

*the*  
PROMISE *of*  
PATAGONIA

THE MOST EXOTIC OF THE CLIFFS' RETREAT COLLECTION OFFERS  
AN EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCE. AND THEN DELIVERS IT

by SEAN DEASY





**O** N A PRISTINE SLICE of the Pacific coast of Northern Patagonia, Chile, two ecosystems collide with a kind of rugged beauty that leaves visitors awestruck. With ocean views, lush forests and the mountains as a backdrop, it is nature at its most diverse. It's hard to imagine, then, that the breathtaking landscape might not be the most lasting memory visitors typically take home. It's usually about meeting people, and making a difference.

The Cliffs Preserve is an eco-resort located here, between Chile's capital of Santiago and Cape Horn. Perched on the edge of 8,000 acres of temperate rainforest called Parga, which means "land of the whispering seas," and along six miles of coastline, The Cliffs Preserve (now in its first full year of operation) boasts six oceanfront villas and a 20,000-sq-ft lodge and wellness spa.

"More and more these days, travel destinations—however interesting or luxurious—are soulless. That could never be said of this marvelous place," says Patricia Gaines, who visited The Cliffs Preserve early in 2008 with her husband Charles. "The magnificent seascapes, the forests, the wildlife and birds are part of it; but also the unparalleled service, the world-class food and the real, unforced warmth of the staff. But mostly, I believe the soul of this place comes from the love and respect with which nature is met and made welcome here."

But how did this journey begin? It might well have been The Cliffs Founder and CEO Jim Anthony's zeal for fishing which led him to Patagonia, but it was a passion for helping people that kept his development dream alive. Anthony saw this outside-the-gates opportunity to enhance the value of his members' properties back in the U.S. by developing a resort for them. And when he saw the chance to touch the lives of the local population, he never looked back. "If you meet people's needs, no matter who they are, you're going to be rewarded," Anthony says, "whether it's financially, or with peace of mind. Or both."

#### FAMILY TREE

The Barker family of Glassy, shown here at their off-site zip line adventure. From left: Philip, Mike, Claire and Robin. "The views are outstanding; the hiking is awesome. But as amazing as the landscape is, the best part of The Cliffs Preserve is the wonderful people here. We never dreamed of having such a great opportunity."



Anthony and his team, including Greg Locke, a South American who is the operation's general manager, set about building a luxury retreat, careful not to compromise the locale's delicate ecosystem. It would eventually take a year-and-a-half to overcome the challenges of bringing electricity and other essential amenities to the region, according to Locke. Chief among their priorities, once their camp's basic infrastructure was established, was to secure local staff that could bring the true character of Patagonia to life for visitors.



#### SHORE THING

Below: An aerial view of The Cliffs Preserve. Opposite, bottom: The Yopp family of Keowee Falls saddles up.

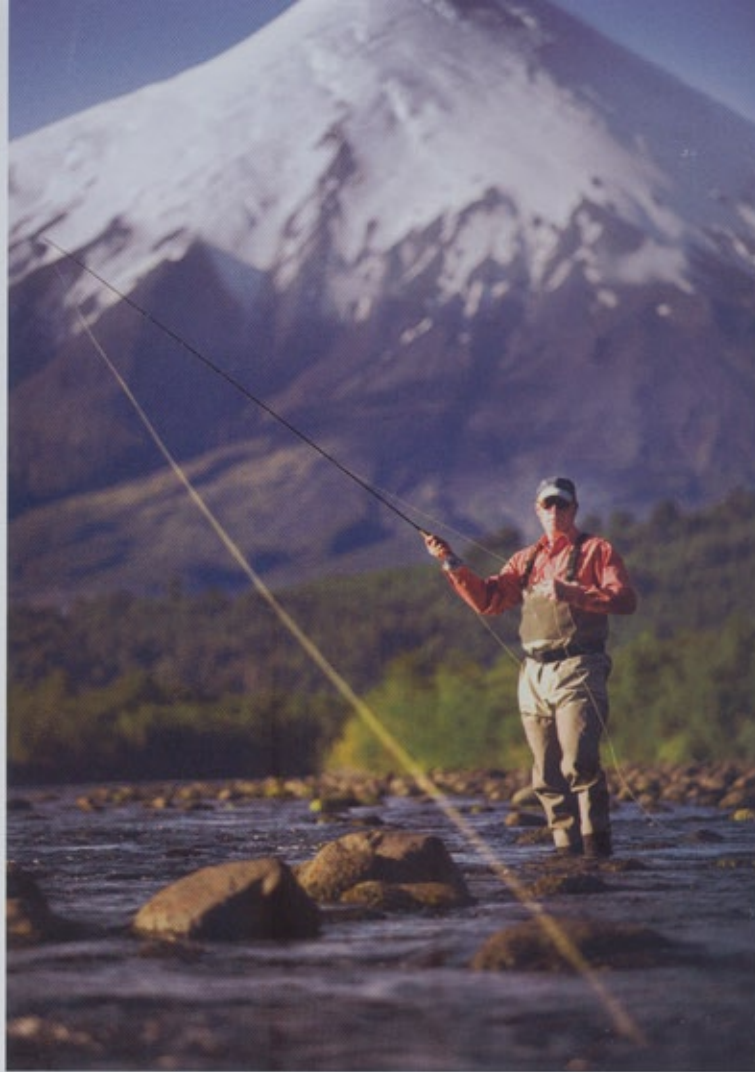
The Cliffs Preserve strives to create unforgettable memories by delivering the simple pleasures of life with a caring and personal touch. And it turns out to be an objective that's innately part of Chilean culture. "There's a Spanish word for the way people behave down here—*cariño*," explains Locke. "There's no word for it in English, but it generally translates to giving, caring, and loving without hesitation."

It's safe to say that *cariño* is making all the difference. "My wife, Lynne, had difficulty on inclines due to a previous injury. But [staff members] offered their help and made her feel just as important as any of the other, more fit people on the hikes," says Carl Kohrt, a visitor from the U.S. "All were talented and interesting people who shared their stories and became more than staff, but friends as well. We have never experienced that type of service in 40 years of living abroad or traveling to many countries."

Despite the challenges of setting up a world-class facility on the edge of civilization, the primary concern of everyone involved was creating sustainable development initiatives. The Cliffs Preserve has spearheaded some remarkable programs that will undoubtedly leave the truest, lasting impression on the region.

The Eye Care Program brings in American eye care professionals to provide free examinations and prescription glasses to local communities that would otherwise not have access to eye care. In the summer of 2007, 1,400 people from Los Muermos received prescription glasses. This year, 1,200 people from the rural towns of Maullin and Calbuco will receive the same care.

The Cliffs Artisan program helps local families sustain themselves and enhance the quality of their lives through woodworking and weaving. So far, twelve women and five men have completed the training, received the necessary tools for creating their crafts, and are in the process of product development and merchandising. The hope is to replicate this training throughout the region to foster economic



#### CAST AWAY...

Chile is a world-class fishing destination (for Brown Trout, in particular) with shimmering ponds, lagoons and lakes. There are also a variety of ways to fish, including float trips and heli-fishing.

EVERY MORNING, THE

# spray of the whales

WAS MY FIRST SIGHT. AND AT SUNSET, MY LAST.

sustainability as well as preserve the area's cultural heritage.

The Cliffs Preserve has also forged a fruitful relationship with the local fishing trade. Three years ago, The Cliffs Preserve built a fishermen's house that is used by families representing area syndicates as a base camp to take care of the abalone and seaweed concessions they own. In addition, they provide an outlet for the daily catch of fresh fish

and seafood. These families are currently being supported with legal assistance so they can establish fishing cooperatives that will allow them to apply for Chilean grants so they can purchase refrigeration units. These units will be indispensable in extending the life of their perishable produce, so they can receive a better price and significantly increase their main source of income.

The National Conservation Reserve is another ambitious project that began two years ago, with an alliance between the Chilean government, The Cliffs, and the Wilderness Foundation. A 30,000-acre conservation park, the first of its kind in Chile, now protects the watersheds of Lake Copa and Lake Roosevelt, both deep in the heart of Patagonia. The park's remote location and pristine quality make it ideal for a sanctuary that will be used for ongoing research, conservation and the establishment of a sustainable model that can serve as a guide for the management of all watersheds and fisheries in the Chilean Patagonia.

But perhaps the project closest to the hearts of The Cliffs' associates and members is the children's home in Los Muermos—a home for approximately 20 young girls who the courts have deemed high risk. They live there on a permanent basis and are supported by home mothers and psychologists who provide them with love, education



and hope for a brighter future. For many, the connection between the land in Patagonia, its people and the role of visitors is growing increasingly seamless. Indeed, respect has manifested itself in wonderful ways, beyond the mandate of The Cliffs Preserve. Last December, according to Locke, a group of visitors who visited the local village of Quenuir found the library was closed due to lack of funds. Since their return to the U.S., they (and The Cliffs Preserve team) have not only established a fund for the purchase of new books, but are also making arrangements to pay the modest wage of a part-time employee for the library.

Nowhere has the truly authentic travel experience evolved further, it seems, than on the Chilean coast. Here, it's no longer about creating and bringing back wonderful memories, exclusively. It's about the possibility of giving back something tangible for the betterment of all.

There's also a rewarding level of refinement at The Cliffs Preserve that truly sets it apart from other exotic vacation destinations. Each villa, adorned with delicate, rustically elegant touches that reflect

Patagonia, was built over several years using only local wood and workmanship. And each one has living and dining areas that share a private, unobstructed view of the ocean with walk-out access to the bluffs and the beach.

The Cliffs Preserve also boasts a seaside restaurant worthy of any discriminating gourmand's palate, that features fresh Pacific king crab, abalone, sea bass, mussels and clams that come from the immediate coast, and herbs, spices and fresh greens from an organic garden on the property. Complimenting these ingredients is an extensive wine collection that includes a fine selection of the best Chile has to offer in reserve and premium vintages.

When visitors aren't relaxing in the private, wood-burning hot tub outside their own villa, they can indulge in a staggering range of activities: from riding horses on the beach and paddling in the ocean for a sea-level view of the coastal ecosystem, to off-reserve adventures like heli-fishing, white water rafting and heritage tours, there's no short-

NOTHING COMPARES TO  
*six soothing miles*  
OF SOUTH PACIFIC COASTLINE

*BAY TO  
BEHOLD*

The Pacific coastline at The Preserve is home to blue whales, penguins, sea lions and otters, and an abundance of marine birds.



age of thrilling experiences. The Preserve seems to be a truly complete experience for the North American visitor, particularly those travelers who have already visited some of the planet's most exclusive vacation destinations. "In my 25 years of extensive travels, I have never seen a resort with such a beautiful setting, unmatched quality and privacy," says JoAnn Kurtz-Ahlers, a former VP of Sales and Marketing for The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company. "From the penguins and sea lions that live nearby, to the organic gardens, horses, and hiking available, a paradise awaits those who take the journey."

But even guests from South America are moved, including Maita Calvo, who discovered an exhilarating ritual to bookend each day. "The spray of the whales near the horizon was my first sight in the mornings and my last at sunset. The view of that really moved my soul," Calvo says. "It was a dream stay in a magic place." ■

For more information on *The Cliffs at Patagonia*, please visit [www.cliffspreserve.com](http://www.cliffspreserve.com) or call toll free 1-888-750-4839.



## The Cliffs world: finding real adventure around the planet



▲ Up the river with a paddle. Kayaking in Hakai Beach, British Columbia.



▲ Enjoying the awesome power of powder at Kispiox River, British Columbia.

The value of membership at The Cliffs goes far beyond the Carolinas. The ever-expanding portfolio of The Cliffs' Retreat Collection offers members vacation opportunities, from relaxing getaways to thrilling eco-adventures. And above all, the chance to truly reconnect with nature—some of the most serene, rugged and unspoiled the world has to offer.

The Cliffs at Kispiox River in British Columbia is a fly-fisherman's paradise with snow-capped mountains leading down to hundreds of lakes and streams full of gargantuan steelhead and salmon. Families can enjoy snowshoeing, heli-skiing, whitewater expeditions and more. The Cliffs at Hakai Beach, also in British Columbia, can only be accessed by a flight on a private floatplane. The coastal resort offers world-class saltwater fishing, sea kayaking, whale watching and other great activities for the family. And, with a planned opening in 2010: a private island paradise—The Cliffs at Cornish Cay, Bahamas. Nestled in the calm turquoise Sea of Abaco, it will be a world-class destination for bonefishers and sunlovers.



▲ Bird's-eye view of Cornish Cay, Bahamas. Sea-level view of the waters of Abaco.