

Montevideo Is a Mirror for Uruguay

- - - Like Nation, It's Individualistic

Ten to one you would not pick Montevideo as your destination if you planned a vacation trip to one of the great cities of South America. Not enough is heard about it.

Seeing the capital of Uruguay was one of the real eye-openers to those who hadn't visited it before when the Clipper Friendship of Pan American World Airways bore a party of American newspapermen, radio executives and government officials there from Rio de Janeiro on the clear and sunny afternoon of Sunday, July 2.

This beautiful, bustling city of more than 800,000 was a treat to all and a surprise to many. Over 120 miles of coastline east of Montevideo is one continuous sandy beach.

As the spacious, well-planned Carrasco airport came in view, we beheld lines of autos along every road and highway roundabout. The people had turned out to welcome President Juan Trippe of Pan American and his guests on the flight.

The throngs pressed close, waving and shouting in friendly fashion, as our line of 10 or 15 taxis edged across the air field toward the highway to the city. There we waited, and waited some more, as—with not a cop in sight and every motorist for himself—the traffic snarl slowly worked itself out and our drivers were able to get onto the highway.

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"These people are individualists," someone explained. "This is as democratic a country as you'll find any place. They don't take anything off anybody. Matter of fact, if anybody has a flat, like as not he'll stop right on the road and fix it while other motorists draw up behind him and calmly sit and chat until he gets going again."

The taxis assigned to us bore numbers, pasted on the windshields, for recognition. We in turn applied the numbers to the drivers. Thus, the driver for John N. Wheeler, president, North American Newspaper Alliance, responded with alacrity and with smiles to "Hey, Cinco!"

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Montevideo is built on a peninsula on a gracefully rippling hill, from which it reflects its charm and natural beauty into the waters of the River Plate. Its largest port, inside a marvelous bay, receives the world's largest trans-Atlantic ships, since the geographic location of Montevideo makes it a required stop on the maritime route.

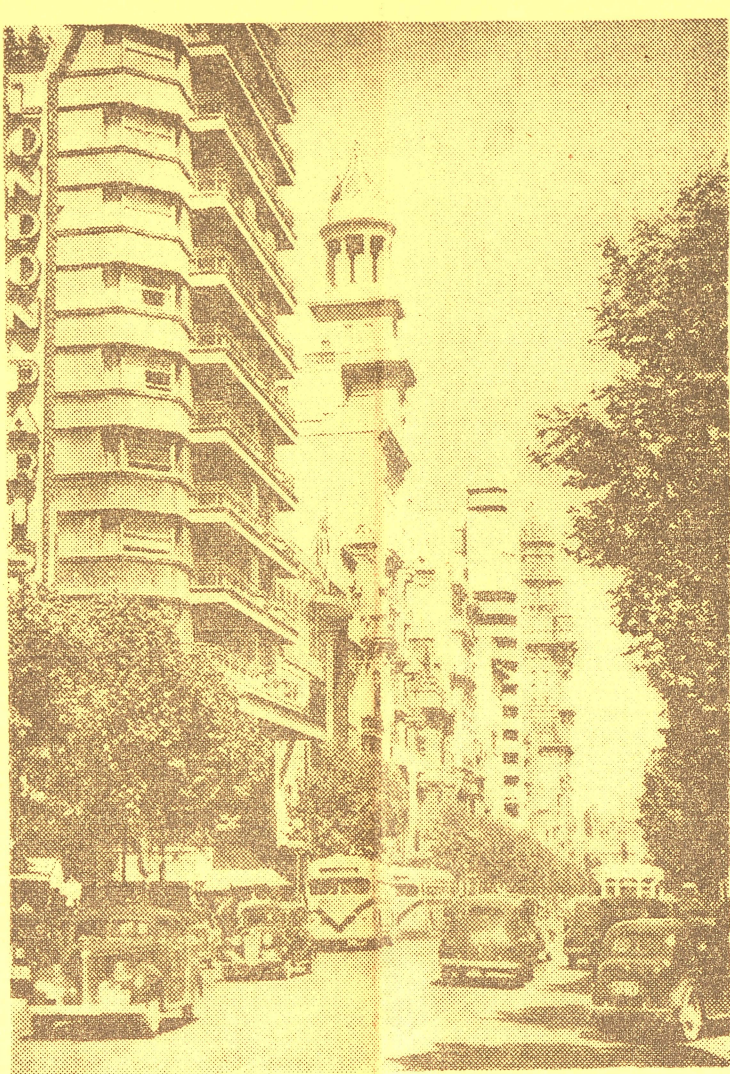
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Moreover, the large airlines, arriving as we did at Carrasco field, join this capital in daily flights with the cities of North America, Brazil and the old Continent. There also are national airlines that carry traffic daily between Argentina, Brazil and the interior of the country.

It's Winter, or at least that's what they call it, south of the Equator. The only "Winter" we encountered, however. (Upstate New Yorkers please note!) was here at Montevideo where topcoats were comfortable in temperatures around 45 degrees.

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Memorials to Franklin D. Roosevelt and to Woodrow Wilson



PICTURESQUE Avenida 18 de Julio in Montevideo.

drew attention to the Uruguayan's high regard for the United States and its traditions on the drive into the city. There is no better friend in the hemisphere than this smallest country of South America.

Uruguayans like to point out that the actions of officials are in harmony with the democratic spirit of the country. The seat of the presidency, corresponding to our White House, is on Independence Square. Across the way is a popular public restaurant. For lunch, the president strolls unostentatiously across the square to dine with no more ceremony than any other customer.

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Somehow, although possessed of a charm all its own, Montevideo did not strike this visitor on first appraisal as the Monte Carlo of South America; as the spot where one would expect to find gambling—banned in glamorous Rio—organized and legalized almost on a big business basis. Yet a large area of our hotel, the Parque, was given over to a casino.

There, some of those less in need of sleep, reported later, tables were crowded and roulette wheels clicked until dawn. It's government regulated, and this may account for the fact that, by our standards, taxes are nothing to worry about! However, as one of our party remarked "If you pay out your money anyway, what matter whether they take it out in

This is the third of six articles by Paul Miller, editor and publisher of The Times-Union, on an air trip to South America with a group of U. S. publishers, radio executives and government officials, as guests of Pan American World Airways.

taxes or across the table at the Parque Casino?"

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Uruguay is regarded as a devout country, but customs vary in all lands. Here roulette wheels spin through Sunday night and afternoon newspapers appear on Sunday afternoon as on any other day. The stores, however, were closed, most of them, and the prosperous-appearing crowds thronging the downtown streets were sightseers and moviegoers as in Rochester.

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We found that the English language is enough to get a traveler by, even as in most of the rest of the world. There's always someone nearby who speaks English and who can come to the rescue when needed.

There are a good many Americans in Montevideo—brokers, salesmen, bankers and others. We met a number of them and it was from some of these Americans that we began to hear at length the stories rampant over South America about

life in Argentina under President Peron—rather, under President Peron and his wife Eva.

They were stories we were to try later to check for ourselves, face to face with the hospitable Perons.

NEXT: Fabulous Argentina and the equally fabulous Perons.
