

THE FIRST 🌿 THE ONLY

Verobeach

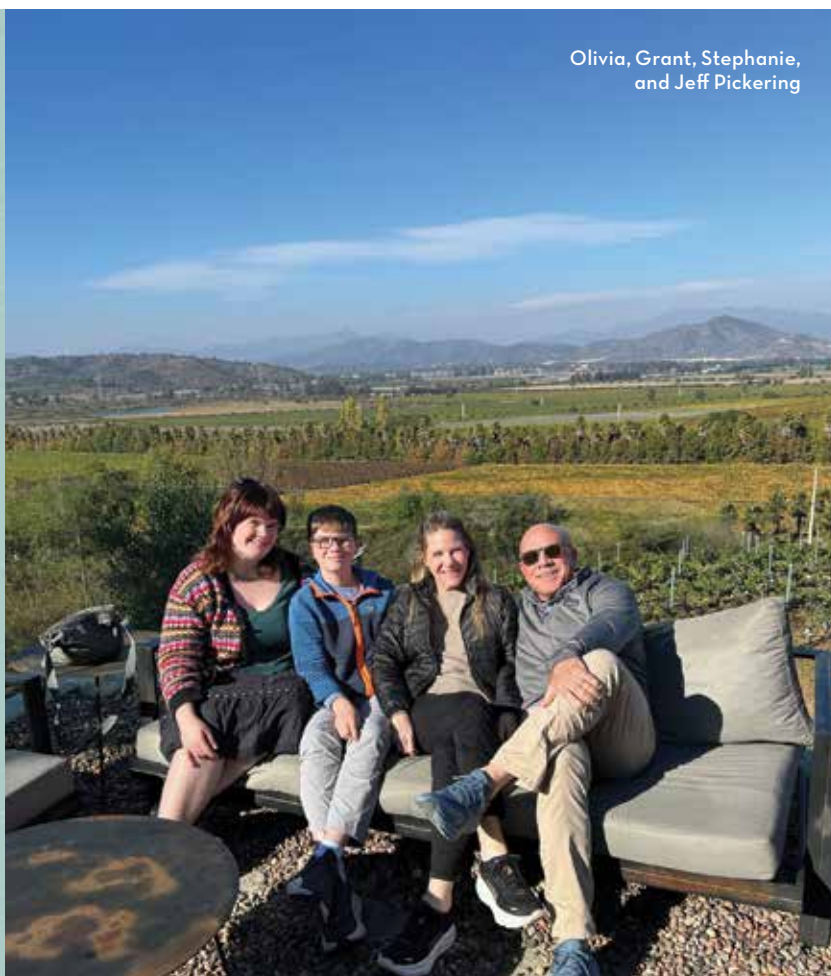
SEPTEMBER 2026

Magazine®



**AMERICA,
YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL!**

Visit breathtaking national parks via
images from our 2026 Photo Contest



Olivia, Grant, Stephanie,
and Jeff Pickering

FAMILY GETAWAY

A Warm Reception in Chile

TRAVELING IS THE PERFECT WAY TO EXPAND OUR HORIZONS



BY JEFFREY R. PICKERING

“Buenos días, damas y caballeros. Bienvenidos a Santiago.”

The captain’s greeting was a warm welcome as I rubbed my eyes and peered out the window as our airplane descended toward Arturo Merino Benítez International Airport on the morning of April 3. After a 10-hour overnight flight from Miami to Chile’s capital city, I was ready to

stretch my legs and take my first steps on the continent of South America.

The inspiration for our trip came from our daughter, Olivia, a 2023 Saint Edward’s School graduate who attends Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. She was spending the last semester of her junior year studying abroad through an exchange program at the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso, on the

coast roughly two hours west of Santiago. Two hours by car, that is, and closer to four on the public bus Olivia was riding to rendezvous with us for a weekend in the city.

Chile is 100 miles wide and almost 3,000 miles long; its population of roughly 20 million people is dispersed along a narrow country bordered by Peru to the north, Bolivia to the northeast, Argentina to the east, and the Pacific Ocean

INDIAN RIVER INSIGHTS



Santiago's cable car (seen here) and funicular offer panoramic views of the city.

to the west. One-third of the country's residents make their home in Santiago. Spanish is the official language, spoken in a rapid cadence that sounded more percussive than melodic compared to my own.

Surprisingly, there was less fluency in English among the people I began to interact with than I had experienced in other Latin American countries I have visited—more challenging for my wife, Stephanie, who understands more Spanish than she can speak, and less so for my 12-year-old son, Grant, who is required to learn this foreign language by Saint Edward's School, where he attends and I serve as a trustee (a role that helped assuage

the guilt I felt for giving Grant permission to play hooky so close to the end of his sixth-grade year).

Our weekend together in Santiago began on Good Friday, which is a national holiday in Chile. Every school, business, and government office was closed, and from the rooftop pool deck of our hotel, the city was dead quiet. It was the same on Saturday morning as we rode the funicular railway to the top of Cerro San Cristóbal, where sweeping views of the city and a giant statue of the Virgin Mary awaited.

The Mercado Central was a bit more active, with fishmongers and food vendors vying

Smoked Salmon Canapes



HOME BISTRO TO-GO SUMMER HOURS: MON-WED-FRI 10AM-2PM

*Entertaining with
style & distinction for
over 41 years.*

**ELIZABETH D. KENNEDY
& COMPANY, INC.**
FINE CATERING

486 21st Street, Vero Beach
(772) 563-0646
elizabethkennedycatering.com



Santiago stretches for miles behind Grant and Jeff Pickering. Below, Grant and Olivia are impressed by the funicular's longevity.

for our attention as we walked past stall after stall on our way to the historic El Galeón for a seafood lunch. Outside, however, the absence of the typical urban noise lasted the entire holiday weekend, making our first few days feel more like a retreat than an international vacation.

On Easter Sunday we left Santiago for Viña del Mar, a coastal resort town that lies just north of the port city of Valparaíso. Our home for the week was a modern apartment that overlooked the Pacific Ocean. It was safe, quiet, and conveniently located next to Olivia's homestay in the Recreo neighborhood. We settled into life as Chileans, which we quickly learned required a daily game plan that revolved around bread.

Chileans are among the world's highest consumers of bread per capita, eating a different type for every meal. Fortunately, this high-carb regimen is interspersed with lots of walking to and from a different bakery for the freshest product, depending on the time of day. For breakfast, Viña's best purveyor of the



sweet, egg-based pan de huevo was located about a 10-minute walk away.

For lunch, which is the main meal in Chile, marraquetas are served, typically with either butter or an herb salsa. These crispy, airy rolls include four segments, which I imagine are intended to make sharing easier, but in true American style I tended to "supersize" my own portion and eat the whole thing myself. While they don't stay fresh for long, any leftover marraquetas were saved for "la once" (pronounced on-say), a Chilean tradition like the afternoon tea enjoyed by our friends in the United Kingdom.

La once usually takes place

Central Beach



Gorgeous 4-bed, 3.5-bath residence nestled beneath majestic oaks in the heart of Central Beach. Golf cart to beach, shopping, & dining on Ocean Drive.

Asking \$2,395,000



Charming 4-bed, 3-bath beach house east of A1A offering the ultimate walkable lifestyle. Stroll to beach, cafés, boutiques, & farmers market; then relax by your pool.

Asking \$1,800,000



Cathy Curley
REALTOR®
TOP PRODUCER

#2
Agent
in Vero Beach

DS **RE** **DALE SORENSEN**
REAL ESTATE INC.
THE RIGHT MOVE™
2026 REALTRENDS AWARD

(772) 559.1359 | ccsellsvero.com

Live Life *Independently*

Whether you want to feel confident living independently, or need trusted support through health challenges, the Visiting Nurse Association provides care at home that fits your routine. Helping you to stay active, confident and in control of your daily life with dependable, compassionate support that keeps you safe at home.

Explore what care at home can mean for you.



Scan Me



772.567.5551 | www.vnatc.com

INDIAN RIVER INSIGHTS



Chupe de mariscos is a favorite dish at Casa Higuera in Valparaiso.

between 7 and 9 p.m., often in place of dinner. The origin of the name of this ritual comes from the popular legend from the 19th century, when workers in the saltpeter mines would spike their afternoon tea with a strong liquor called aguardiente, which consists of 11 letters. To avoid getting into trouble, the workers used “la once” (“the eleven” in Spanish) as code while taking their breaks.

The only trouble we got close to, however, was due to the proximity of our apartment to Heladeria Massimo, a home-made ice cream shop that served 2-ounce tastings to go. I am 100 percent certain that Grant and I are the only people in Chilean history to order 11 servings on a nightly basis and put our own spin on the cherished tradition.

Over the course of our stay, I found most of the Chileans we

interacted with to be reserved but warm. From the waiters at the few restaurants we visited to the taxi drivers, from the surf shop and winery owners to Veronica, the host of Olivia’s homestay, Chileans carry themselves with a formality at first that eventually gives way to a more generous and welcoming tone. While we were tourists, it never felt like that was how we were perceived, and is definitely not how we were treated.

While serious, Chileans do have a wry sense of humor, as evidenced by the appropriation of the names of American celebrities Elizabeth Taylor and Jennifer Lopez as slang terms for “ready” (“Liz Taylor” instead of “listo”) and “full” or “stuffed” (“Jennifer” instead of “lleno”). The first time I heard these terms used, I thought I was being made fun of, but instead, as Olivia explained, it

showed a sign of comfort and acceptance by letting me in on the joke.

Because Olivia's daily schedule included classes at the university, we did not fill our trip with too many planned activities. We were happy just to spend time with her and be a part of her routine. On our last day, however, Grant and Olivia's agenda included a visit to the harbor to look at seals and a reservation at a cat café. Stephanie and I opted out in favor of a lunch date at Maralegre, the terrace restaurant in the historic Casa Higuera hotel high above the Valparaíso port. The chef's fresh-baked hallullah, a piping hot chupe de mariscos

(a rich seafood stew), and a crisp glass of Kingston Family Sauvignon Blanc from the Casablanca Valley were alone worth the trip.

As I knew it would, our time in Chile passed too quickly, and by the end I was sad to leave. I could have easily stayed for a few more weeks, but it was time to head back home.

When you love living in a place like Vero Beach as much as I do, sometimes it is hard to imagine that traveling somewhere far away could deliver something better. I live on a barrier island. I can walk to and from a job I love, on many occasions along the beach. My home surf break at Riomar



Grant gets acquainted with the denizens of the cat café.

reef is uncrowded, with, at most, one other dude in the lineup. My family is safe and content, and my dog knows our neighborhood by heart.

Traveling to Chile was a good, timely reminder, however, that the world does not revolve around Vero Beach,

around Florida, or around the United States. Destinations abound, and there are people in other places who are welcoming and whom we can learn from. I am glad to be home, but estoy Liz Taylor ... ahem, I am ready ... for when the next trip comes calling. 🐾

GLENMEDE

TRUST COMPANY

Sophisticated, *Personalized* Solutions

Your experienced wealth partner for
lifestyle, legacy, and philanthropic goals.



Joe Coconate

Regional Director of Florida
561-571-4904
joseph.coconate@glenmede.com

glenmede.com