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Bowhunting South America

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With my deep-rooted passion for bowhunting international destinations, Argentina is a place I had always wanted to hunt. After multiple trips to other continents, and a diminished interest in hunting North America, South America beckoned. It offers a wide variety of big game animals, including native and introduced species. Before my first trip there, however, I had no idea how much I would enjoy Argentina's hunting opportunities.

My wife, Josefina, would accompany me so that created the need for a family atmosphere. After reviewing different possibilities, we decided on Cerro Indio Safaris.

Getting to Buenos Aires is easy. There are direct daily flights from Dallas, Houston and other U.S. cities. We flew overnight and directly into Buenos Aires, then we caught a one-hour charter flight to Estancia Acelaín. En route, we flew across Argentina's flat grasslands, and I watched the

aircraft's GPS unit while keeping a lookout for the historic estancia. Before long, rising up from the open pampas grasslands was the majesty of Acelaín where Cerro Indio Safaris maintains its base of operations.

Visitors here catch a glimpse of and relive the opulent lifestyle of the great cattle and grain barons. Their manor homes still dot the countryside. Built in 1922 by Enrique Larreta, an author and one of the country's wealthiest *estancieros*, Acelaín features the Moorish style. Larreta's collection of Spanish furniture and art from the 11th to the 17th centuries still graces this estancia.

Perched on a promontory, the house overlooks the lush gardens that are the pride and joy of the current owners, Larreta's descendants. The 1,600-acre parkland is partly wooded and abuts 15,000 acres of grain fields and cattle grazing lands.

Within the estancias' forests and on its grasslands, however, exists a

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unique and plentiful combination of trophy big game animals. Hunters visiting South America for big game animals will be hard-pressed to find a more beautiful location or better outfitter. World-class wingshooting is also available. Hunting the fast-flying doves and pigeons as they move out from the woodlands to feed on crops is a wing-shooter's delight.

Larreta's great-grandson, Gonzalo Llambí, along with his wife, Marina, own and operate Cerro Indio Safaris.

Gonzalo has a degree in agricultural economy, and he uses it to conserve Acelain's wildlife and the habitat. He has worked hard to improve the genetics of the species brought there from Europe by Larreta, and has introduced additional big game species. European red deer and stags with antler measurements of more than 400 SCI can be hunted here in a free-range or estate environment.

The hunting estate also has European fallow deer, Père David deer, multi-horned and hybrid sheep, feral goats and blackbucks. All of these species, with the exception of the Père David Deer, can also be hunted free range. Water buffaloes and boars are also available.

A few hours drive away is one of Gonzalo's concessions, Cerro Colorado. The terrain here is more mountainous and open, and stalking opportunities abound. The rolling terrain and high grass provide good cover for getting within bow range.

Gonzalo also has additional concessions in the Buenos Aires province. Here hunters can bag ducks and geese, or pursue gray-brown Brocket deer, capybara, collared peccaries and pumas.

While hunting at Acelain and Cerro Colorado, I killed a buffalo; red, fallow, and axis deer; European mouflon; multi-horned and hybrid sheep; feral goat; blackbuck and boar. In Chaco, I hunted some of the native species, such as puma, gray-brown Brocket deer and capybara. All trophies were SCI Gold Medal quality and many of them ranked in the Top 10. Although I mostly hunted by spot-and-stalk, you can also hunt from horses or stands.

The opportunity to visit Acelain is well worth the trip. I was hunting within 15 hours after I left home, and with little jetlag. Spending a few days in Buenos Aires before or after your hunt offers other adventures. 🐾

