

CHECKING IN

Bahia Vik, Uruguay

WHAT: Bahia Vik, in Jose Ignacio, Uruguay, is the newest retreat created by Alex and Carrie Vik, who own two other luxe hotels (Playa Vik and Estancia Vik) in the South American country that's wedged between Brazil and Argentina on the continent's eastern coast.

Located right on Mansa Beach, Bahia Vik has 11 modernist bungalows set amidst the dunes, as well as 10 suites in its main building.

WHY: When the mercury hovers around freezing in New York, it's 80 and sunny in the beachy village of Jose Ignacio. Alex Vik describes the weather as "sunshine with air conditioning" due to the mild breeze, which allows sun worshippers to barely

break a sweat — even after hours outdoors.

WORKING WELL: Every room has a view of the ocean. Thanks to nature's ingenious placement of the dunes, people walking the beach cannot see into the bungalows. It's a shame, as each bungalow has completely different furniture and art, making for an entertaining visual experience. Bungalows have either two or three bedrooms and great rooms with living and dining areas — an ideal setup for families.

Swim in the ocean (it's just steps from your room, after all) or in one of the multiple pools. Lounge in chairs on your private patio, or on low-slung sofas in the open-air main building

after grabbing a book from the library. Hop on a bike and ride into town for a yoga class. Many say the relaxed yet boho-chic vibe here reminds them of Montauk 15 years ago.

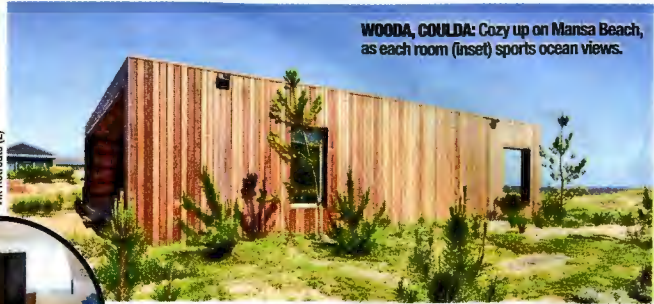
NEEDS WORK:

When you've got a sexy room with an ocean view, you might not want to leave it for a cup of coffee (or anything else) first thing in the morning. Sure, you can ask to have it sent to your room, but that means getting dressed and interacting with people.

A coffee maker in the room would allow for

extended lazy mornings, which is exactly what you want at a place like this. Ditto a

"Do Not Disturb" sign of sorts, which we hear the Viks will come up with an appropriately artful version. No pressure!



WOODA, COULDA: Cozy up on Mansa Beach, as each room (inset) sports ocean views.



Vik Retreats (2)

MUST TRY: Jose Ignacio's hottest new restaurant, La Susana, is also owned by the Viks and, as luck would have it, is located right next door. The ceviche of the day is made with fish caught in the very waters you see out the window, the fried Atlantic calamari was vastly superior to any other we'd tried, and the Vikaccino "dessert" is a tweaked version of an

affogato, but with the added indulgent bonus of caramel. **DON'T MISS:** Sunset drinks by a fire pit sound cheesy, but the wide-ranging guests and the gorgeous views make for a memorable hour of what might otherwise feel like forced socialization.

DETAILS: From \$800, bahiavik.com.

—Rima Suqi

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