



Galicia, in northwestern Spain

A Sense of Place...and Belonging

I read “Welcome to Galicia” in the January/February issue with great interest, since I recently reconnected with my family roots in that mystical region of Spain. I grew up in Miami as a Cuban exile, the son of an exile and the grandson of an exile—a rootless identity of sorts, no matter how one embraces his or her adopted country. Before my father passed away in 2010, we were arranging a trip to Galicia to visit my grandfather’s remaining family. After his death, I went and found not just my relatives and our ancestral history but also all the features of the hidden jewel your cover story so richly explored, from the Costa de la Muerte sites to the iconic delicacies, especially the small green peppers fried in olive oil, pimientos de Padrón. A tip for those planning to visit: Don’t miss the swinging botafumeiro (giant incense burners) in the cathedral during mass.

ANTONIO FINS
Miami, FL

Chile Uncorked

In December my husband and I booked a last-minute honeymoon. After reading your piece on Chilean wine country [November/December 2011], I contacted Sandra Oyarzún, whose itinerary included the Colchagua Valley, the Atacama Desert and Patagonia. The properties you featured exceeded our (very high) expectations, especially Viña Vik. But the spanking-new Tierra Patagonia—we’re worried nothing else can top it. It was only open for ten days before it was forced to evacuate guests and staff due to the Torres del Paine fire across Lake Sarmiento. We arrived on the first day it reopened. Despite the circumstances, the staff developed alternative excursions that had never been touched by tourists, and the service was seamless. We couldn’t have asked for a better experience or a better guide in DEPARTURES.

ASHLEY BAKER
New York, NY

Notes on Asia

I enjoyed John Powers’s “Devouring Singapore” [October 2011], but in keeping with his observation that the city’s main pastime is the debate over food, I’d like to bring up a few points of contention about his selections. As an expat for three years, I feel some of his suggestions are dated. Min Jiang’s once-renowned Peking duck has fallen off some Singaporeans’ must-try list. Newton Food Centre is now a veritable tourist trap, and in my opinion, the kaya toast at Ya Kun Toast is superior to that at ToastBox. I realize in a dynamic place like Singapore, it’s hard to keep up with all the changes. But perhaps Mr. Powers’s time in L.A. left him a bit behind the local foodscape that makes this the center of the gastronomical universe.

AMOS EZRA KATZ
Singapore

The New Asia” issue was incredibly well researched and filled with useful recommendations not found in ordinary travel guides. It reminded me of the fragrances in the temples of rural Cambodia, the bustle of the hawker centers in Singapore and the allure of cultures so different from our own. A copy will travel alongside my passport on my visit to the region next month.



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