WORLD BANK & COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL ALUMNI EXCURSION

TO THE END OF THE WORLD

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This Bulletin is a joint and collective effort of our fellow travelers, based on input provided by them on their impressions of the expedition. The general editors were Miguel Schloss and Silvia Lay, who also wrote the unattributed text and collected most of the pictures, with additional contributions by Duncan Campbell and Gladys Grace, our “Patagonia Natives” who wrote parts of the introduction on this region, Charlene Garcia (a member of Alan Hoffmanner's team in Manila) helped prepare the final production of the Bulletin.
INTRODUCTION

As travelers normally notice, Chile is in the distant Southern end of the world -- this is where air and shipping lines normally end, refuel and return. There is no place to go further south, except within the country.

A long and narrow country on the west side of the Andes Mountains, Chile stretches over 4,300 km (2,670 mi) north to south, but only 350 km (217 mi) at its widest point east to west, making it one of the longest countries in the world, if one excludes part of the Antarctic, which Chile claims.
This encompasses a remarkable variety of climates and landscapes, and is situated within the Pacific Ring of Fire – a geological “active margin” where two tectonic plates collide, causing tremors, volcanic eruptions, active geysers, and landslides – all indications that Chile hasn’t yet reached its “geological equilibrium”, which may well take place in a few million years from now, thereby not justifying postponing until then. On the other hand, all this makes this country stupendous for mining activities, geothermic and hydropower generation, and incredibly varied and monumental landscapes. This trip focused on two such locations – Patagonia and Easter Island.

The region known as Patagonia occupies the southernmost part of South America, covering territory in both Chile and Argentina. Until very recently most of it remained “unknown territory” to the Western World. Even up to the mid-19th century, explorers and scientists had done no more than visit Patagonia's shores, while missionaries and traders had gone timidly inland; Chile had established Punta Arenas (or Sandy Point), a small penal colony, and the nomadic native inhabitants were still present, mostly in the Pampas, and the islands and channels in the south of Tierra del Fuego.

By the early 20th century, sheep-raising had become Patagonia’s main and successful industry, which also contributed to the extinction of the so-called foot Indians.

Patagonia is still a land of emptiness, barely touched by human hands - room enough in past millennia for nomads to live in harmony with nature - room enough today to hold modern citizens and visitors, livestock and industry, some petroleum development and much, much more. It is a land of abundant natural resources — minerals, wildlife, rivers, lakes, icefields — and so huge that it stretches beyond the limits of perception. It has retained people's fascination by becoming a land where tourism provides a lasting flavor, but never reveals all. Lucky is the person who has the opportunity to visit!
Easter Island (Rapa Nui in the local language) is at the southeastern-most point of the Polynesian Triangle in Oceania. Easter Island is famous for its nearly 900 monumental statues, which have earned the status of a World Heritage Site.

It is believed that Easter Island's Polynesian inhabitants arrived on Easter Island sometime between 700 and 1100, creating a thriving and industrious culture. However, human activity and overpopulation led to gradual deforestation and extinction of many important natural resources, severely weakening the Rapa Nui civilization. By the 1700’s, when the Europeans arrived, the island's population had dropped to 2,000–3,000 from an estimated high of approximately 15,000 just a century earlier.

Easter Island is one of the most remote inhabited islands in the world. The nearest inhabited land is over 2,000 kilometers (1,300 mi) away; and the nearest continental point lies in central Chile, 3,500 kilometers (some 2,200 mi) away.

The term Patagonia was coined after Ferdinand Magellan sighted native people (whom he named “Patagones”) in 1520, while en route to the Straits that now bear his name.
Upon arrival on March 23-24, 2018 to Santiago from the four corners of the earth, an informal welcome reunion took place at Miguel and Silvia’s apartment, and then on March 25, the Patagonia expedition to Southern Chile and Argentina departed from Santiago to Punta Arenas and Puerto Natales.

Vast, exotic, wild and infinite in its beauty — that’s how Patagonia was described by the explorers who arrived here almost 500 years ago — little has changed to this day: it remains a truly unspoiled wilderness of mountains, fjords, glaciers, forests and steppes.

The program allowed for visits to two different Regions, which were undertaken in sequence:

i. An overland portion in the Torres del Paine region (March 25-27), where the Southern end of Andes Mountains disappears into the region’s lowlands;

ii. On March 27-29 a ferry crossing of the Strait of Magellan
from Punta Arenas to Porvenir, the largest settlement in Northern Tierra del Fuego, and point of entry of Croatian immigration in Chile, and thereafter crossing through the Argentinean steppes and lunch Gauchos (local “cowboys”) towards Ushuaia port in Southern Argentina.

On March 29 a cruise in the Australis through the canals, fiords and glaciers in the dismembered coastal area to Cape Horn, the Southernmost tip of the continent, where the South Atlantic and Pacific Oceans meet, and thereafter winding circuitously back to Punta Arenas through the Wulaia Bay, Pia, Garibaldi, Aguila and Condor Glaciers, and Magdalena Island, inhabited by Magellanic penguins.

After a stopover in Santiago on April 2-3, some participants took the opportunity to visit the historical and modern sections of the city. Some, on their way back to their home countries also visited the port city of Valparaiso, and some vineyards in-between.
THE EXCURSION

From April 4-7 part of the team flew and visited Easter Island, visiting various archaeological complexes, ceremonial sites, excursions through various Moai sites and island beaches.

Over 20 participants joined the team, coming from New Zealand, Brazil, Argentina, China, Iran, Germany, and the USA, in addition to the colleagues from Chile.
The trip was designed to give a sampling of different parts of the two Regions and provide a “flavor” of the far-flung townships in the midst of cinematic landscapes.

The visit to Patagonia started in Torres del Paine National Park and involved experiencing truly magnificent forests, mountains, waterfalls, lakes and stunning views of the Southern Ice Fields. In all, this was aimed at having a once-in-a-lifetime adventure, exploring the southernmost extreme of the American continent, navigating through countless sea fjords and channels and crossing close to the famous Straits of Magellan.
Along the way we saw some wildlife in the area, including the elegant guanacos, but didn’t lie in wait patiently enough to spot the reclusive puma.

Although the group came 10,000 years too late to meet the mylodon and other prehistoric animals of the region, they nonetheless saw the cave where this giant sloth used to live in this remote part of the continent.

Puerto Natales: A township, which only a few decades ago was a loose set of houses, nestled on the edge of, and in fact the gateway to, the majestic Torres del Paine, some of the Southern-most and last vestiges of the Andes.
Duncan Campbell and Gladys Grace, as our “Patagonian representatives” joined our welcome dinner in Puerto Natales. Duncan Campbell and Gladys Grace as the "Patagonian representatives", and delivered a presentation of the area. For years, they have researched the area's history, particularly the first British settlers, and have published a book, Patagonia Wild and Free, the memoirs of an early adventurer.

Have you ever felt completely insignificant in comparison to nature? Well, that’s precisely how one feels in small and attractive Puerto Natales and among the turquoise waters, glaciers and towering granite horns of the distant Torres del Paine, designated as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.
After crossing by ferry from Punta Arenas to Porvenir, the largest settlement in Northern Tierra del Fuego, and point of entry to of the Croatian immigration in Chile, the team entered the Argentinean steppes, which contrast sharply with the more rugged and mountainous Chilean side of Patagonia. We took the opportunity to lunch with Gauchos (local “cowboys”) in one of the extensive ranches in the area, visited king penguins with their strong monogamous instincts, to end up in Ushuaia port in Southern Argentina.

There the team boarded the Atlantis to retrace part of Charles Darwin’s legendary routes and visit the various fiords, glaciers waterfalls and islands. Along the way, we spotted some of the fauna of the region that may have caught the eye of Darwin, including dolphins, as well as (though very much from the distance, condors and huemules (a timid mountain deer) that are represented in the Chilean coat of arms.
The stopover between the two sections of the trip in the country’s central area gave a feel to participants of the more populated area in *Santiago and surroundings*, where a large part of the country’s economic activity takes place.
On the way to Easter Island and out of the country, several of our team took the opportunity to visit the more urbanized parts of the country in central Chile, mainly Santiago, its historical and modern quarters, and the neighboring Valparaíso port town and Viña del Mar resort, and some vineyards along the way.
One way to describe the Island is “massively impressive”. All participants have doubtless seen countless pictures of the statues of Easter Island and read some of its recondite history, None of that really prepares one for the experience of “being there” face to face with these works of art in their own environment, weighing hundreds of tons apiece, seeing the interplay of light and colors against the stone and witnessing the rugged landscape in which they are ensconced, interspersed among its peaceful population.
Dear all,

Yiting and I were ushered into a cold spring as soon as we arrived safely in NYC this afternoon. It was nice seeing/meeting you in the trip. The trip was a blessing to me as I got a chance to get to know many of you and visit the scenic Patagonia, Torres Del Paine, and watch beautiful sunset in Easter island.

Heartfelt thank you to our gang leaders, Miguel and Silvia for inviting us to Chile and organizing the trip! I also appreciate the informal leadership roles that Stephan and Alan took in the absence of Miguel by organizing group dinners, etc.

May Bianca get better soon!

In closing: Given our recent adventure, I would like to echo this quote of the founder of Patagonia: “Real adventure is defined best as a journey from which you may or may not come back alive, and certainly not as the same person”.

Paulina Yick

Silvia and Miguel,

Adding my deep appreciation. You’ve been such a wonderful host and organizer of the trip :-) the photo memories are making the Columbia history!!

Do let us know when you visit New York next. We shall celebrate the reunion and the Columbia spirit!!

Enjoy the weekend :-) 

Yiting Shen
World psychologists have studied holiday-planning and taking behavior and come to the conclusion that the German do it best with two weeks in a row as the preceding 5 planning weeks already bring positive psychological and physiological improvements and happiness (“the joy of knowing it’s going to happen”) and the following 8 weeks are full of good recollections (“the joy is has happened”). Don’t nail me on the exact duration, though.

Anyhow, from the mail activity I am observing, it seems that we will still be in Patagonia mood for those of us meeting in Paris this October! Quite impressive, indeed.

So much great stuff and memories to ponder about and relive!

Hugs and abrazos to all

Stephan Rey

Stephan and I arrived well and safe after a very long journey from the Easter Island via Santiago and Buenos Aires to Frankfurt. We slept ok but arrived in exploding spring with bright sunshine. We did not go for the Pisco Sour Bar (!) at Buenos Aires Airport and rather stick again to our French red wine at home.

We very much enjoyed the trip and meeting all of you. Thanks again to Miguel and Silvia for all the preparative work - and the initiative of course. Hope to see you all again soon.

Kisses
Daniela Rey

Daniela & Stephan Rey
On the excursion

We have arrived in Rio. Have already eaten a "feijoada" at a local restaurant. We had a terrible night, at most 3 hours of sleep, coughing a lot. We were back at the airport at 6:10 AM. Luckily, because our flight had been anticipated by one hour. We did not receive any message about this change.

I don't remember if I embraced everyone of you guys at the airport yesterday, but if I missed you, feel embraced. This was a FANTASTIC trip. I'm very happy to have met you all. Let's enjoy our return home filled with our memories and openness to what the future might bring. And let's go and prepare our photos.

Warmest regards,
Zaida Knight

I share your sentiment around farewells, Miguel. Suddenly standing on the street outside the warm friendly confines of the bus, I did feel sad it had all come to an end so quickly...but...so cool to have so many new and wonderful friends!

Great idea to do the Bulletin. We will get onto our contribution as soon as we get back...with thoughts of how we can get together again!

Thank you so much, Miguel and Sylvia, for all your thoughtful organization... we had SO much to look forward to!

Julie Irving
Hi all,

Just returned from nearly 2 weeks of meetings in LA and realize that I am never going to get around to processing all the pics I took on the trip. More importantly, I haven't been able to get to my important home project of learning to make Pisco Sours (although I have acquired the most important ingredient).

In retrospect, I am wondering if we were actually on a modeling shoot for Imran and Paulina and nobody let us know (perhaps to avoid standard union wages for the accompanying cast).

Hope everyone is doing well!

Alan Hoffmanner

That was awesome!

I am quite grateful to each of you!

Anne Haack
Dear all,

With much delay, I wanted to thank Silvia and Miguel, as well as Carolina, for all the hard work and devotion they put into organizing such a wonderful trip to Patagonia. They also organized some terrific guides and drivers, with one of the latter pitching in with duct tape at a very needy moment after I burnt my jacket on a stove, sending the white downy filling soaring into the air!

After seeing all the life size Rapa Nui statues at Santiago’s duty-free shops, I felt I’d almost been part of that visit too, but then I saw Peter’s wonderful pictures, and realized that I may well have missed out on something terribly special ... However, I did have four wonderful days in Lima visiting Norma who lived with us for over twenty years, and without whom our working lives with growing children would have been very different. Back here now in DC, I cannot say that I miss the Lima traffic - it is really something else!!

I only just finished putting some pictures of the trip on Facebook, and we certainly had some magical times together; certainly less than magical was Blanca’s fall, and I was so pleased to hear that her arm fracture is slowly mending and that she is in less pain.

Nicola Renison
Dear Gladys, Dear Duncan,

Thank you for introducing Don Guillermo to us. While I read it during the trip, it triggered the same excitement I had as an adolescent reading my grandfather’s “Field & Stream” copies or the books and tales of great game hunters or fishermen. It is so fascinating to discover another life and have a glimpse of “what it could have been like back then”. It shows that luck plays an integral part in shaping our destinies – we had the privilege to get to know you, thanks of Miguel and Silvia, and meet with you so far away from home. Don Guillermo would have gone unremarked if it weren’t for your book – the same applies to Magellan, had he not had Antonio Pigafetta on board of the Victoria, while trying to circumnavigate the globe. I took the liberty of leaving your book with the librarian on the cruise ship we had – good books are like ships, they have to circulate!

Let us know should your path take you to Frankfurt am Main!

Thank you again for your contribution in making this trip a once in a lifetime occurrence!

Stephan & Daniela Rey
Hi Duncan and Gladys:

Stephan’s and Daniela’s fascination with your book reminds me how deeply impressed I was when I read it at the time it was published — above all your contribution to digging into the history of our deep South.

Far too many of our so-called history books, particularly those we are supposed to memorize in school, are in fact overly removed from reality, listing abstract events and dates, trying to portray our past in rather idealized terms, with little or no effort to validate statements or events with disciplined research or first-hand documents as you have done.

Your book is indeed a much needed (and exemplary) contribution to filling this glaring void — bringing out a real “feel” of the society of the time in that part of the country — the thoughts, idiosyncrasies of some of the people, the dynamics between the settlers and the indigenous population, the daily life (with its good and bad sides). For far too long, we have literally ignored or knew nothing about this, and just moved on — risking (and, from what I see, to an extent repeating) some of our past limitations and absent-mindedness.

In this regard, you have shouldered the profound responsibility of bringing out to life the story of one of our settlers and acquaintances, giving them a voice, a testimony, and their thoughts — in the process providing a sense about how this country emerged, the environment at the time, and in away what we need to learn from it.

In sum, this is a scrupulously and thoroughly investigative effort to dig out facts, giving us a most readable and interesting insight that benefits both, us the readers, and those who write history, by providing a good example of how one should probe deeper to get a sense of events, the real context and so much else that takes place on the ground, to get a real appreciation of the region.

With warms regards and my congratulations to both of you.

Miguel Schloss and Silvia Lay
Hola Miguel:

Thanks for the kind words about our recent venture into publication. History is so much more engrossing when written in the first person singular, don't you agree?!

Our sincere thanks to Miguel, Silvia and to all of you who honored us with your attention in Puerto Natales at the close of a long day's travel. We hope that our brief words of introduction to Patagonia added to your appreciation of the region, and that you will have ample opportunity to enjoy and share William Greenwood's enduring memories, exactly as he set them down in his book "Patagonia Wild and Free".

Happy trails, everyone!

Cheers,

Duncan Campbell &
Gladys Grace
This Bulletin cannot be considered completed without expressing our deep appreciation to the audacious, friendly, diverse and unique group that came to visit us, literally from the four corners to the far ends of the world.

In the process, we enjoyed every minute of your company, learned a lot from each other, explored one of the emptiest and barely touched pieces of land still remaining around the globe, and formed great bonds we hope will endure for many years to come.

We also know from the various mails we have received, that all of us are appreciative to Carolina Barrera, who arranged the logistics, picked the guides, drivers, hotels, airplane connections and so much else with extreme patience and willingness to help, no matter where in this vast country, which proved to be downright invaluable.

*Miguel Schloss and Silvia Lay*

**THE HEROIC VOYAGERS**

Coralie Curtis; New Zealand
Firial Galadari; USA/Iran
Anne Haack; USA
Stephan & Lynne Hancock; New Zealand
Alan & Diane Hoffmanner; USA
John & Julie Irving; New Zealand
Peter & Zaida Knight; USA and Brazil
Adela Matienzo; Argentina
Nicola Renison; USA/UK
Stephen & Daniela Rey; Germany, France
Miguel Schloss & Silvia Lay; Chile
Ytting Shen; USA/China
Imran Tayebaly; Malaysia, Madagascar, France & Italy
Blanca Vera Tudela; Chile
Paulina Yick; USA