



ANOTHER UNBEATABLE SOUTH AMERICAN HIGHLIGHT

Iguazu: down the Devil's Throat

NIAGARA ON VIAGRA! THAT'S HOW ONE tourist put it when he saw the **Iguazu Falls** for the first time. And, having spent two full days ogling this spectacular attraction, we Cooneys can fully understand why. The trouble is, words and photos simply don't do it: you've gotta BE THERE! You've gotta HEAR the sheer, raging, overwhelming roar as 23kms of churning water crash down into a giant gorge – and you've gotta FEEL the sting of blinding spray on your face as those geyser-like eruptions surge into the air.

However, here to whet your appetite are some personal words from our long-time friend **Ian Dunwoodie**, following his unforgettable Iguazu encounter. Read on ...

THIS IS SENSE-SATURATION – LITERALLY. WHEREVER I look, life is reduced to a single, ponderous, thunderous, mountainous movement of water. The sight before me is one of the planet's greatest – the **Iguazu Falls**, higher than **Niagara**, wider than **Victoria**, and more beautiful than both of those (according to people who've seen all three)! Plunging water tips over cliffs that stretch for more than three kilometres. In one part they line up into reasonably straight ranks. In another they circle around into a pounding cauldron. Elsewhere side cataracts lurk behind tumbling vegetation, and rocky outcrops conceal more huge dumpings of water. At full flow they say there are **275 separate falls!** It's too big to comprehend – all you can do is experience it.

The Iguazu Falls are in the extreme north of **Argentina** – in fact, across the river is **Brazil**. The two

countries have each built facilities for viewing the massive phenomenon. Walkways and boat trips take you to different points around, below and over it.

*I make my way along one of the catwalks on the Argentinean side, crossing some of the smaller waterfalls at the edge. The walkway runs just one metre above the surface of the river, right over the point where it begins its drop, curving out and down, disappearing from my view. I can't see where it lands, but up here at the top, immediately beneath my feet, the water hurls itself over and down, endlessly dropping away from me, drawing my eyes after it, till it seems to pull my whole body. I retreat in some consternation from this spot, called the **Devil's Throat** ... dizzy from the racing current rushing to its death.*

I follow my walkway to its end – out where the tortured brown liquid rages away to its second drop. Further down still, it emerges, boiling itself out into the mainstream below. The tawny river then coils and twists



and writhes its way out of sight, on its journey to the coast hundreds of kilometres away.

The truth is, to appreciate the Iguazu Falls fully you need to see them from all angles – from above, below, and even out near the middle. But, for now, sunset is at hand and I need to get back to the hotel ...