



In harmony with Chile's environment

Companies that have discovered how to capitalize on the country's natural beauty without damaging it are reaping rich rewards

Still off the beaten tourist track, Chile preserves some of the planet's most beautiful native forests, cleanest desert air, and untouched coastlines. Despite encroaching urban developments and controversial business proposals, the sheer size of the country and its small pop-

ulation have kept most harm at bay, and Chile remains an ecologist's delight.

Many developers and businesspeople choose to adopt environmental sustainability as a pillar of their activities, knowing fully well that it is precisely Chile's 'greenness' that lures in

so many foreigners. Two examples are Empresas Transoceanica and Crystal Lagoon.

Empresas Transoceanica is a highly diversified family holding, established in 1954 by a German immigrant. Today his son, Christoph Schiess leads the business, which has grown

over the decades from its original focus on foreign commerce to include tourism, real estate, bottled water, malt and barley, a port, and investments and finance.

Mr. Schiess has left his mark on the company by broadening its business lines, always with a view to innovation and originality. "I'm attracted by everything different and unexplored,"

he says. "I'm not interested in doing something that 30 people have already done."

He adds that in the tourism area, people today have moved on from seeking out the Hiltons, Sheratons and Marriotts around the world. Instead, they want "a unique experience that cannot be copied – something nobody else offers. This is why I concentrate on looking for this type of business. I'm concerned with entrepreneurialism," says Mr. Schiess.

One of Empresas Transoceanica's flagship properties, and its first foray into the tourism sector, is a hotel at the Puyehue thermal springs. Located in Chile's beautiful Lake District and nestled in the surrounding forests, the New Termas Puyehue Wellness & SPA Resort is the first 5-star all-inclusive complex in Chile.

Other noteworthy properties Mr. Schiess points out are Teatro del Lago – a wooden theater in Frutillar built over the clear blue waters of Llanquihue Lake, boasting views of the Osorno, Puntagudo, Tronador and Calbuco volcanoes – and also the company's brand new headquarters in Santiago.

The building that Empresas Transoceanica now calls home

father purchased 30 years ago, and is the first of a series of office buildings to be built. This one is notable for its curved shape, and energy efficient air conditioning system. "While the system required 40% more investment than a normal building would, we estimate that energy consumption will be 75% lower," he explains.

The building has received the Leed Gold Construction certificate, the highest certification of any ecological building in Chile.

Another one of Chile's other most remarkable real estate developments is San Alfonso del Mar, in Algarrobo, due west of Santiago. Built by the Crystal Lagoons Corporation, San Alfonso del Mar is a residential complex of pyramid-shaped towers overlooking the Pacific Ocean and features the largest swimming pool in the world.

This Guinness World Record holding pool employs the most advanced and environmentally friendly technology to draw in and purify salt water without causing damage to the surrounding aquatic life. Crystal Lagoons CEO Fernando Fischmann developed a low-energy system of sensors and pulse-based injectors to use 100 times fewer chemicals than a normal

PHOTO: San Alfonso del Mar / Crystal Lagoons



The world's largest swimming pool at San Alfonso del Mar is