

MVP *Outfitters*

Recognizing the Most Valued People in the Industry and the Services They Offer.

Read about

MVP's Argentina Adventure with

*Southern Flight
Outfitters.*

The birth of Southern Flight was conceived in the mind of Brett Root Ericksen, a highly motivated young man from central Illinois. Brett grew up with duck hunting being part of his roots. This vision of a high end duck hunting experience took him halfway around the world to Argentina. To create a duck club and a hunting experience that jettisons you into the past as if you were hunting in the old market hunting days. Days when the sky would darken and the hunt was mainly judged by the nuances and the company you keep. With months of preparation and lots of help from friends and family, the day came for the maiden experience and MVP Outdoors was privileged enough to take part in that experience. Our role was to film the experience and produce a marketing video as well as a website. Critiquing the overall experience was part of our role as well. The Southern Flight experience didn't leave much room for any critiquing because this world class duck hunting adventure had all the bases covered with class and charm.

A twelve hour flight with the usual airline process came at no surprise, so a little patience is required, but well worth it. Landing in Buenos Aires gives you the feeling of smallness in a big world. Eager locals wait to hopefully assist with your luggage and earn a quick tip. The first and most important words you need to learn are "No Gracie" no thanks, Brett was right there on the spot to save us from the unnecessary assistance and make our entry into Argentina very quick and easy.

It seems that you come to Argentina with preconceived ideas from things you hear, but it doesn't take long to see Argentina and the people of this wonderful world in a beautiful light. The love, passion and dedication for family and friends was a very evident force. Holding to traditions and cultural values in an old world atmosphere is inspiring. The vastness of a city of 14 million people is overwhelming to a country boy.

As quickly as we arrived, we were whisked off in the reméis, "a bus like van", for another four hour ride to the estancias that will be our home for the next week. We were so tired, yet afraid to close our eyes, not wanting to miss any of the sights along the way. It looked as if we were traveling in North Dakota; no wonder the ducks love this part of the world.



The Santa Rosa, established in 1864, was the name of the breathtaking old world estancia, resembling a southern mansion with a Spanish flair. Wine, bread and cheese were awaiting us in the courtyard as our bags were unloaded. We soon realized that we were going to be treated like royalty, and it took a split second to come to a place of accepting this treatment with a thankful awe. A tour of this grand old world monument of a historical antiquity was given to me by



The Santa Rosa 1864



The Santa Rosa 2007

Bebe, the master of the estancia. The pride that glowed from his every description of generations of heirlooms in every room beamed from his countenance.

It seemed as if I knew what he was talking about even though I didn't understand a word of his most wonderful discourse. Later, I found out that lordship of this vision of elegant solitude has been in his family since its establishment. After my tour, I met Kelly Presley, James Porter and Terry Davison in the parlor, all members of our hunting party. James and I are the owners of MVP, and Terry is James' stepfather who's a life long Duck Hunter in central Illinois. Kelly is one of MVP Outdoors' very fine customers and Kelly's family owns Presley Outdoors, one of central Illinois' sporting goods stores of choice. We all looked at each other and the same overwhelming expression of satisfaction was sparkling in our eyes.



Palle

Brett's support team consisted of Dave Kinsella, Jeff Mans, our hunting guides and new friends. Palle(pronounced pa-jay) was our translator and Brett's Argentine liaison, a very important job in my book. These guys seemed to keep every moment action packed! It made for a siesta being a welcome part of the day. When the call is made and everyone enters the dining room, your first impression is WOW! I felt like I needed to be wearing a tuxedo, but we were as welcome as if we had one on. Vino is a main part of most every meal along with queso (cheese), tostado (toasted rolls) and fancy spreads and jams. Everything is a little different in Argentina; the purpose of life, the pace of life, and meal time is a celebration.



Southern Flight

Conceived in the mind of Brett "Root" Ericksen

The Hunt

A large part of Argentina is potholes and marsh. They are everywhere and ducks are spread across the whole land. All you really need to do is hide behind some pampas and start shooting. The ducks seem to constantly move from one water hole to the next. It's a steady flow of one to twenty. In the cool mornings, it doesn't take long and you can warm your hands on the barrel of your gun. There are very liberal limits on the ducks, so you shoot until you're tired of it. Now, you might think that you would never get tired of shooting ducks, but you can. They have Teal, Pintails and Whigion and a few others, but they're different, just like everything else in that country. It's different in a good way, just like everything else. The Cinnamon Teal have better color and the Silver Teal are a very unique species. The White Cheek Pintails are quite different than our Pintails and so are the Whigion. The ducks do make

a migration from the south to the north, and some even migrate from north to south. Sometimes we need 'different' it's not that it's better, it's just a change. But if you want to shoot a season's worth of ducks in a few days, then Argentina is the place to go. If I don't shoot another duck this year I can say I am satisfied. Brett's whole team busted their tails to make sure the plan came together.

The lack of pressure changes the whole approach to hunting. It was a bit of an adjustment not being too concerned about the shine off your face or complete concealment. These things can help, but they didn't seem to hinder as much. Just be still and

shoot till you're done. It doesn't take long and you have a pile of ducks. Brett and his

team prearranged duck donations to the local schools to feed local children who are very poor. It was very satisfying knowing the ducks we didn't keep for personal dining or taxidermy were used for a good cause. Very few locals have guns so they only get ducks when someone shoots them and gives them away.

One of the most memorable parts of duck hunting experience is having dinner with the gauchos. The gauchos are the cowboys of Argentina, and cattle are a major part of this great land. Much of the marsh land and pasture land just merge as one. Sometimes it seemed as if the cattle keep the ducks moving from hole to hole. The gauchos are famous for their beef barbecues, called asados. In this vast expanse of marsh, agricultural fields and pasture, neighbors are few and far between. The gauchos were very excited to show us a part of their culture and put on a feed. Many of the cattle ranches were humble abodes, but they were so rich with life they didn't know they were poor. It was this pearl of truth that makes them wealthy. It's not how

much money you have that makes you rich; it's your attitude towards life that makes you rich.

One of the gauchos was a unique looking individual and we nicknamed him medieval man because he looked as if he came right out of a medieval time. A gentle little man that was very proud of his chickens and his cat. Medieval man was nearly in tears when he would shake your hand and give a hug and a kiss. He was truly happy to spend time with us as if we were long lost relatives. I miss him the most.

Sometimes after duck hunting and a fine meal and a nap we would go hunt perdiz and giant hares. The hares were the size of a dog and could run faster than a greyhound. It would take three or four good shots to bring one of these monsters down. Perdiz are a ground bird, and, like a grouse, they would hold tight and fly fast. On other occasions we would shoot dove and pigeons. Both are great sports as well as popular table fare. The package that Brett Root Ericksen, owner of Southern Flight, put together was top

shelf. We didn't have much time for the dove and pigeon hunting, but the dove hunting Southern Flight does in Santiago Province is the best in the world. I'm looking forward to next year.



Pictured: (Left to Right) James Porter, Terry Davison, Kelly Presley, Brett Ericksen, Dave Kinsella.

Buenos Aires

After wrapping up our wonderful hunting adventure, Southern Flight had prearranged for us to stay in Buenos Aires for a few days prior to our departure. Anytime you travel six or seven thousand miles to a new and exciting place, you want to see how the rest of the population lives. B. A. is the capital of this province, the second largest in South America. Argentina has a taste of about every geographical condition imaginable in one province. Brett set us up in a nice, old world condo so we could film and experience the big apple of Argentina. This might sound funny coming from a full time hunter, but this was the part that touched me the most. Maybe it was because I haven't experienced a lot of cultural diversity so the experience was new.

B. A. is a massive spread of endless buildings, kind of like the trees in a forest. I don't like city life, but the people were inspiring. They are a predominantly Roman Catholic, family oriented people with a zest for life, romance and friends. Lots of hugging and kissing seemed to go on.

The cafés seemed to be the gathering places with lots of food and vino, lots of vino. Most of the shops don't even open until noon because most of the city partied all night. You really don't even have dinner until nine or ten o'clock. The streets start filling up about midnight and go till early morning. The nightlife offers a vast range of entertainment for all types across

various demographics across the city. B.A. has various districts like other major cities offering both low key and upscale environments. We visited one area that was known for its upscale clothes and atmosphere. The same shops are actually converted into night clubs as evening approaches to keep the thousands of shoppers there for some night life and keep the dollars flowing. It was quite amazing how they offered full service shopping, food and beverages all in one place. James and Kelly and the guides seemed to be quite excited regarding the array of places B.A. has to offer....not to mention the wonderful scenery. Terry and I enjoyed the shops, cafes and antique shops in the "Art District" where the Condo was located. The antique shops were a glimpse into Argentina's rich history, as a lot of items go back to the fifteenth century. Every Sunday the local streets turn into an open market, rich with local artifacts, trinkets and unique items made by local artists. I picked up a few handmade journals (see pic) that I thought would be great for recording the wonderful journey, not to mention a great conversation piece back in the states.



Mate Gourds



Bombilla

While in B.A. I continued a delightful habit I picked up from the Gauchos prior to our hunts. There is a café drink they call a mate' which has similar effects of coffee, you drink it out of a fancy gourd called a "bombilla" pronounced (bomb b sia) through a silver straw that is usually hand made with wonderful designs.

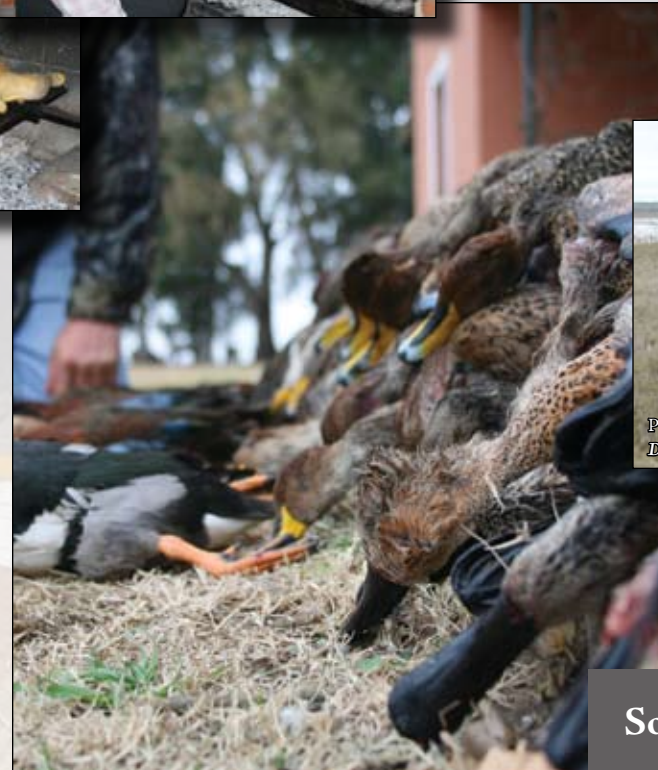
You fill the bombilla with the mate' herbs and add plenty of sugar then pour hot water in it to the rim. You slowly sip the drink through the straw and share it with others around you. The wonderful part is the sharing of

the drink, which quickly becomes a wonderful social expression. I was hooked. Now I am a mate' man. This drink was a social focal point that everyone looked forward to. Work would come to a stop to enjoy a mate'.

The manager of the condo we stayed at was a wonderful, energy packed ball of delight named Graciela. Graciela and Brett would take us out and show us the sites and make sure nobody took advantage of us because of the language barriers. Brett and Graciela arranged for us to have a rooftop Asado (barbecue) with some local friends and family, along with the hunting party. Graciela became a good friend; she would take care of us like we were her own kids. Graciela and Brett made it possible to see Argentina with new eyes. Graciela comes from Greek mythology, meaning "Three Graces" having association with art and beauty. It was the Puritans that initiated the name to mean thankfulness.



Graciela Pictured Above in Green.



As a tribute to Southern Flight and Graciela for this world class experience, we pay our salutes **BY SAYING Graciela Argentina:** translated

'Thank You Argentina' We Are Thankful!



Pictured (Left to Right): Don Fraim, Kelly Presley, James Porter, Dave Kinsella, Terry Davison, Brett Ericksen, and Palle.

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