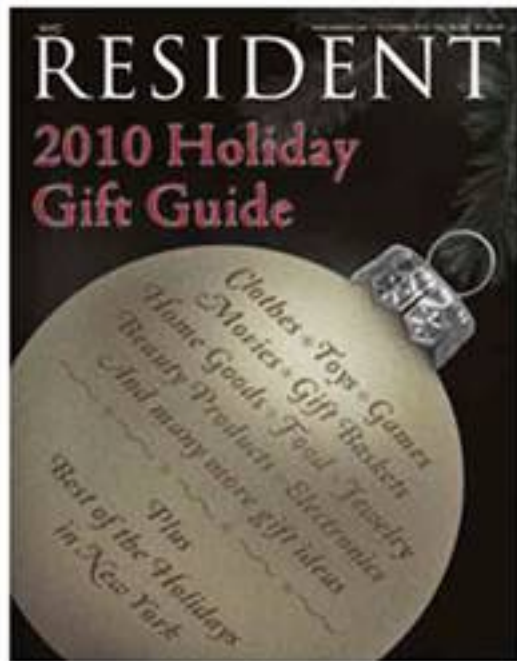


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## Buenos Aires: Scent of a City

By Lisa Loverro

Staring through the window from my comfy Business Class seat courtesy of LAN Airlines ([www.lan.com](http://www.lan.com)) I felt a sense of excitement, much like a teenager on a first date, to be visiting the city of Buenos Aires. I had always dreamed of jetting down to "BA" and if the service in this European-flavored city was anything comparable to what I experienced on South America's premiere airline, LAN, things could only get better!



I was there to attend ArteBA ([www.ArteBA.org](http://www.ArteBA.org)) this past June; the city's annual and very colorful 5-day art show. But behind the hundreds of stalls showcasing dynamic artwork, funky installations, with visually appealing spectators roaming its halls, the city of Buenos Aires is filled with a flavor hard to describe. Its eclectic mix of Spanish, Italian and German cultures meld together to make something of a unique combination, unlike other South American cities. And in this immense city of stunning architecture, steakhouses and tango clubs, there's a certain scent that's hard to ignore. It's sexy, fragrant and energizing.

The city's many neighborhoods each have a very distinct characteristic all their own. In Recoleta, for instance, the "upper crust" of society roam the pristine streets much like our neighborhood of the Upper East Side. Home to Eva Peron's resting place, this area of the city is filled with high-end hotels such as the Alvear Palace ([www.alvearpalace.com](http://www.alvearpalace.com)) and Park Hyatt ([www.buenosaires.park.hyatt.com](http://www.buenosaires.park.hyatt.com)); and boutique lodgings such as the Casa Sur ([www.casasurhotel.com](http://www.casasurhotel.com)). The Palermo neighborhood is funky and hip with boutiques showcasing local designers. One of the newest hotels here, the Nuss roots back to the early settlers from Italy. In San Telmo, home to the Moreno Hotel ([www.morenobuenosaires.com](http://www.morenobuenosaires.com)), the heart of the city is at your fingertips with antique markets, art galleries and tango halls. San Telmo was perhaps my most favorite neighborhood in Buenos Aires, and the Moreno Hotel, in the heart of this district, was the perfect spot to begin my journey.

Strolling the streets, attending ArteBA and feasting on empanadas and perfectly cooked steaks engulfed my senses to the point of almost overload. But it wasn't until I moved into my new hotel for the next few nights, Faena Hotel and Universe ([www.faenahotelanduniverse.com](http://www.faenahotelanduniverse.com)) that my senses completely exploded. From the moment you enter this hotel located in Puerto Madero, a waterfront district previously housing an old grain silo (now the Faena Hotel) and deserted warehouses, you'll be overwhelmed by the hotel's very own unique scent lightly sprayed throughout the property. The hotel, designed by Philippe Starck in close collaboration with the driving force and brainchild behind the property, Alan Faena, is not only a hip and chic "city resort" but also a visual feast for the eyes. Its all about the color red (and white); heavy velvet red curtains controlled remotely in my room, red roses on my night table and carpeting in its lobby. Their nightclub was hot, the Tango show cool. Although located a bit away from the main pulse of the city, the hotel was perhaps the most appealing part of my trip.

Located just outside the city there are many Estancias perfect for a quick dose of country comfort. The Estancia Villa Maria ([www.estanciavillamaria.com](http://www.estanciavillamaria.com)), about a one-hour drive from the city, is a sprawling estate-turned-boutique hotel where you'll enjoy tennis, swimming, taking in a polo match and viewing gauchos (cowboys) tend to their horses. Perfect for a day trip or overnight stay!

If your travel plans allow for an excursion, hop on LAN Airlines and fly up to the Iguazu Falls. Taller than Niagara and wider than any other, the Falls are majestic and grand, forceful and beautiful all at the same time.

If you prefer to stay in your own private Villa, the customized tour services of Blue Parallel ([www.blueparallel.com](http://www.blueparallel.com)) can arrange a luxurious home in the heart of the city.



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