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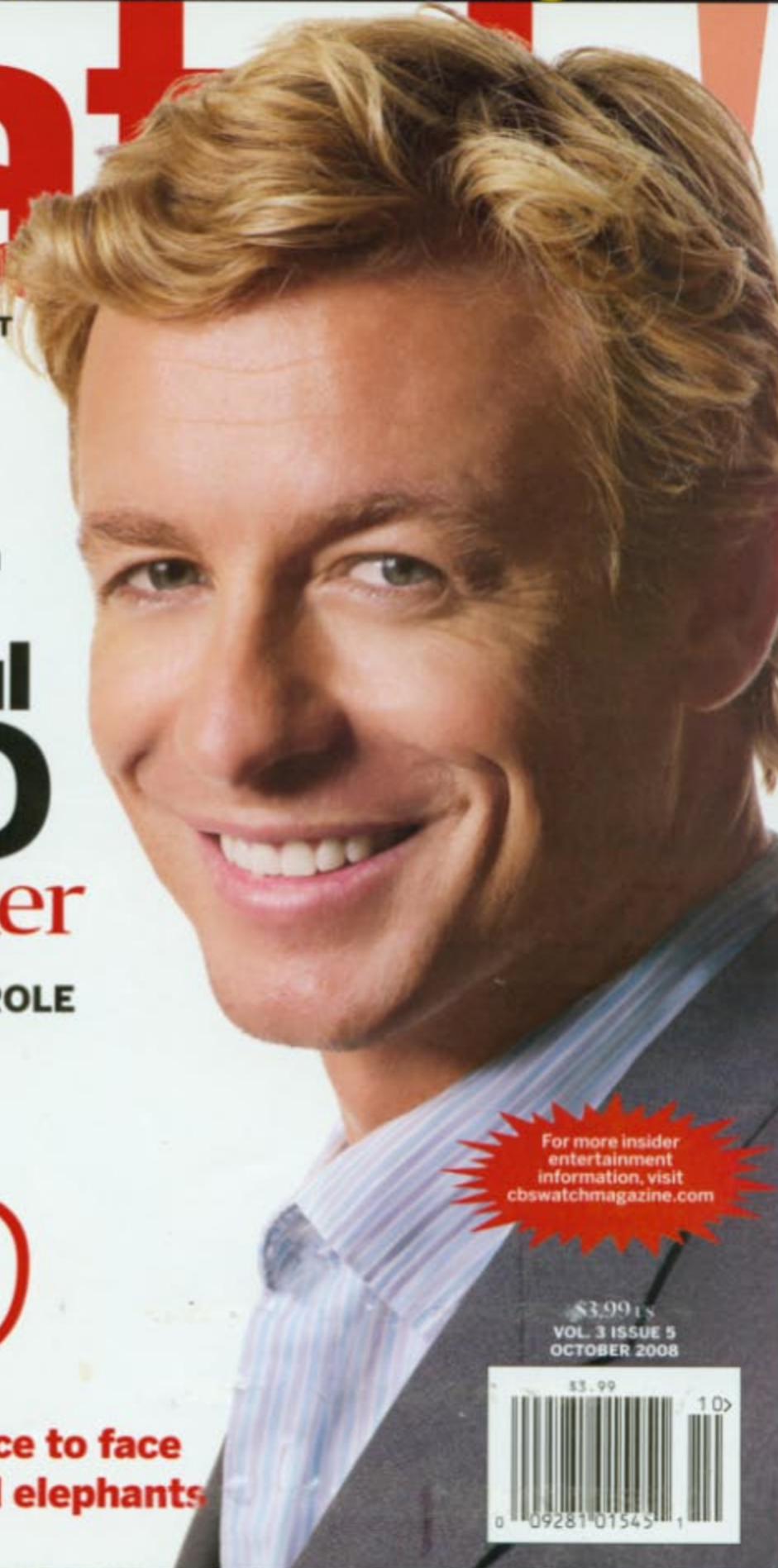
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# The Ends of the Earth

Rugged but increasingly hip, faraway **PATAGONIA** offers adventures for celebrities and civilians alike

Undiscovered. Untouched. Unspoiled.

Three words you would hardly use to describe your average celeb.

But those are the perfect adjectives to describe South America's stunning Patagonia region, where stars like Glenn Close and Richard Gere have traveled to hike, sail and relax, thousands of miles away from Hollywood. It's a seemingly unlikely hot spot—literally. Patagonia sits at the bottom of the world, and the area rarely sees temperatures above 70 degrees (or for that matter, below 40). But, sprawling over 250 million acres in Chile and Argentina, where the Pacific Ocean and Andes Mountains meet, Patagonia is a veritable geological mosaic of mountain streams, rivers, lagoons and lakes, all tempting but so many yet unexplored.

Recently, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Dan Aykroyd, Robert Kennedy Jr., John McEnroe and their families have all battled the rapids here, by white-water rafting along the Futaleufu River. Julia Roberts brought all three kids to see the snowcapped volcanic peaks and chilly jungle forests. Drew Barrymore sampled wine at a strawberry farm, and with pal Cameron Diaz, visited a local glacier for an episode of Diaz's MTV reality show, *Trippin*.

Finally away from the makeup chairs and the hot lights, big-name actors have always been drawn to roughing it for a while (if, by "roughing it," you mean a few days

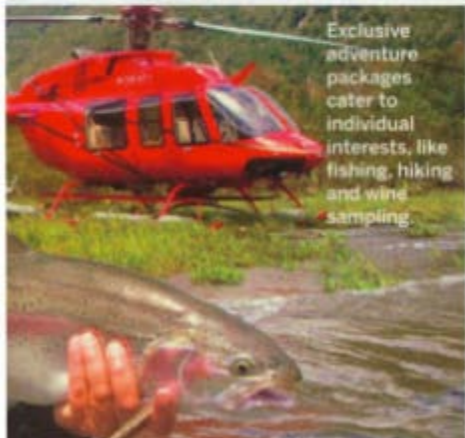
experiencing nature followed immediately by more than a few hours of deep-tissue massage). But these days there's an extra dimension, a new twist to their outdoor adventures, as well as to so many other Americans' getaways: a desire for a certain ... call it "ecofriendliness." And so in response to the growing trend toward ever more ecologically responsible vacations, some of South America's leading hotel destinations have concocted travel packages that

Located—quite literally—at the bottom of the world, Patagonia is a hot spot for water adventures.





In 2005 the blue whale was rediscovered in Chile's fjords. Since, highly specialized whale-watching tours have been increasingly popular.



Exclusive adventure packages cater to individual interests, like fishing, hiking and wine sampling.

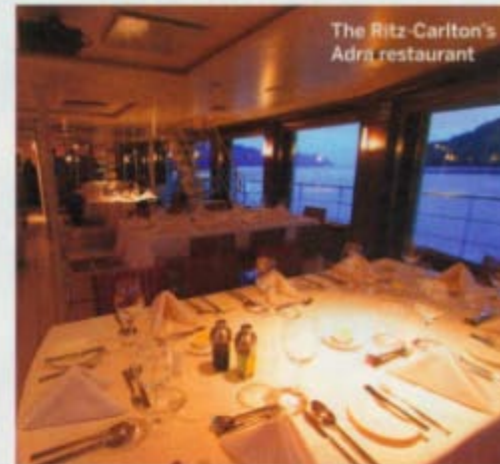


alleviate any green guilt while still satisfying an adventurer's need for speed—not to mention his taste buds.

### Go Green, Save the Blue Whale

In 2005 the blue whale was rediscovered among the Chilean fjords, exciting preservationists who had previously believed it extinct. Shortly thereafter, The Ritz-Carlton hotel in Santiago began offering its "Save the Blue Whale" tour package to vacationers who want to help protect the elusive animal, the largest ever to live on Earth. The Ritz's partnering yacht, the *Nomads of the Seas*, is an intimate, state-of-the-art expedition cruise ship that carries 28 passengers and 32 crew members from Santiago southward to partake in highly specialized whale-watching tours and dock in local villages for bird-watching excursions and highland horseback rides. Far from your vanilla vacation, the hotel's package provides its participants the chance to take an active role in saving the blue whale; the Patagonia region's Blue Whale Center welcomes all hands on the *Nomads'* deck to help in counting the majestic ocean creatures and even in studying their underwater vowel sounds and behavioral changes.

Of course even an expert oceanographer needs to eat, and so the "Save the Blue Whale" package serves up some ceviche to go with all those cetaceans. During two nights' accommodation in the Ritz Santiago's Club Level, Thomas Olivera, executive chef at the hotel's renowned restaurant, Adra, puts together eight-course meals inspired by the famous seafood and wines of Chile. And after all that water travel, the hotel's Bath Butler



The Ritz-Carlton's Adra restaurant

offers a customized bath of one's own, including a decadent immersion in Carmenere grapes, a rare species thought to have been lost in the late 1800s in France but recently rediscovered in Chile.

The "Save the Blue Whale" package offers the ecominded adventurer the chance to have it all. The Chilean capital of Santiago is an undiscovered South American gem often called "the next Buenos Aires" for its cultural and architectural appeal, where cosmopolitan hot spots like the Ritz's Wine 365 restaurant offer 12 mixtures of the national drink, the pisco sour, all under a glass-domed roof with 180-degree views of the Andes. And down in Patagonia, an abundance of resources and beauty, countered by the remoteness of the region's mountain nooks, makes for a terrain definitely privileged and occasionally harsh.

No wonder people from Tinseltown seem to feel right at home. **W**