



URUGUAY'S VISUAL VANGUARD

Never mind the bikinis — the beach towns around Punta del Este, Uruguay, offer up a different kind of eye candy. A nascent art scene has sprung up all around the so-called St.-Tropez of South America, putting a more highbrow gloss on all the hedonism. The area's latest endeavor is an oceanfront eco-retreat where guest rooms double as art installations. **GENEVIEVE PAIEMENT**

PLAYA VIK JOSE IGNACIO Set to open next month, Playa Vik (left) is the beach-side sister hotel to Estancia Vik, the luxurious ranch on 4,000 inland acres nearby. The sculptural glass-and-titanium main building has a cantilevered pool that juts out toward the ocean and is surrounded by six green-roofed casitas. As at the Estancia, Uruguayan artists were given free rein: Pablo Casacuberta's colorful suite is graffiti-inspired; Eduardo Cardozo's minimalist casita centers on a fireplace formed out of mud and hay. playavikjoseignacio.com; estanciavikjoseignacio.com.

