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Luxury Getaway Company Vik Retreats Expands

This spring, Carrie and Alex Vik are introducing their first European property and a collection of bungalows at their hotel in Chile



BIG CHILE One of the 19 guest bungalows at Puro Vik, Alex and Carrie Vik's new property in the Millahue Valley, two hours south of Santiago. PHOTO: CRISTOBAL PALMA

By Stephen Wallis

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Carrie and Alex Vik, art-loving hoteliers known for a handful of South American retreats, are expanding their business—on two fronts. Starting a decade ago, the couple helped put the Uruguayan beach town of José Ignacio on global travelers' maps with their trio of invitingly intimate properties: Estancia Vik, Playa Vik and Bahía Vik. They brought a similar sensibility to the Vik Chile hotel and Viña Vik winery, which they opened in 2014 on 11,000 acres in the Millahue Valley.

Now, building on the Chilean project's success, they've added 19 glass-walled guest ungalows, perched on a forested slope overlooking the Millahue wetlands reservoir. Dubbed Puro Vik, these new accommodations are a short walk from the hotel's restaurants, spa and other facilities, but they offer a very different feeling, says Alex Vik: "You're basically living in the trees with these panoramic views." The bungalows are outfitted with instinctive art and furnishings, each with its own theme. One features Japanese-inspired decor devised around works by the 19th-century artist Utagawa Hiroshige. "We find things," says Carrie Vik, "and then we put it all together—and it somehow works."

Also this spring, they are unveiling the first Vik Retreats project in Europe, a revamp of the TownHouse Galleria hotel in Milan. Renamed Galleria Vik Milano, it is the Viks' first property in a city and their first redo of an existing hotel. "It's rare that you get an opportunity to have a property in the best place in a major city like Milan," Alex says of the location inside the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, one of Europe's great 19th-century shopping arcades.

The couple is recasting all 90 of the hotel's rooms, introducing distinctive antiques and installing eye-catching art. The emphasis is on contemporary Italian artists, including Alex Folla, whom the Viks commissioned to paint a Greek myth-themed fresco for the lobby. "You walk in," says Alex, "and it's an experience." vikretreats.com