



Photo by Getty/Julien Capmeil

Hotels

Chic beach retreats

By Laura Fowler 19 Feb 2014

URUGUAY Two stylish new hotels have just opened on the coast of Uruguay, among the sand dunes of José Ignacio and the winelands of Carmelo.

Uruguay is already one of our [Top 10 destinations to visit in 2014](#) (quick! While there's still an element of oneupmanship about getting there first). Now there are two more excellent reasons to visit, two more excellent places to stay.

The first is the long-awaited hotel amid the sand dunes on marvellous Playa Mansa in José Ignacio, a former fishing village gaining popularity as a barefoot-chic party destination in the summer, and with surfers, horseriders and hippies out of season. Initially - and this was many years ago - there was going to be a Setai hotel here. Foundations were laid; and lay dormant for years. Briefly it was a pop-up restaurant, which was fab, but then that went to seed too.

Now the Viks - whose award-winning [Playa Vik](#) and [Estancia Vik](#) are two of the loveliest, coolest hotels in José Ignacio - have taken over the site and created **Bahia Vik José Ignacio**, which opens this May. As with the other hotels, the focus at Bahia Vik is very much on art, architecture and design (owner Alexander Vik is a financier and art collector), while the feel is distinctly contemporary. At its heart, a modern, grey slate building provides a sociable public space - a library, a games room, a spa and gym. Guests stay in suites in the main building, or in the nine beachfront bungalows (there are more nearby, being sold as holiday homes to José's jetset crowd, and bound to become something of a destination).