

JETSETREPORT

Another seasons ends in Punta del Este

We've never quite understood its short high season. [Punta del Este](#) that whips into frenzy from January through February but then comes to a sudden halt March 1st. The swollen cafes of La Barra empty, the hostess at [La Huella](#) suddenly stands alone and prayers for a room at [Playa Vik](#) are actually answered. But that may soon change. March is exactly the time to visit as the Uruguayan Riviera becomes less showy and its booming beach scene reverts back to a coastal bohemia.

For 2014, the hotspots remained to the north of Punta, from La Barra north to be more specific. The one-road town of La Barra grew with restaurants, shops and forthcoming retail hub [Oh!](#) shopping center designed by Carlos Ott. Nearby in Montoya, [Kala Boutique Hotel](#) brought a slice of Santorini to one of the area's favored neighborhoods. And further north in Manantiales, our favorite beach town, a far larger residence/hotel development known as [Selenza Village](#) looms in the background of Bikini Beach with its incredible [Fish Market](#) and sunset parties that linger till late nights even in March.

Luckily in these parts, not all hotels promised or even partially built come to fruition. Setai Jose Ignacio for example, that after years of idling as construction site will soon debut as [Bahia Vik](#) – the latest hotel development from Vik Hotels that own Estancia Vik and Playa Vik. The waterfront property takes a more native approach to design and architecture than Setai with new [La Susana](#) that alas offers a touch of St. Tropez-style beach

club scene by day that lingers and sometimes heats-up as a restaurant and lounge by night. A drive further into Jose Ignacio reveals little that's new albeit larger, grander houses and [Almacén El Palmar](#) that an all-day gourmet café by Relais Chateaux chef Jean Paul Bondoux that you'd barely notice along the sleepy town square – just the way we like it.

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