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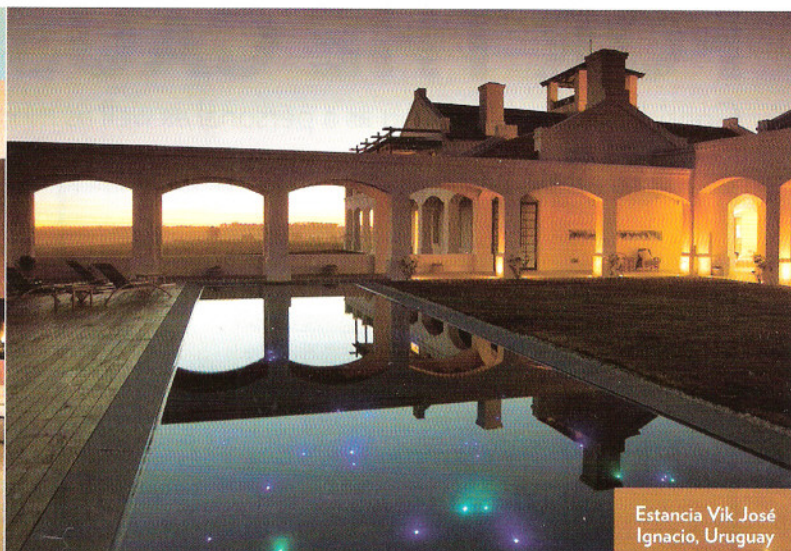
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2009

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Display until December 29, 2009

BY CEMILE KAVOUNTZIS

Bardessono,  
Napa ValleyEstancia Vik José  
Ignacio, Uruguay

## NEW ECO-CHIC HOTELS

Being a concerned environmentalist is no longer just for crunchy hippies sporting Birkenstocks and backpacks. Nowadays, we're all monitoring how our lifestyles impact the earth — especially when it comes to travel. Brand-new eco-chic hotels have cropped up around the world, making it easy to go green and still be stylish. Here are four favorites:

### NAPA VALLEY: THE TRENDSETTER

Napa Valley could easily be the healthiest place on earth, with its fresh farmers' markets and abundant wine country. Not surprisingly, America's greenest luxury hotel opened this past February in Yountville, the exclusive enclave where Thomas Keller has his restaurant, French Laundry. **Bardessono** (doubles from \$450; bardessono.com) pairs luxury with sustainability in design that works with the surroundings: The landscaping uses native plants, solar power panels seamlessly cover the roofs, and large, airy windows let in natural light so less electricity is needed.

### ST. LUCIA: THE "IT" ISLAND

There's been a lot of buzz about this Caribbean island, whose soaring Pitons look like they were plucked from the South Pacific and set down off the coast of Soufrière. Since tourism is still growing, you'll find quite a few new eco-conscious hotels, like **Cap Maison Villa Resort and Spa** (doubles from \$435; capmaison.com), which opened last year in Rodney Bay. Among its green actions, this exclusive boutique hotel uses solar energy and recycled water for landscaping. The rooms are also positioned to catch a breeze from the beach, so you can listen to waves instead of an air conditioner's hum.

### HAWAII'S BIG ISLAND: A ROYAL RETREAT

Despite its size, one of the island's most exciting new ventures is actually quite small — only nine rooms, in fact. Situated on 50 acres in North Kohala, the nine-month-old **Hawaii Island Retreat at Ahu Pohaku Ho'omaluhia** (doubles from \$250; hawaiiislandretreat.com) is an eco-retreat that uses solar- and wind-powered energy as well as water-conserving toilets and showers and organic bath products. Enjoy the hotel kitchen's cuisine, which uses produce from the retreat's organic gardens and eggs and goat cheese from its farm.

### URUGUAY: THE "OTHER ONE"

You've probably heard about the incredible steaks and wines in Argentina, but people from Uruguay will tell you the steaks are thicker and the wines are tastier in their homeland. They'll even lay claim to the tango. Unveiled this past February, the beautiful, self-sustaining **Estancia Vik José**

"We are all mortal until the first kiss and the second glass of wine."

—Celebrated Uruguayan writer  
Eduardo Galeano

**Ignacio** (low-season suites start at \$500; estanciavik.com), which is situated just one mile from the Atlantic Ocean, is designed to maximize natural resources to heat, cool, and irrigate, and minimize overall energy use. In addition, Uruguay's temperate climate allows the hotel to grow fresh produce year-round. The kitchen specializes in traditional cooking, like barbecue. As it turns out, "trying to outdo your neighbor" is a secret recipe for perfect steak. **NJL**