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October 18, 2011

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Has Patagonia gone posh? What a silly question to ask about a region that embraces 350,000 sq. miles, mostly in [Argentina](#) with a slice of [Chile](#)—stretching from the two-country-shared Lake District down to the bottom of the world at the Strait of Magellan and Tierra del Fuego—a gorgeous adventure-land of labyrinthine lakes and craggy Andean peaks, groaning glaciers and

icy fjords, condors and guanacos at home in national parks, and penguins and whales hugging the coastlines.

On the other hand, it is fair to say that there are now boutique corners of Patagonia where luxury lodges and estancias with a strong sense of place, authenticity and sustainability have tamed the wilderness experience, or at least made it a wildly comfortable adventure to go exploring on foot and horseback, by boat and 4WD. While Patagonia's often rustically plush, out-of-this-world places are now linked by an improved network of roads and flight services, it was the **Best of Patagonia (BOP)**—[bop.travel](#)—that first cobbled together an alliance of 12 of the region's most exclusive hotels and cruises to promote the southern cone region as a single luxury destination to the international market.

“We invest great effort on the U.S. market,” says Juan Pedriel, director of Best of Patagonia (BOP), “as it is the most important for us. Not only do we promote our individual members, offering special upgrades and perks to guests who stay at least three nights, but we design vacations of a week or two that visit different corners of Patagonia. We work closely with the most respected luxury tour operators and experts on Latin America, as well as travel agent members of [Virtuoso](#), **Ensemble** and **Signature**.”

And obviously its joint marketing efforts are working, for Pedriel advises that the alliance is broadening its reach. “While we are keeping the name Best of Patagonia, we are widening our borders and thus turning into a more integrated alliance of the most exciting and sought-after tourism areas of South America.” The newest member additions are the trio of **Inkaterra** properties in Peru: **La Casona** in Cusco, **Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel** in Aguas Calientes, and **Reserva Amazonico** in Tambopato.

[argentina](#)

The idea for BOP originally came from the **Alvear Palace Hotel (800-223-6800; [alvearpalace.com](#))**, the grande dame of Buenos Aires properties, which understood a decade ago that its very upscale guests were seeking new destinations—in town, outside town, in the wild—that deliver both comfort and authentic experiences, and the Alvear Palace was perfectly positioned to serve as the hub for the marketing of Patagonia. Located in the upscale Recoleta district, elegance is everywhere in this historically important hotel, combining Empire- and Louise XVI-style furnishing with French decorative arts. The hotel's 210 rooms—100 of which are suites—come with personal butler service, fresh flowers and fruit baskets, large marble bathrooms with Hermes toiletries and

jacuzzi baths (in most). Among the hotel's bars and restaurants are two of the city's most illustrious establishments: the bird cage-like L'Orangerie for buffet lunch or afternoon high tea and La Bourgogne restaurant, a gastronomic legend. Guests asking at the desk for the best tango show in town will certainly be directed to Esquinas Carlos Gardel, the only BOP attractions member. Double room rates with breakfast and taxes from \$875.