brothers born in captivity. They live in a habitat that encompasses 2.1 acres of jungle.

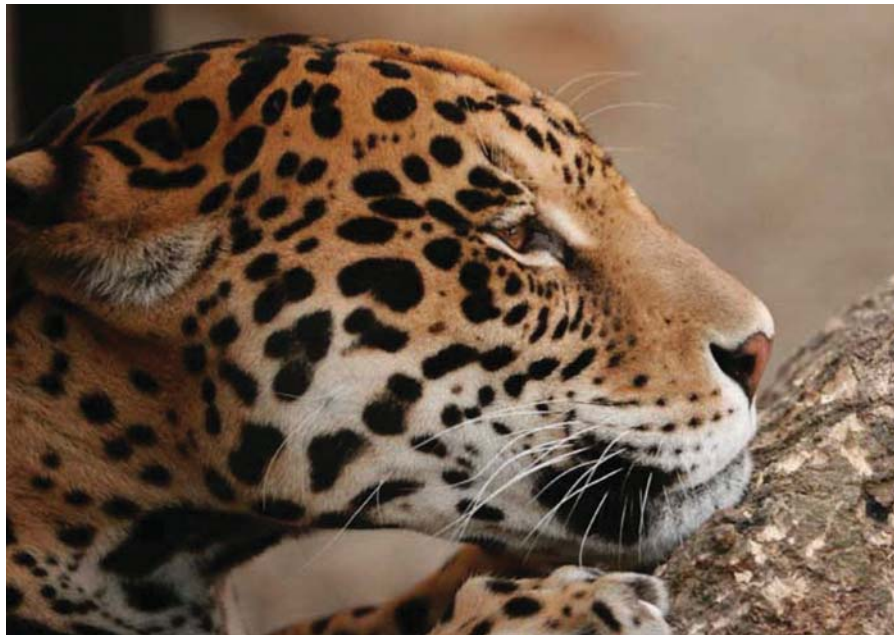
The jungle cats were part of a captive-breeding program and were set to be sent to a zoo in Mexico. But Kenneth Karas, founder of BLE stepped in and now the pair will inhabit a 2.5-acre sanctuary, complete with pool, located in the middle of the accommodations. Though the great cats can be observed by the public, they and Ballum Na are home to a greater ideal that is - at the heart of BLE's philosophy – that of nature conservancy.

"Ballum Na is part of a wildlife program of rescue, rehabilitation and re-introduction," said Karas. "This is a better way to educate people – not in a zoo setting, but in a natural setting. And, it is a way to restore this natural habitat through sound wildlife- and forest-resource management practices."

Next to this is the lodge, whose 2nd floor is home to deluxe 5-star Master and two Junior Suites. On the 3rd floor, guests will find their own private restaurant and bar, with expansive decks and a canopy walkway overlooking the jaguar enclosure, Boden Creek and Parrot Falls.

On the 4th floor an observation deck looks out in every direction over the top of the jungle canopy and a carpet of green. Complete pampering is assured by your own personal executive chef, as well as a waiter and private butler in constant attendance.

The properties of BLE are scattered among its privately-operated 14,000 acre Boden Creek Nature Reserve. The reserve is ideally situated within a 600,000 acre protected area and National Park system. Nowhere else in Belize is the primitive



Xupi, one of Ballum Na's resident male jaguars.

and unfettered natural beauty of the country, better situated to remain intact for future generations.

"We will always preserve the integrity of the experience surrounded by these protected areas," says Karas. His past experience as a world-class nature film maker helped direct him to pursue rescuing this idyllic natural space and taking the ideals of good corporate citizenry a step farther.

"By employing indigenous peoples in our company, we are helping to create local jobs and protect some of the local Mayan culture," he says. "We offer a place for local people to use their inherent knowledge of nature and wildlife in a way that preserves the culture."

Belize is regarded as an adventure paradise with one of the finest array of marine and outdoor offerings available for adventure travelers. The location of BLE's lodges allow visitors to experience southern Belize in comfort and style within one of the last wild and remote regions of Central America.

Belize Lodge & Excursions four exclusive and distinctive lodges, offer three to nine night all-inclusive packages that include local ground and marinetransfers; luxury lodging at any of four locations: Indian Creek Lodge, Ballum Na Suites, Jungle Camp and Moho Cay Lodge; all meals; excursions; entrance fees; local taxes; and guides.

The company also offers carefully selected and designed all-inclusive Overland Tour Packages to many other destinations in Belize that can be combined or taken separately with a trip to their southern group of lodges.

**Belize Lodge and Excursions, [www.belizelodge.com](http://www.belizelodge.com)**

## CUNA DE VIDA BREAKS GROUND ON PRIVATE AIRPORT IN PANAMA

Cuna de Vida, a newly formed brand of luxury resorts, has announced the start of construction of the Del Rey Airport, the first full-service, private international airport in the world. The airport will be located on Isla Del Rey in the archipelago of Las Perlas in Panama.

Scheduled to break ground February 2, 2008, Del Rey Airport is the first phase of the Cuna De Vida Development. The airport will be the primary means of arrival for discerning private plane owners who are expected to arrive at the Cuna de Vida branded resorts with their guests. Once complete, the entire development will include luxury resorts, a marina, spas and restaurants.

Del Rey Airport will have the ability to accommodate Boeing 737 business jets and will be a full-service international airport with a terminal building housing a luxury lounge, direct en-villa custom and immigration services, fueling services and resort ground transportation.



CUNA DE VIDA – ISLA DEL REY IN THE ARCHIPELAGO OF LAS PERLAS IN PANAMA

The runway will accommodate most personal and business jet aircrafts. Jet Membership is also available by invitation and referral only. First class members will enjoy world-class accommodations and luxury facilities once this development is complete. Shortly after the construction begins on Del Rey Airport, the first Cuna de Vida resort, Las Perlas, will also begin construction. Twenty buildings are planned with two villas in each. Las Perlas will sit on one of the most desirable stretches of beach in Panama - Playa San Juan. Five resorts are planned in various parts of the world by 2025.

The developer of the Cuna de Vida brand and the Del Rey Airport is André Niederhauser, hotelier and entrepreneur. "Creating convenient access into the Cuna de Vida resorts by building this airport is the first step to a successful and perfectly planned luxury development," said André.

"This airport will offer a level of service unmatched in any other area in the world, meeting the needs of guests that demand a certain level of service and luxury."

Del Rey Airport, 800-950-CUNA,  
www.delreyairport.com

## RIU TO BREAK GROUND IN COSTA RICA

In 2008, RIU will begin construction on Hotel Riu Guanacaste, a five-star, all-inclusive beachfront hotel in Costa Rica, the most visited nation in Central America. Hotel Riu Guanacaste will feature 701 rooms, three specialty-themed restaurants, six bars and five conference rooms. The hotel will open in Fall 2009 on the Pacific coast in Guanacaste, an area known for its beaches, bird watching, sport fishing and surfing. The new hotel and entry into new markets is a continuation of RIU's expansion in the Caribbean and the Americas, where RIU has been operating hotels since 1991.

"We have had great success in the Caribbean and Mexico," stated Mr. Luis Riu, CEO of Riu Hotels & Resorts, the third generation Riu family member to run the global hotel company. "In 2007, we opened our first resort in Aruba, added new resorts in Mexico and Jamaica and enjoyed record-breaking occupancy levels in the region. With more than one million arrivals to Costa Rica each year, this is a destination our guests want to discover."

Riu Hotels & Resorts, www.Riu.com

**BELIZE LEGACY BEACH RESORT**  
Ambergris Caye, Belize

Escape to a tranquil, luxurious, and romantic destination at the Belize Legacy Resort located just 10 minutes North of San Pedro Town. This truly exotic tropical resort offers one and two bedroom suites, with spacious kitchens and living areas, each with a private verandah overlooking the pristine Caribbean Sea.

Toll Free 1-866-210-2267  
Ph: 011-501-226-4600  
Email: reservations@belizelegacy.com  
www.belizelegacy.com

**Travel World NEWS**  
The Magazine for Destination Travel Specialists

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE**  
50 Washington Street • South Norwalk, CT 06854-2710  
Voice: 203-853-4955 • Fax: 203-866-1153  
www.travelworldnews.com

Charles Gatt, Jr., Publisher  
charlie@travelworldnews.com

---

Jennifer M. Lane, Editor  
editor@travelworldnews.com

Linda Rogers, Design Production Manager  
production@travelworldnews.com

For Online Subscription, Renewal or Change of Address: www.travelworldnews.com/subscribe

**THE VILLA GROUP NAMES  
ALEJANDRO DE LA GARZA CORPORATE  
DIRECTOR OF SALES AND MARKETING**



**ALEJANDRO  
DE LA GARZA**

Villa Group Resorts has announced the appointment of Alejandro De La Garza as Corporate Director of Sales and Marketing for its Mexico resort properties in Puerto Vallarta, Nuevo Vallarta, Cabo San Lucas and Sierra Madre.

Based in San Diego, De La Garza will be responsible for Villa Group Resorts' sales and marketing activities, and will oversee all departments and personnel involved in sales and marketing for the company. In addition, he will provide leadership in the

day-to-day operations of the sales and marketing department, while focusing on the company's strategic goals.

In his new position, De La Garza will report to Fernando Gonzalez, one of the owners of Villa Group Resorts. He will work on a daily basis with Ricardo Orozco and Carlos Aquino, Corporate Directors of Villa Group Resorts in Cabo San Lucas and Vallarta respectively.

"We are pleased to welcome Alejandro to Villa Group Resorts and are pleased that his impressive background in sales and marketing will be a significant advantage for our company," remarked Orozco. "Villa Group Resorts is confident that Alejandro's experience will play a major role at this time of substantial growth, especially as we gear up for the opening of Villa La Estancia Nuevo Vallarta and expansion to both Cancun and Loreto," added Aquino.

De La Garza holds a degree in Business Administration specializing in Marketing from the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. Most recently, he served as Regional Director of Sales and Marketing for Sol Melia Hotels & Resorts' ME Cabo and Melia Cabo Real Hotel in Cabo San Lucas.

"I look forward to working with Villa Group Resorts as it expands beyond Cabo and Vallarta to Cancun and Loreto," said De La Garza. "In my 25 years with the hospitality industry, I have been directly involved with launching and promoting properties throughout Mexico. It will be nice to put my experience to work for such an exciting company during one of its major periods of expansion."

The Villa Group, 877-845-5247, [www.VillaGroupResorts.com](http://www.VillaGroupResorts.com)

**RIU PALACE PACIFICO TO OPEN  
OCTOBER 2008**

Opening October 2008, Riu Palace Pacifico, located in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico will offer 484 guestrooms, four specialty-themed restaurants, five bars and two conference rooms. The family-owned resort chain currently offers two hotels (1,250 rooms) in Puerto Vallarta. Riu Palace Pacifico will be the third RIU hotel in this Pacific coast resort city.

Also in 2008, Riu Hotels & Resorts will break ground in a new area of Mexico: the coastal resort town of Mazatlán. Hotel Riu Mazatlán, a five-star, all-inclusive beachfront hotel will offer 716

rooms, three specialty-themed restaurants, five bars and three conference rooms. The hotel will open in May 2009.

"We have invested in Mexico since 1997 and our guests want to explore more of this beautiful country," stated Mr. Luis Riu, CEO of Riu Hotels & Resorts. Mexico, the top destination for RIU in terms of arrivals and revenue, is currently home to 13 Riu resorts, offering a total of 6,937 rooms. By the end of 2008, Riu will offer 14 hotels (7,421 rooms) in Mexico. By Spring 2009, RIU will offer 15 hotels with 8,161 rooms all in Mexico.

Riu Hotels & Resorts, [www.Riu.com](http://www.Riu.com)

**CAPELLA RESORT AND SPA OPENING  
IN CABO**

Capella's first North American property – and Cabo's most anticipated new hotel – is underway. The 66-room Capella Resort and Spa at the exclusive Capella Pedregal community will open this November with A-list amenities.

Among them are 61-foot luxury Viking yachts for charter at the Capella Yacht Club; mountaintop Auriga spa with floating treatment "pods" and a distinctive menu of treatments created with Mexican healers (Curanderas); Capella's team of signature private assistants to arrange everything from spa treatments, to dinner reservations, to private yacht trips to nearby islands; and the best location in Cabo, steps from downtown Cabo San Lucas, but accessed only via a private tunnel carved through the mountainside.

Capella Hotels and Resorts, [www.capellahotels.com](http://www.capellahotels.com)

**SUNBREEZE HOTEL &  
SUNBREEZE SUITES**

AMBERGRIS CAYE, BELIZE



*The perfect combination offering facilities to suit the needs of most travelers seeking a somewhere off the beaten path. A five minute stroll apart, located in the town of San Pedro, yet out of the hustle and bustle. The SunBreeze Hotel features 43 rooms offering the facilities and services of a resort while the SunBreeze Suites has 20 oceanfront fully equipped suites. A variety of packages are available.*

**SUNBREEZE HOTEL**  
email:[sunbreeze@btl.net](mailto:sunbreeze@btl.net)  
[www.sunbreeze.net](http://www.sunbreeze.net)  
toll free: 1-800-688-0191

**SUNBREEZE SUITES**  
email:[sunbreesesuites@btl.net](mailto:sunbreesesuites@btl.net)  
[www.sunbreesesuites.com](http://www.sunbreesesuites.com)  
toll free: 1-800-826-1631

# BOLIVIA

## Andeans Roots



**C** **T**  
rillon **T**ours s.a.  
Bolivia  
since 1958

**CELEBRATING**



**AS PIONEERS OF TOURISM IN BOLIVIA**

[www.titicaca.com](http://www.titicaca.com)



• LA PAZ, BOLIVIA: P.O. Box 4785 E-mail: [titicaca@entelnet.bo](mailto:titicaca@entelnet.bo) - [andes@entelnet.bo](mailto:andes@entelnet.bo)  
• USA INFORMATION OFFICE: Phone.: (305) 358-5353 / E-mail: [darius@titicaca.com](mailto:darius@titicaca.com)