

Eva's Admonitions

Texas XXXs RFC -- Buenos Aires Tour Guide Issue: Numero Siete

Countdown: Four Weeks!

In the famous words of Emily Latella: NEVER MIND! – You will recall in the last issue, it was suggested that you buy a plastic flask, fill it with your favorite flavor enhancer, and bring it on the plane in your carry-on in an attempt to get around the high cost of buying hooch from Continental. Well, since then the world has changed – again – and now the taking on of liquid filled containers (especially those with a slightly flammable substance) doesn't seem like such a hot idea (pardon the pun). According to Continental's latest travel advisory, however, you can still buy a bottle in the Duty Free store, and it will be delivered to your seat on the plane.

Letters, we get letters – Bill Crawford writes with several questions, some more confounding than others. For starters, he wants to know if anyone has signed up yet for one of the Tango shows in BA? If you visit the Vintage Games website, there should be links to side trips and excursions. A Tango show was one of the offerings, as was the Gaucho ranch excursion, the day trip to Uruguay, etc. The tour committee (that select, yet secretive group of ne'er do well harumphers) decided we should make a group outing to experience the Gaucho life, but that the other offerings should remain optional. After some additional research, it was strongly suggested that there are several outstanding Tango shows in BA, and that it would probably work out just fine if individuals waited until arrival in BA and consulted with the concierge. Besides, if you take the tournament offering, you could well end up in a banquet hall full of other ruggers. Ditto for the day trip to Colonia (in Uruguay) via ferry (either the one-hour foil, or the infamous "three hour tour," with John Galloway starring as the Skipper and Jerry Riggins as his "little buddy.") And ladies, keep in mind that while the men have to trudge off to the rugby wars on M-W-F, you are certainly free to arrange other diversions on those days. After all, once you've seen the Belgrano Atletico Complex (where we will be all three game days), the only thing left to marvel at in this location will be old men in short pants.

Other Crawford inquiries: *How many people on tour?* A roster has been sent out recently by Ken Coulter, listing (liberally) 33 players, 22 women types, and two strapping 13-year-old boys whom we will stick on the wing. Or at hooker. *Game Times?* As we are entering two sides, the tournament organizers have assured us that we will be playing at different times; since there are three playing times, we can probably expect to have the first and last game of the day. *Do we have any other organized events?* Basically, we have the opening parade and ceremonies on Sunday, games on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Gaucho Day Thursday, and the Banquet Friday evening (for which you will need

a blazer with our Yellow Rose patch). As far as other plans, we need to hear from the ODs (see previous newsletters for this information), although some are treating their plans like the formula for Coca Cola, or Viagra. Bryant Winn and his ADC Abner Burnit, for instance, report they have something extremely unique planned for Thursday, but will only say that “folks will either love us, or hate us.” HmMMM.

Finally, Crawford and several others have asked what about **dress for Parade Day** and Opening Ceremonies on Sunday? We now have word from OD Kevin Griggs and ADC Chris Bugge that they will continue with tradition and the oh-so-creative Western motif theme. Keep in mind that Griggs and Bugge are the second and third best referees in our group, so expect to be yellow-carded for not following the dress code. For men, this means that – at a minimum – you will parade in cowboy boots, navy blue playing hose, pristine white playing shorts, Texas/western-motif shirt, and cowboy hats. (It is suggested that you bring a cheap but decent looking hat that is easily stowed on the plane ... you will probably trade it and not be bringing it home; please, no funky redneck open weave/floppy straw hats; and remember, feathers are sooooo 70’s). For the distaff side, boots and hats are also de rigueur, and whatever is in between should be Western, be it a blue jean skirt, sexy chaps, or dance hall ooh laa laa with fishnet hose. If wearing Jeans, ladies are requested to wear the Rocky Mountain style. These requirements for both sexes can be accessorized by belts, buckles, scarves, spurs, whips and blindfolds (good for hangin’). Or if you wish to come as a Western-themed persona, e.g. Indian, Sheriff, Undertaker, that would be equally colorful. Just remember, there are **no exceptions to the boots/hat requirement**, especially for pink sweater wearin’, boat shoe shufflin’, Florida sailing types.

Thanks for asking, Bill.

Looming events – No, were not talking about the craft of looming. But don’t forget that this Saturday, “Mr. Tony” will guide us through our first two **Tango lessons** from 3-to-5 p.m. The third and final lesson will be at 4 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 26. Cost is \$15 per person, per lesson. Wear dancing shoes made for slidin’, not Chuck Taylor’s, sandals, flip-flops, waders, or rugby cleats. Women should wear pants or very loose, extremely short dresses with a slit up to The studio’s address is 3300 Richmond, but it’s actually the southeast corner of Beverly Hill and Chimney Rock. It’s a one-story, T-shaped white office complex. The studio is on the west side of the building, facing the parking lot along Beverly Hill.

We have about nine couples signed up so far, and it should be a lot of fun. If you want to get in on the action and avoid the ridicule of your fellow players who stepped up where you were too skaired, to say nothing of what you’ll get from the wife, contact Ron Britt NOW, at rpbspu@aol.com. Or call him on his cell phone, (713) 305-1370. Take this number with you in case you can’t find the entrance. Please be there at least 15 minutes early so we can get in two full lessons. You can bet we’ll have a jar or two afterwards.

The other date to circle in red on the calendar is the **Kit Distribution Party** on September 3, the Sunday before Labor Day. We'll gather at the Cadillac Bar and Grille, Shepherd and I-10, beginning at 4:30 p.m. (Tilman Fertitta needs the scratch.)

Important Note For All Tourists: If you live in the greater Houston area, but cannot be at the party, it is your responsibility to make alternate arrangements to get your kit from our beleaguered Kit Boy (Dave Brzezinski, david.brzezinski@bakerhughes.com); he will not deliver it to your, or drag it to the airport, and he certainly won't schlep it to BA for you. Consider asking someone who you know will be at the party to pick up your gear. If you are not in the Houston area, contact Dave to arrange for shipping, for which he will bill you. Please do not wait until a week before leaving to make these arrangements. Again, Dave will not be bringing anyone's personal gear with him to BA.

Limerick Break:

*There was a young gaucho named Bruno,
Who said, "Sex is the one thing I do know.
Women are fine,
And sheep are divine,
But the iguana is Numero Uno!"*

Speaking of Gauchos (and no Brokeback Pampas jokes while on tour, please) – The word gaucho could also be used to describe the members of the Texas XXXs, as it originally applied to rough individuals, with tough manners, who either traveled alone or with a woman, and with only a knife for baggage. They, like the XXXs, are the eternal wanderers, the hard working horsemen that stand as one of the best-known cultural icons of Argentina.

The horsemen date back to the 1700s and have been both vilified and deified – sometimes simultaneously – since then. Cattle were first primarily raised only for the leather. Harvesters would leave entire carcasses behind after a slaughter, and the wandering gauchos would turn it in to a meal, morphing into today's asado. And we thought only Texans dined at the Road Kill Cafe? Their favorite weapons were their *boleadoras*, which are three balls on a rope, tossed David-vs-Goliath-like at horses or cattle, and as the animal lay stunned, the gaucho would cut the tendons of the rear legs to prevent escape. Today, the boleadoras are used as part of their traditional dance, sort of an Argentine "River Dance." Click here to see a sample performance.

<http://www.travelsur.net/gauchos.htm>

Tour Days Details – In the last newsletter, we provided some detail on the Parade and Opening Ceremony (amplified above with regard to dress). Now, let's take a peek at Monday and Tuesday, September 18-19.

Monday is the first of three game days (the others being Wednesday and Friday). The Officer of the Day is the Great Inquisitor, Bill Crawford, and his Aide de Campes are Buzz Marconi and Eugene Murphy. You will recall that there are two ADCs on game

days, as we have two teams to herd. In the morning, we will be bused to the grounds of the Belgrano Athletic Club, a wonderful facility about 45 minutes away. (By the way, you should know that Manuel Belgrano led the Argentine Revolution against Spain.) It has eight permanent rugby fields, facilities for youth rugby, soccer, lawn bowling, field hockey and other sports, and also features a very nice club house with changing facilities (bring your own soap/towel). On the grounds will be a large entertainment area with beer, wine, food, and souvenirs. They have even arranged for local leather dealers to come and ply their trade.

The first of three game times is 11:30 a.m., followed by matches at 12:45 p.m. and 2 p.m. It is anticipated we will play at 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. The club house and bar will remain open until early evening, so even if we have the late game, we won't have to rush off without the traditional "cool down." And remember, BA is a VERY late starting city at night ... so no point in rushing back unless you want to squeeze in something touristy.

The ODs on game days will also organize our post-match laundry, as this service will be provided on the grounds. After our day is concluded, it's back on the bus, where no doubt the ODs will have surprises for us to shorten the ride home. Remember that in our registration packets, which we will receive Saturday or Sunday, you will be given an ID to be worn to all events. You won't be able to board the bus without it. You will also be given separate tickets to the events not at Belgrano. For these, you will need both your tournament ID and the ticket for that particular event. (As mentioned in the last newsletter, you must have medical insurance; bring this information, or you will not receive your ID badge/tickets and other goodies.)

Tuesday is our one fully "free day." Some think that by drawing this assignment, Officer of the Day James Anheiser got lucky. He obviously doesn't know his ADC, Brian T. Hanlon, very well. Also, these ODs must come up with some truly creative ideas/suggestions for the tour party, as they are working with a totally blank slate. And to add to their burden, they will both be accompanied by very shy, retiring women who hold no strong opinions of their own (not!). So it should be interesting to see what they come up with. Maybe they will find a great deal on group seating for the ballet at the Teatro Colon? Maybe they will arrange for a Country Western Karaoke Night at a local watering hole? Maybe they'll plan a pool party on the roof of the hotel?

(ODs: Send any previews/details of the plans for your day now to paul@mabrytexas.com, so they can be included in the final edition(s) of the newsletter.)

Travel Tips – Like the cell phone issue we reported on, there are two schools of thought on carrying a passport. Some travel guides insist that you should always have it with you. Others say lock it up in the hotel safe and carry a copy with you (unless of course you are planning on bopping over to Uruguay, then you'll need it fer shure). In any case, you should have copies with you and left behind at home. Also, empty those wallets and purses, taking only cash, ID, your favorite credit card (you know, the one with the most credit available), and a back-up card or two. The Costco card is worthless to you, as is your VIP card to Rick's Cabaret. Have copies of the credit card numbers and the

customer service number in your luggage in case you need to report a theft or get replacement cards. And trade-out the family heirloom jewelry for the cubic zirconia earrings. They won't let you play in earrings anyway, guys.

Continental restricts passengers to **two checked bags, weighing 50 pounds or less**, and one carry-on bag (not including a purse or ubiquitous fanny pack). Elite level passengers, even if flying coach, may check three bags. Anyone in business or first class may check three. Pooh-Bah is checking on the opportunity for group check-in. Regardless, the team will have a few bags of its own (jerseys, etc.). If you can check one of these bags within your allotment, it will save Kit Boy from having to use club funds to pay for excess baggage. Please volunteer at the Kit Distribution Party.

Continental's Houston flights for BA currently depart from gate E-4. The check-in lobby for Terminal E is now up and running well, meaning that you no longer have to use Terminal C for check-in. It's a bit of a labyrinth getting there, but there is curbside drop-off at "E" now, right outside the doors of the new lobby.

Ask Eva –

Dear Eva ...

I'm concerned my husband is going a little bit overboard on the whole Gaucho thing. He seems to think he may have been one in a previous life. I'm even concerned he's going to start wearing one of those funny hats with the little balls hanging down around the edges instead of his standard-issue redneck John Deere cammo 'gimme' cap. But what really has me concerned is the fact that he thinks he is going to carnivore heaven when we visit your lovely country. He keeps waking up in the middle of the night yelling "ASADO!" I thought he had been watching too many Japanese war movies. My question is, will I be able to find something to eat other than red meat?

Woman Here In Need of Eggplant and Rutabagas

Dear Whiner,

Don't you read? We are the most European of all Latin American cities with 12 million citizens. Trust me; you are going to find eclectic restaurants all over, just like you have there in Houston. I'll bet when people visit Texas, all they think they're going to find is chicken fried steak and maybe some collard greens (whatever those are) on the side. We have an extremely large Italian population, so we've got your pasta covered, and the Germans weren't the only ones coming here at the end of the Big War. When it comes to high-tailing it, they've got nothing on the French, so yes, you can find nouvelle cuisine. Seafood? Check an Atlas; we're right on the water. So no worries, my darling, your gastronomical requirements will be adequately met. Bon appetit.

Eva

Eva's right. Did you see the recent letter in Ken Hoffman's *Houston Chronicle* column? Not only is great pizza plentiful, but so is, evidently, cat food!

We recently visited Buenos Aires, Argentina (which has Lombardi-quality pizza all over town), and they have an interesting solution to their stray-cat problem: They have given them a park right in the middle of the city to live in. The "Botanical Park" is about the size of two Houston blocks and is next to the Plaza Italia, in one of the better parts of the city. It's a beautiful, old historical park, and there are thousands of cats living there. I bought some kitty chow at a store and went in there, and I got mobbed; cats came from everywhere. My wife got mad at me, but I had a good time. Chazz Reinhold, Houston

Weather Report – At high noon on August 17, one month before arrival, the temperature in BA was 50-degrees, with 82% humidity. An overnight low of 42 is predicted, with a high of 60 expected. For the next ten days, the temperatures will range between 67 and 40 degrees; we can expect slight warmer ranges in mid-to-late September, which, by the way, is typically one of the least rainy months in BA ... but pack a poncho anyway.

Entre más viejo el violín, más dulce la música
www.texasxsrugby.com