



GREEN PEARLS®
UNIQUE PLACES

José Koechlin von Stein – A portrait



Darmstadt, April 21, 2017 * Green Pearls®** On a regular basis Green Pearls ® introduces from now personalities who have written history regarding sustainability. We start with a portrait of José Koechlin von Stein who is involved passionately in 'green' tourism in Peru for 40 years.



The Peruvian Eco Pioneer

In 1975, José Koechlin von Stein bought land in Puerto Maldonado and set out with an axe to clear the space for his first Inkaterra Hotel, the [Reserva Amazónica Lodge](#). After founding Inkaterra, it took a while for the eco-tourism idea to catch on, but now that it has, Inkaterra is expanding fast with currently seven lodges located at Peru's most popular spots: the Amazon rainforest, the Machu Picchu cloud forest, the Sacred Valley of the Incas and the city of Cusco. Today, Inkaterra's non-profit organisation, *Inkaterra Asociación*, aims at conserving Peru's natural environment as well as cultural and archaeological resources. The man who started it all belongs to the Koechlin family, who arrived in Peru in 1852 from native Alsace. The von Stein grandfather arrived in 1913 as General Consul of Austria, José Koechlin von Stein has been dedicated to developing eco-friendly tourism in Peru for over 40 years now. He has served on and chaired numerous conservation boards and tourism committees, such as the Peruvian Association of Adventure Travel and Ecotourism, Peru's National Chamber of Tourism. José was also the founding chairman of the Sustainable Development Committee at the National Confederation of Private Enterprise (CONFIEP). His focus was always to grow the value of Peru as a tourist destination and conserving its natural beauty. His vision is that environmental responsible travel is the only way to sustain the industry in Peru and generating a positive impact on the environment.



The name Koechlin is also well known within the film industry

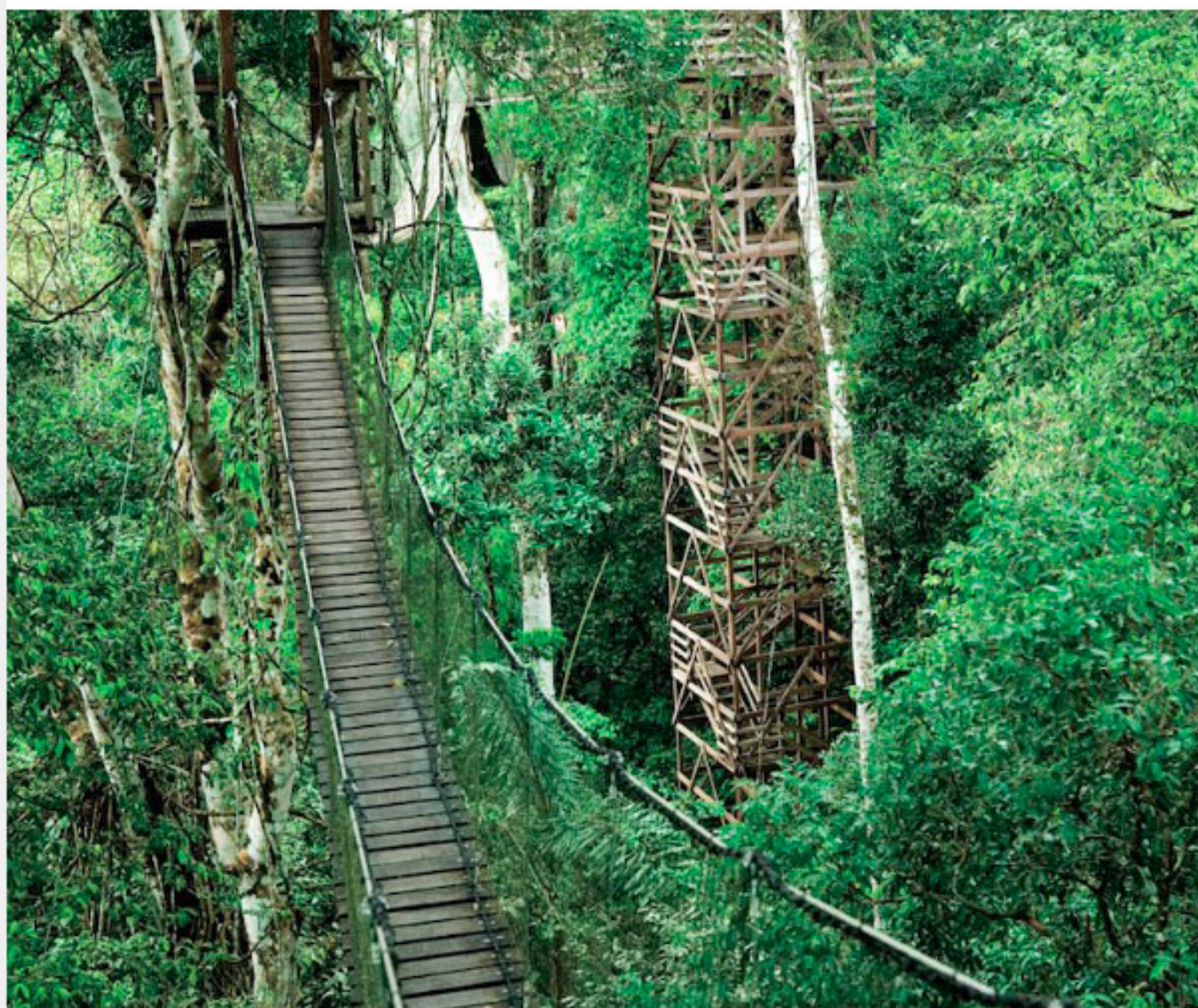
You might recognize the name José Koechlin von Stein from a different side career: He co-produced Werner Herzog's classic films *Aguirre, The Wrath of God* (1972), *Fitzcarraldo* (1982) and Les Blank's documentary *Burden of Dreams* (1982). Both had formed a friendship during the filming of *Aguirre, The Wrath of God*, a film narrating the misadventures of Lope de Aguirre, a traitor to the Spanish crown who sets out to find *El Dorado* on his own. Thus, when Koechlin visited Herzog in Munich to tell him the story about the Peruvian Carlos Fermín Fitzcarrald, Herzog was on board almost instantly and *Fitzcarraldo* was born. It took four years, from 1978 to 1982, to film and produce the movie that later would win Herzog the award for best director at the Cannes Film Festival. The film explores the story of a rubber baron who has to build a ship in the Amazon rainforest before it has to be carried from one river to another over a hill. According to Koechlin, the most effective medium to publicize a destination is film, thus making it the perfect way to help his cause to educate the world about Peru.





The Modern Noah

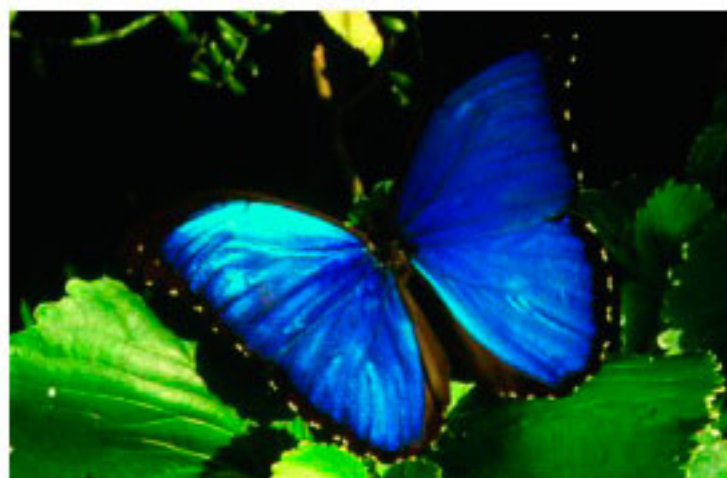
Peru is a large, uncompromising territory divided into areas of jungle, mountain and desert with few rolling plains in between. It is rich with ancient indigenous culture and nature, wildlife and scenery, and, arguably, the best food in Latin America. To find such an unspoiled but still beautiful and civilized country is a rarity. This is the country José Koechlin von Stein dedicated his life to preserving. He is almost a modern-day Noah, saving species from going extinct. He has sponsored major explorations of flora and fauna in the Amazon basin resulting in an inventory of more ant species at [Inkaterra Reserva Amazónica](#) than anywhere else in the world. He also helped to create the world's largest Orchidarium of 372 native species in their natural habitat at [Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel](#) as confirmed by the American Orchid Society. And his sponsorship of multiple ecological publications has led to the discovery of fourteen new species to science on the Inkaterra properties.





Biodiversity Capital of Peru

Only a short flight from **Cusco** lies the rainforest lodge, **Inkaterra Reserva Amazónica**, at the border to the Tambopata National Reserve. This area, where Koechlin built his first hotel, is known as the “Biodiversity Capital of Peru” where you can find two-thirds of all known plant and animal species. Guests can explore the rainforest on a number of existing land and river tours while living in simple lodges with limited electricity. The accommodations are thirty-five thatched roof cabañas, in the style of indigenous *Ese Ejja* people, connected to the rest of the property by winding tree-trunk boardwalks. The award-winning eco-lodge has been the ecotourism pioneer for more than forty years, promoting the sustainable use of the Southern Peruvian Rainforest.



The Orchid Wonderland & the Secret Valley of the Incas

Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel is located on a private five-hectare mountainside reserve at the foot of Machu Picchu Mountain. The land Koechlin bought was used partly for the lodge, as well as to reclaim the cloud forest around the hotel, and he also donated eleven acres to build a school, train station, market, stadium and houses. It was called “The Garden of Eden” with its ecological trails and numerous observation spots for birds and butterflies. The incredible variety of flora, especially the 372 vibrant native orchid species in their natural habitat, can be seen on special orchid walks. The most recent addition to the Inkaterra Hotels, the Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba, located between historical Cusco and Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley of the Incas. This makes it the ideal stop for travelers to acclimatize before journeying to Machu Picchu. The Valley offers the opportunity to explore the secrets of the Incas and the vibrant traditions of their descendants. Surrounded by incredible mountain views as well as cacti, flower species and the indigenous pepper trees, the modern, luxury hacienda has been designed to emphasize Inkaterra’s core philosophy of respecting the environment.

The German Green Pearls GmbH with place of business in Darmstadt, Germany unifies international tourism companies that support environmental protection and demonstrate social commitment. Thereby, Green Pearls is the first holding company worldwide that consolidates sustainable hotels, destinations and restaurants in a global data source.

Among the criteria of admission to Green Pearls® Unique Places, are a sustainability plan on management level, sustainable architecture, comprehensive water, energy saving and waste recovery measures, the use of seasonal and regional ingredients in the kitchen, as well as a large commitment for the social balance in each of the vacation regions.