

CEO Q&A WITH INKATERRA'S JOSÉ KOECHLIN VON STEIN

WRITTEN BY [RICHARD D'AMBROSIO](#)



Established in 1975, Inkaterra has been at the forefront of ecotourism and sustainable development in Peru, creating authentic travel experiences, while preserving the region's biodiversity and local cultures. Its sustainability efforts have gained them membership with diverse alliances, such as Relais & Châteaux, Virtuoso and National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World.

Inkaterra's luxurious properties are established in the heart of the Machu Picchu cloud forest, deep in the Amazonian rainforest, along the cobblestoned streets of Cusco and surrounded by the rolling hills of the Sacred Valley of the Incas. All of the company's hotels are defined by their eco-friendly design, inspired by traditional architecture, built with native materials, and in harmony with their environment.

The FTA recently interviewed Jose Koechlin, Inkaterra Founder and Chairman, about this amazing company, about how Inkaterra develops accommodations and experiences that embrace and protect its surrounding habitat, and how we can invite guests to consider doing the same.

FTA: When was Inkaterra launched, and why?

Koechlin: Since its inception in 1975 – way before “experiential travel” was the “it” trend – Inkaterra recognized the need to research, preserve the wildlife, habitat, cultural heritage and offer authentic Peruvian experiences. The abundance of resources in the seventies were believed by many people to be inexhaustible; however José Koechlin (President and founder of Inkaterra and Inkaterra Asociación) was ahead of his time in predicting that the future of our ecosystems depended very heavily on knowledge and consistent economic management of natural resources.

In its 44th year of operation, Inkaterra is Peru's leading luxury eco-tourism group and sponsor of the non-profit, NGO-Inkaterra Asociación-ITA. So far, Inkaterra has protected thousands of acres of Amazon tropical forest and Andean cloud forest; created a rehabilitation center for the endangered Spectacled Andean Bear; protected and catalogued hundreds of native orchid (372), bird (214 of which 18 are hummingbird, and butterfly (111) species; restored a beautiful 16th-century colonial mansion in Cusco (Inkaterra La Casona), home to



José Koechlin von Stein, Founder of Inkaterra

Conquistador, Diego de Almagro and Libertador, Simón Bolívar, among others; and has hosted hundreds of scientists at its properties to aid in their research to catalogue, discover and preserve Peru's natural gifts.

FTA: What sets your company apart from other companies that could guide American travelers to South America?

Koechlin: Guests traveling to Peru with Inkaterra have a chance to experience Peruvian culture through regional lenses specific to the destinations of each hotel; every Inkaterra property is unique. The ethos of each hotel's region is engrained in the property – from design aspects and cuisine to the experiences offered, each distinct property leaves a lasting mark on the guest which, when combined, provide an unforgettable and authentic Peruvian travel experience.

FTA: Inkaterra is known for its hotels, but you have so many. Can you describe some of them?

Koechlin: Inkaterra owns and operates the 12-acre Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel in the Andes and the Inkaterra La Casona boutique hotel in Cusco, Inkaterra's first member of Relais and Châteaux. The group's newest property is the Inkaterra Guide Field Station in the Madre de Dios-Tambopata region of the Amazon, South Eastern Peru.

Additional properties include the elegant Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba in the Sacred Valley of the Incas, Inkaterra Hacienda Concepción and Inkaterra Reserva Amazónica, on the shores of the Madre de Dios River – the first Inkaterra property which opened in 1976 – with its unique Canopy Tree House and Canopy Walkway located within the 10,000 hectare Reserva Ecológica Inkaterra in the Amazon rain forest.

Additionally, El Mapi, by Inkaterra at Machu Picchu Pueblo, offers Inkaterra specialness and modernity at value prices. Inkaterra's inspiration provides travelers with eco-responsible hospitality and luxury with a view to ensuring guests an authentic Inka experience. At the forefront of sustainable development, Inkaterra's current partnership with National Geographic's Unique Lodges of the World includes unique cultural and nature experiences at Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba, Inkaterra La Casona in the Andes, and Inkaterra Hacienda Concepcion in the Amazon rainforest.

FTA: Who do you find to be the ideal client for your company?

Koechlin: From a social media perspective, we target potential guests who are environmentally conscious in search of an authentic experience and enjoy every aspect of nature as well as people looking for honeymoon locations, spa destinations, and Peruvian experiences.

FTA: What social media images and content engage potential clients the most?

Koechlin: Throughout the last year, we have seen that UGC images frequently result in the highest organic engagement across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. As they are images that guests and potential guests can easily relate to, they encourage followers' engagement. We also find that a lot of the external and destination images perform well as we try to share images that are different from the typical images published by other hotels; we are also extremely lucky to have such picturesque surroundings to be the background of all of our images.

FTA: What's next?

Koechlin: Inkaterra currently is working on developing a new travel destination and important hotel development in the Cabo Blanco region of the Northern coastal desert and build other new properties in the Andes of Peru.

FTA: What do you think is the greatest challenge your company has attracting U.S. originating travelers, and convincing them to book a tour with you?

Koechlin: Machu Picchu is a bucket list destination for most U.S. travelers. However, there is so much more to Peru than the iconic Incan citadel. Since U.S. travelers tend to have less vacation time than guests who visit from

other parts of the world, they are sometimes hesitant to visit other parts of the country.

LEAVE A COMMENT

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Comment

Name *

Email *

Post Comment

FEATURED STORIES



Why I left Wall Street to launch a Cuba travel business

Who knew that building a business in an emerging market would be such a gut-wrenching experience? Yet, as a 30-year old Harvard Business School graduate, I set out to pursue my dream of launching a socially conscious travel company.

[Continue Reading Story ►](#)



Take Over Our FTA Social Media in 2019

Social media is one of the key ways FTA members stay in touch with each other and their followers. In 2019, we will continue to expand platforms on Facebook and Instagram for our members, so you can demonstrate your talent and offerings.

[Continue Reading Story ►](#)



FTA Join Forces with Northstar Media To Help Agents Sell To Families

The FTA collaborated with Family Getaways and the Northstar Travel Group to further their efforts to educate travel professionals on selling family travel.

[Continue Reading Story ►](#)

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Kids Sea Camp & Family Dive Adventures



Sign up for Family Travel Association Newsletter

Get the latest tips, advice and ideas about family travel sent to your inbox (and check out our newsletter archive).

In 2000, Margo Peyton, decided to combine fun, safety and education in conjunction with PADI dive programs for kids. She also wanted to create an equally relaxing and enjoyable dive vacation with built-in private time for adults. Kids Sea Camp was born that year and has been thriving ever since.



[Learn More ▶](#)

[Join FTA ▶](#)

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

Stay Connected:



[Agent Login](#) [Site Map](#) [Privacy Policy](#)

Copyright © 2019 Family Travel Association. All rights reserved.