



## DESTINATION: BUENOS AIRES

Tattooer **Ernesto Vasquez** guides us through the streets and bars of his hometown.

Ernesto Vasquez could have worked anywhere. And he has made his Buenos Aires studio, *Historia de Mi Vida*, just as international as the city itself. The busy shop in Buenos Aires's Palermo neighborhood welcomes a roster of revolving artists from around the world. And Vasquez and his two partners spend a few months each year working abroad, usually in Spain, Brazil, or Germany, collecting new skills to augment their global styles. "People come from Europe and the States to get inked here," he says, noting that they're drawn by cheaper prices and the burgeoning custom culture in the city.

Global artistry mixed with local humor has earned the studio a solid reputation. "We're always looking for new things," says Vasquez, who even brings his equipment along on vacation. "But really, we're old-school guys." —Stephanie Lim



**BEST CEMETERY** The otherworldly Recoleta Cemetery is "an amazing acropolis," says Vasquez of the resting place for Eva Perón and former presidents and poets. Admission is free, and you can spend hours marveling at the elaborate tombs and sculptures. Close by, the Recoleta Cultural Center ([centroculturalrecoleta.org](http://centroculturalrecoleta.org)) showcases the city's diverse art scene, including works from up-and-coming comic illustrators and multimedia artists.



**BEST BARGAIN HUNTING** Buenos Aires is full of antiques and those who love to hunt them. At the local *feria*, you can find anything from Pink Floyd records and dusty Leica film cameras to 18th-century maps and costume jewelry. Vasquez hits the Dorrego Street flea market (Dorrego and Niceto Vega) in Palermo to find unique fixtures for his apartment and studio. Prices are lower than they are at the more touristy San Telmo weekend antique market (Defensa through Plaza Dorrego). Vasquez's advice for scoring the best deals: shop during the week and "try to speak Spanish."



### BEST DINNER & DRINKS

After closing up the studio on a busy Saturday, Vasquez and the crew sometimes grab dinner with their clients at Rincón Parrillero (Medrano 1293), a small, Argentinean-style grill where Vasquez will indulge in "any kind of meat." For drinks, he heads to Palermo's Mundo Bizarro ([mundobizarrobar.com](http://mundobizarrobar.com); Serrano 1222) to enjoy the best cocktails in the city in a place with an "American thrash culture" vibe. Sip on the bar's namesake cocktail—the Mundo Bizarro Monsoon, a vodka-based drink mixed with melon, oranges, and pineapple—while enjoying rockabilly music and Bettie Page movies projected on the back wall.

### BEST BIG NIGHT OUT

Club Roxy ([theroxybsas.com.ar](http://theroxybsas.com.ar); Niceto Vega 5542) in Palermo Hollywood is a good bet for live rock shows. In nearby Palermo Soho, Vasquez prefers the low-key Crónico Bar ([cronicobar.com](http://cronicobar.com); JL Borges 1646) over the neighborhood's trendier bars. The covered smoking area makes it a go-to destination even in poor weather. Vasquez has been frequenting the spot for years because of its cheap food and drinks, including blended *batidos* and another local favorite: cola mixed with Fernet, a bitter Italian digestif. Don't be surprised if you find yourself stumbling out well after sunrise—Crónico is open 24 hours a day.



### BEST CULTURAL MASH-UP

It might not be the prettiest sight in Buenos Aires, but La Bombonera, the Boca Juniors' soccer stadium, radiates energy and passion. Although Vasquez's own home team has since left the city, he still loves a great soccer game or concert at the legendary stadium. Even if there's nothing riot-worthy going on at La Bombonera, its La Boca neighborhood is a great spot to experience the mixture of Latin American and European culture that *porteños* (natives of Buenos Aires) are so proud of. Grab a fresh-pressed orange juice off the street and experience the grittiness of the docks, the romance of tango at a late-night *milonga*, and the city's Italian influence in the brightly painted buildings of Caminito.