



Told to Steve Hogarty

MY HOLIDAY

Founder of Aracari Marisol Mosquera on rediscovering the rainforests of her homeland

Seeing the rainforest for the first time was such an important moment for me. Tambopata Research Center is one of the most remote lodges in the Amazon rainforest, and I went there for the first time while scouting destinations for my business. I was really impressed by their approach to guiding – they work with the local community there, as well as with biologists from the University of Lima, and they do some really important conservation work. The diversity in the Amazon is like nowhere else on the planet, and the unmatched variety of flora allows a diverse range of birds to flourish.

At Tambopata they constructed artificial nests for the macaws, where they now roost to raise their young. The researchers even found some orphaned eggs and placed them in there. Watching macaws from such an intimate distance makes you realise just how wonderful they are. They mate for life and live for a very long time, and can be seen flying in pairs above the canopy. Up close, they're surprisingly massive. Really large, beautiful birds. I had never experienced the rainforest before, and came to re-

alise what a fragile and unique place it is.

I am Peruvian. I spent my early childhood here until my parents left with me and my brother to live in Europe. This was during a long period of unrest in South America, when a lot of people were leaving for political or economic reasons, and those who were here couldn't travel around much. We had guerillas all over the country and a lot of areas were simply out of bounds.

As an adult I carried around a lot of nostalgia for my home country. It was a big part of why I wanted to come back and start my business here. I feel incredibly privileged to have grown up overseas when so many people in Peru have a tough life. I wanted to work to highlight the beauty and traditions of this amazing place, to show it to as many people as I could.

This is why conservation efforts such as those at Tambopata are so incredibly vital. This part of the world is under great threat, so raising awareness is vital. What was a life changing experience for me could be a life changing experience for many more.

Marisol Mosquera is the founder of Aracari Travel Consulting. To find out more visit aracari.com