

GREEN PEARLS® - UNIQUE PLACES

Blog

Peruvian sustainability pioneer – José Koechlin von Stein

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On a regular series on Green Pearls® pioneers we introduce you to some vicious personalities who inspire us with their engagement for sustainability. Today the blog post is about José Koechlin von Stein, who since more than 40 years now engages in conscious and ecological tourism in his home country Peru.



José Koechlin von Stein ©Inkaterra

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How it all began...

The family Koechlin, originated from the Alsace, migrated to Peru in 1852, and in doing so laid the foundation for the success story as we know it today. José Koechlin von Stein had always been engaged in sustainability, be it in various environmental projects, tourism boards or as founding member of the sustainability committee of the National Confederation of Private Enterprise (CONFIEP). His aim, raise awareness for Peru as touristic destination while protecting the beautiful, pristine nature. In 1975 he bought some land in Puerto Maldonado where later the first [Inkaterra](#) hotel had been built: the [Reserva Amazónica Lodge](#). Over the years more hotels were added – today there are seven Inkaterra hotels and lodges: in the Amazonas rainforest, at the Machu Picchu Cloud Forest and in Cusco.



©Inkaterra

Sustainable engagement for nature

Only a few years after he purchased the first property, the non-profit organization [Inkaterra Asociación](#) (ITA) started its work. The mission was to save and protect the Peruvian species diversity and cultural heritage through research, to support the local communities and sustainable business models. The projects especially research are financed by touristic offers such as guided tours in the rainforest. In close cooperation with other organizations, like the National Geographic Society more than 15,000 hectares of rainforest could be saved, a conservation program for the spectacled bear was instigated, studies about birds and orchids were conducted and a marine reserve was founded in the North of Peru. Furthermore the work of the ITA already saved various species from extinction. By the way: the Inkaterra Asociación is always looking for [volunteers](#) willing to help protect the unique Peruvian nature.



The Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel ©Inkaterra

On the trail of the Incas

The Sacred Valley of the Inca with its astonishing Inca ruins, small Andean villages and fields, surrounded by the breathtaking mountain landscape, is located in the North of Cusco along the Urubamba river. Here, at the foot of the Machu Picchu, José bought a five hectares big property

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which had been partly used to build the Inkaterra [Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel](#). But above that his major motivation was to regenerate the „Cloud Forest“. Additionally José gave some land to the community to build a school and a train station and some more to also build private houses. Between Cusco and Ollantaytambo and also in the Sacred Valley of the Incas another hotel of the Inkaterra group is located: the [Hacienda Urubamaba](#) which serves as the perfect starting point to acclimatize before daring the hike up to the most famous Inca ruins of all.