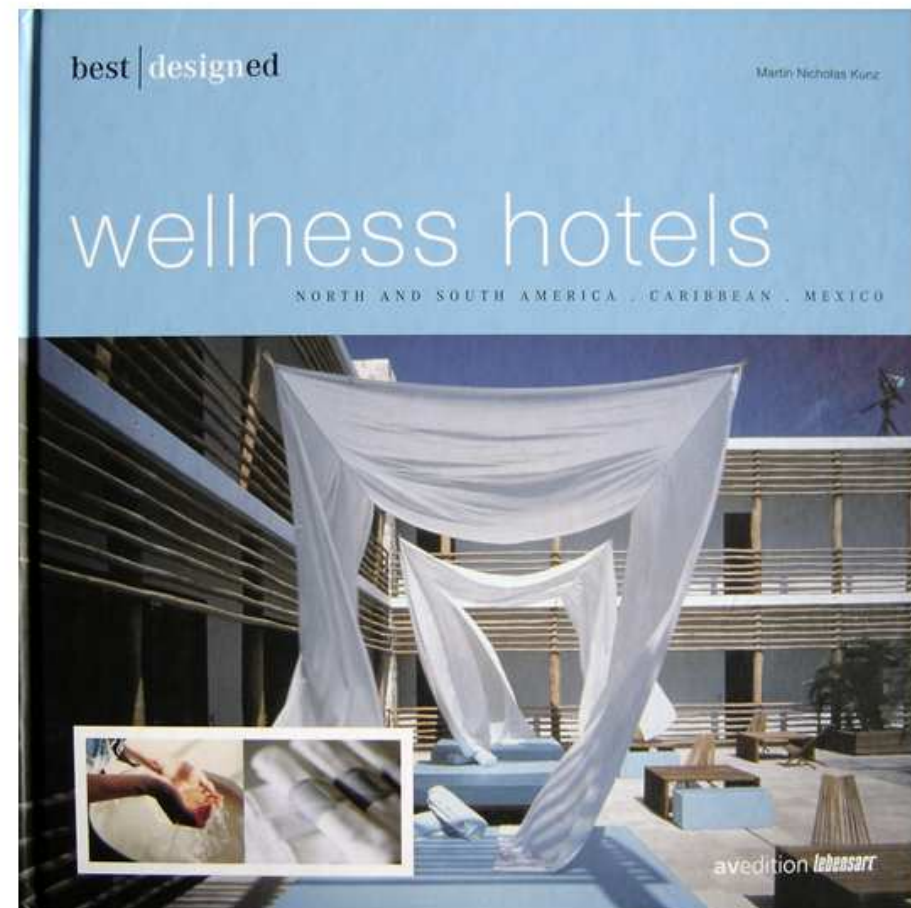


WELLNESS HOTELS  
NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA,  
CARIBBEAN, MEXICO

150 154 : EXPLORA EN ATACAMA  
154 160 : EXPLORA EN PATAGONIA

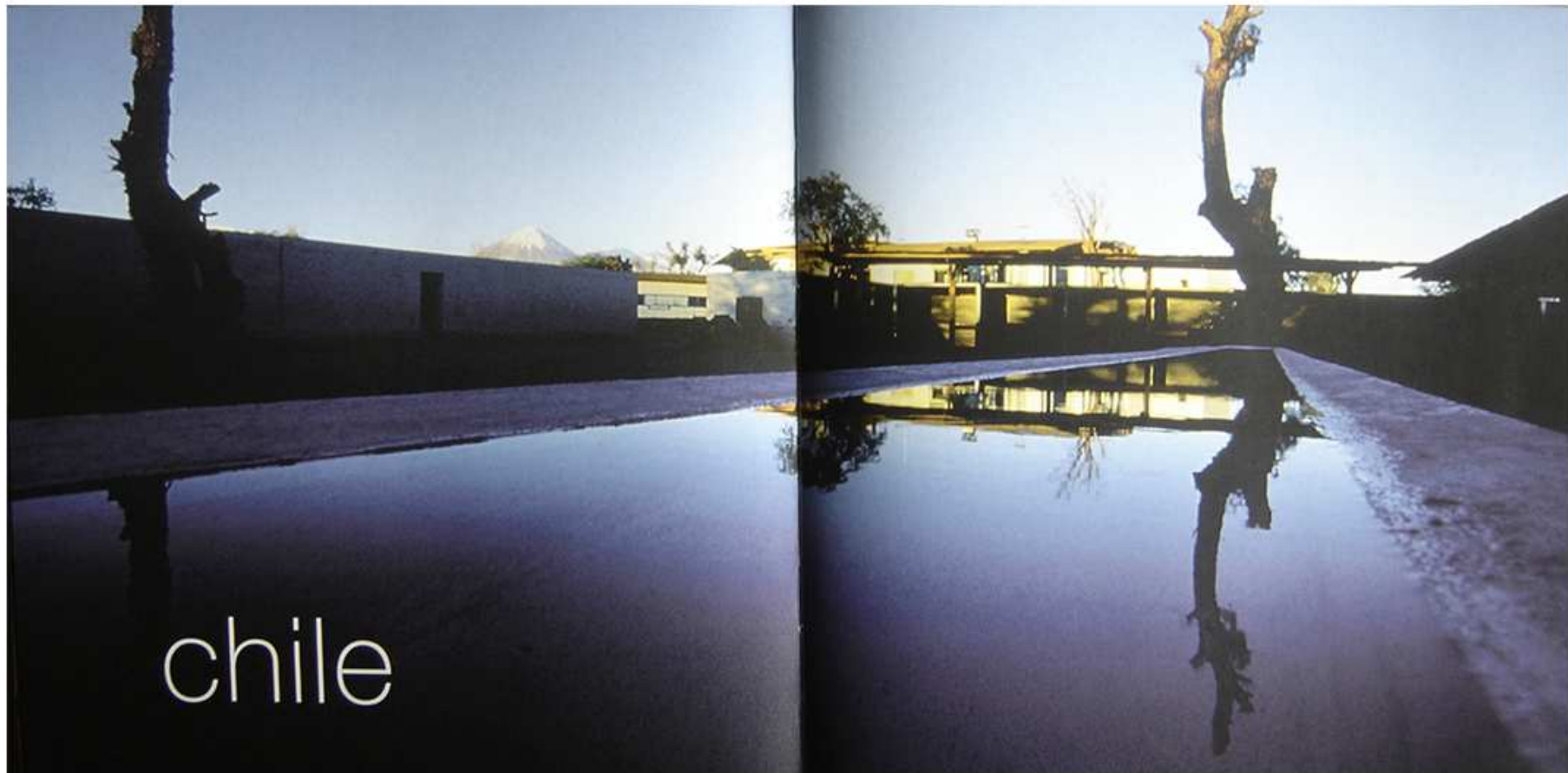
2002  
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explora en atacama | san pedro de atacama . chile

With a relative humidity of two percent or less, the Atacama Desert in northern Chile is one of the driest places on earth. Somewhat of a challenge for hotel constructors, one might think. It is precisely this climatic extreme that gave German del Sol the added impetus to install a counterpiece to his other property, Explora en Patagonia. Just as their natural backdrops differ, so do the two hotels.

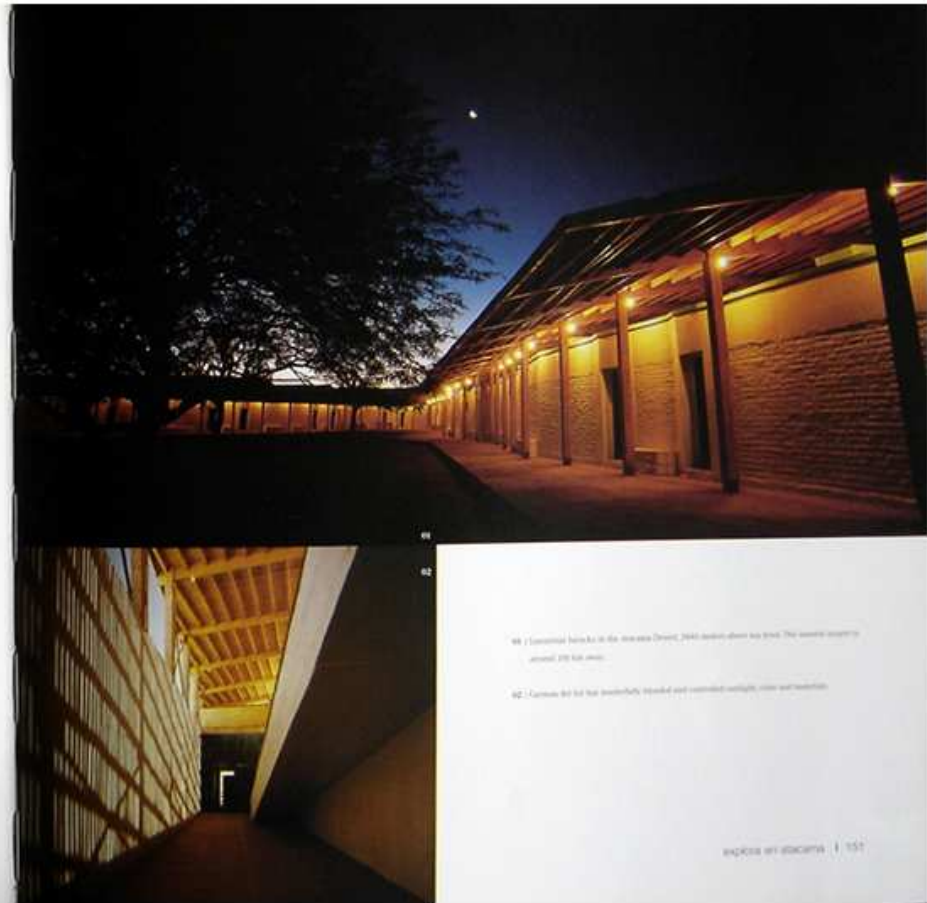
The Explora en Atacama is situated 8,000 feet above sea level and resembles a futuristic fort. At present, the hotel boasts 90 guestrooms set within the elongated, enclosed wings of the structure and arranged in

the form of a parallelogram around the main building, which also contains a lobby, gallery, restaurant and business offices. Cantilevered roofs shaped like airplane wings protrude a full 10 feet over the building and protect the terraces below from the sun and wind. In keeping with local design tradition, the rooms at the Atacama are small—most social or commercial life in the region takes place outdoors, encouraged by average daytime temperatures of around 75 °F. At the resort, this natural lifestyle is adhered to, and emphasis is laid on the exploration of the nearly limitless surroundings, either on foot, on horseback

or on mountain bikes. Guided groups of eight or less are taken by the hotel's local ranger into the wide expanse of the desert and steep landscape, volcanoes and geysers, or to numerous hot and Tulumayo runs. A comprehensive irrigation system developed by the area's original inhabitants is still used today for local agriculture and also supplies water to the hotel. Seizing upon the pre-existing technology, German del Sol set canals, waterfalls and pools throughout the resort. As with the irrigation systems, the resulting creations appear as man-made but harmonious components of the landscape.

Architectural, social and economical integration, are crucial factors in the philosophy of the Explora hotels. Local villages produce the raw ingredients used in the hotel's kitchen, local artisans provided their skills in the furnishing and construction of the hotel and local artists display their works at the property.

Such an immersion in the indigenous culture can be an overwhelming experience for guests, but it's an experience that can open up new ways of thinking about the world, and helps visitors to Explora en Atacama discover something new about themselves.



48 | Cantilevered beams in the Atacama Desert, 2002 define above and below. The overall concept is around 270 feet wide.

42 | Terrace del Sol has beautifully finished and reinforced concrete, stone and terracotta.



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explora en patagonia | torres del paine . chile

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It takes a good six hours to drive from the nearest airport in Punta Arenas, the southernmost city on the globe, to the hotel Explora en Patagonia. But the trip to the end of the world is made infinitely easier by the majestic natural backdrop of the Torres del Paine national park on the southern tip of Chile. Located above the 50th parallel, the Torres del Paine is a UNESCO world Biosphere reserve. Here, in the thinly settled and mostly pristine example of Patagonian landscape, Chilean architect German del Sol set about creating an ecologically-friendly hotel project. It's a theme that comes naturally to del Sol.

who is also the founder of the Explora travel agency, a body dedicated to operating sustainable tourism ventures throughout South America.

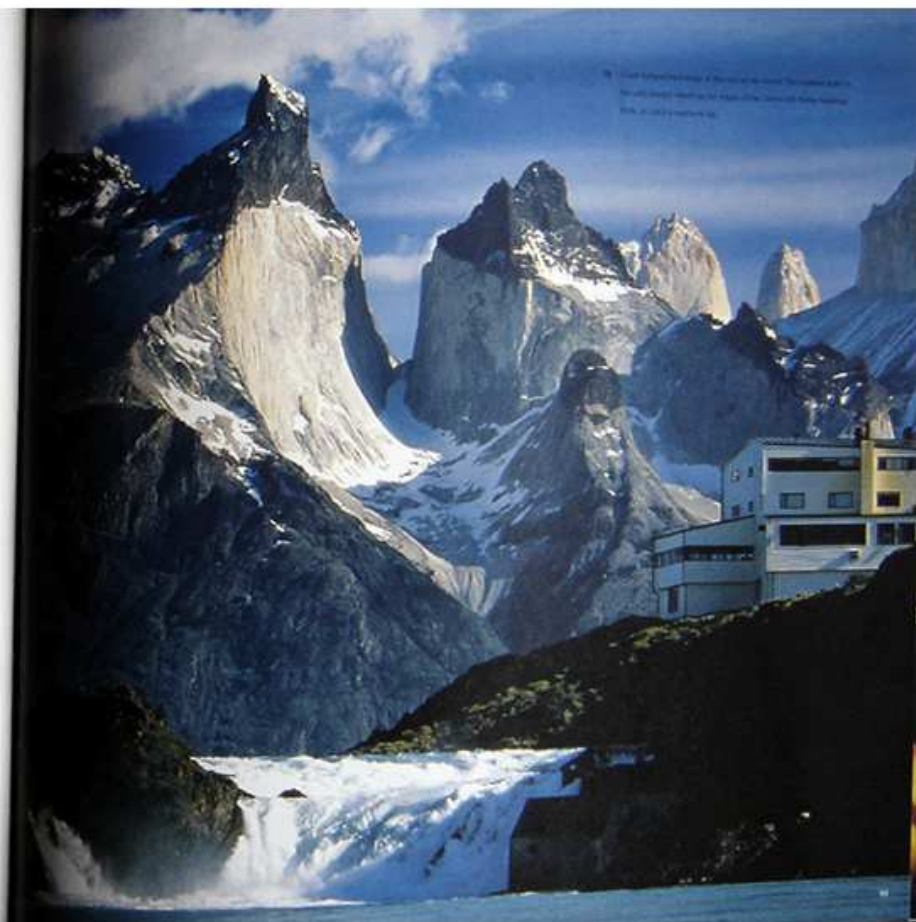
On the banks of Lake Pehoe, this luxury hotel is framed by steep, generally snow-covered mountains reaching 14,000 feet in height, a perfect starting point for modest explorations. Using a geometry usually found in cities, del Sol has attempted to create a counterpoint to the flowing natural forms around. Nonetheless, the property betrays the limited effect that architecture can achieve, regardless of talent and

creativity, when dwarfed by such impressive natural environments. Even though the angles and slopes clearly indicate the pencil lines and strokes of a gifted planner, the white-enrosted building looks from afar like a layer of snow before the trees.

Viewed from up close, however, the hotel springs forth like an observation station with a five-star ambiance. Its nature lodge contains a mere 30 rooms, each one uniquely designed. Lighting, furniture and accessories, all were designed by del Sol and manufactured by local artisans using materials native to the region. Many of

the rooms boast panoramic views of nearby waterfalls, mountains, glaciers or lakes.

Every guestroom comes equipped with all of the creature comforts one could reasonably expect. With so much awe-inspiring nature around, the television is a fairly surprising addition and one that usually remains untouched. Instead, after a day's trekking, most guests prefer to relax with a sauna or massage, then savor some of the excellent cuisine on offer, accompanied, of course, by a glass or two of Chilean Chardonnay or Cabernet Sauvignon.



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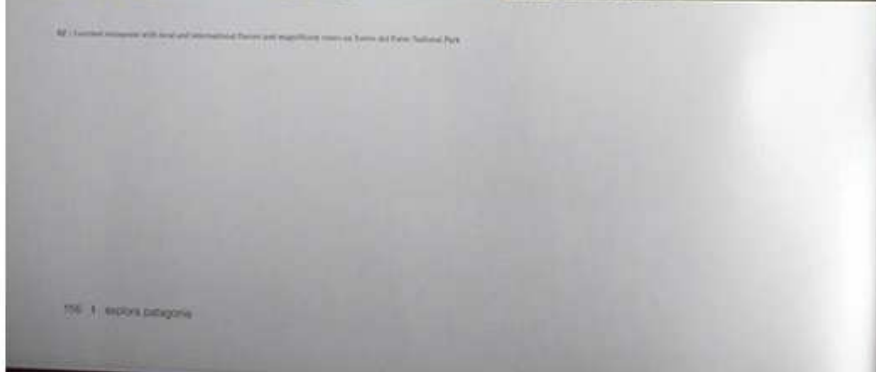
02 | A modern restaurant with local and international dishes and magnificent views of Torres del Paine National Park



03



- 04 | Despite the geometrically clear lines and reduced furnishings, the hotel's interiors are warm and relaxed.
- 05 | Many of the decorative elements are inspired from the landscape.
- 06 | ... and that, even if the space is modern, it is a clear statement of the hotel's concept in design.



156 | explora patagonia



04

05



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