



## Special Landscape Edition

As I'm sure you noticed (or more likely didn't notice) there was no regular edition of the newsletter on Dec. 15th. As mentioned in the last two newsletters, I was planning to do something a bit different to end the year. I'm happy to be bringing two special editions to you to end 2023. This one will focus on some of the best landscape shots from our trip to South America and one later this week will be about my best wildlife shots of 2023.

### Ushuaia

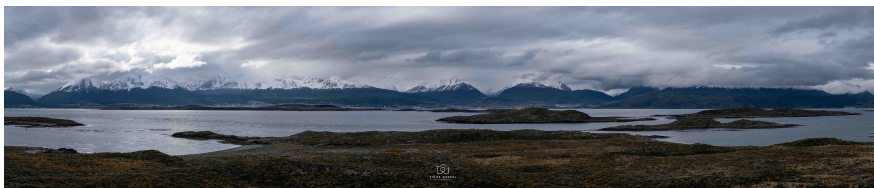
Our first port of call in Argentinian Patagonia was the city of Ushuaia. A city of around 80,000, it is the southernmost city in the world. The city owes its existence to the fickle nature of national sovereignty. Chile and Argentina have long debated, at times violently, who is the rightful owner of much of the southern end of the continent including the island of Tierra del Fuego. As a way to bolster their claim to the island, the Argentine government subsidized and incentivized the development of industry to support a local population on the island, in the city of Ushuaia. Indeed, around the country you can see many appliances proudly stamped "Made in Tierra del Fuego by Argentine Industries".



Lying at the very end of the Andes mountain range, the scenery is stunning as mountains suddenly end at the Beagle Channel. Tierra del Fuego island is separated from the mainland by the Strait of Magellan to the north and here in Ushuaia the Beagle Channel (named after the HMS Beagle which first charted the channel). Photographed above is what is known as the Wreck of St. Christopher, an abandoned former World War II British Navy tugboat (the HMS Justice) that was sunk in the harbor over fifty years ago.



Ushuaia is a great spot for both hiking and maritime excursions. Above is one of the more popular hiking destinations, Laguna Esmeralda. Above the lake in the snowcapped mountains is a glacier known as the Albino's Eye (Ojo del Albino). Weather conditions didn't allow us to make it to the glacier but we got a great view of the lake.



Navigating the channel was one of my favorite activities of the whole trip. In addition to visiting a penguin colony with three species of penguins (see the separate gallery for that), we also spent a few hours on a boat visiting locations in the channel. Above you can see a panoramic view of Ushuaia from one of the channel islands.

Penguins of Isla Martillo

## El Chaltén



There are few mountains more photographed, and with good reason, than Mt. Fitzroy (named after the captain of the aforementioned HMS Beagle). I was in bed and preparing for our early morning departure on an overnight hike to camp at the base of the mountain when I

looked outside and saw the above sunset developing. I quickly scrambled outside half dressed into the brisk dusk air and took my drone up to get some shots of the sunset. I was glad I did as it turned out to be by far the best sunset of the days we were there.



The hike up to the lake (Laguna de los Tres) at the base of Mt. Fitzroy is demanding. Especially when you're also taking camera gear and camping gear with you. While I would have loved to get a picture from this spot at sunrise, the hike up from the camp site is almost 3,000 feet up over a mile and a half. Once was enough.

## Perito Moreno Glacier



Perito Moreno Glacier, named after one of the founding fathers of Argentine conservation, is one of the largest glaciers in the massive South Patagonian Ice Field (which is the third largest store of fresh water on Earth). Unlike most glaciers, it seems to be actually stable or even periodically growing in size rather than rapidly retreating. We spent a while here watching as small pieces of the glacier would intermittently drop into Lago Argentino. The overcast weather didn't make for the most stunning photos but it's a breathtaking view in person.

## Iguazú Falls





I took a lot of pictures at Iguazú, on both the Brazilian (top picture) and Argentine sides. With almost 250 individual falls making up the complex of falls over 1.5 km long, there are so many different views to capture. You can see some more angles in the gallery link at the end of the email.

## Itaipú Dam



Third largest by size and second in annual electricity generation, Itaipú Dam on the Paraná River straddles the border between Paraguay and Brazil. We did a special tour of the dam that allowed us on top of (photo) and inside the dam. The scale of the project is impressive. Each of the twenty turbines produces 2.3x the amount of hydroelectricity as the largest dam in Central America (Reventazón in Costa Rica).



The dam's spillway is particularly impressive. When fully opened it can handle 10x the water flow as the record amount to go over Niagara Falls. This is an important safety feature. While much less known internationally than the Amazon, the Paraná River that it dams up is the second largest in South America so its important to be prepared for emergencies.

## Colombia



This trip's origin was in taking advantage of a cheap flight to Argentina but ended up including the better part of a week around Bogotá, Colombia due to flight pricing on the return leg. We spent the entire week there focused on birdwatching but obviously took some landscape shots along the way. This beautiful sunset was taken from the farmhouse we stayed in about two hours from Bogotá. On the ridge at the right of the photo is a large factory that still produces a lot of the cement used in construction in Bogotá.



I've talked in the past in the newsletter about the amazing habitat known as páramo. A type of tropical tundra found above tree line, the dominant flora is a type of plant known as a Frailejón (*Espeletia sp.*). Photographed is the type common (*Espeletia grandiflora*) to the largest páramo in the world, found in Sumapaz National Park.

This newsletter has also been by far the longest I've ever put out (although much condensed from the over 7,000 words I wrote in a travel log while on the trip). For a few more landscape photos that

didn't make the cut or to see larger versions, see the accompanying gallery. And if you read all the way to the end, thank you for taking the time to do so.

Landscape Gallery

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