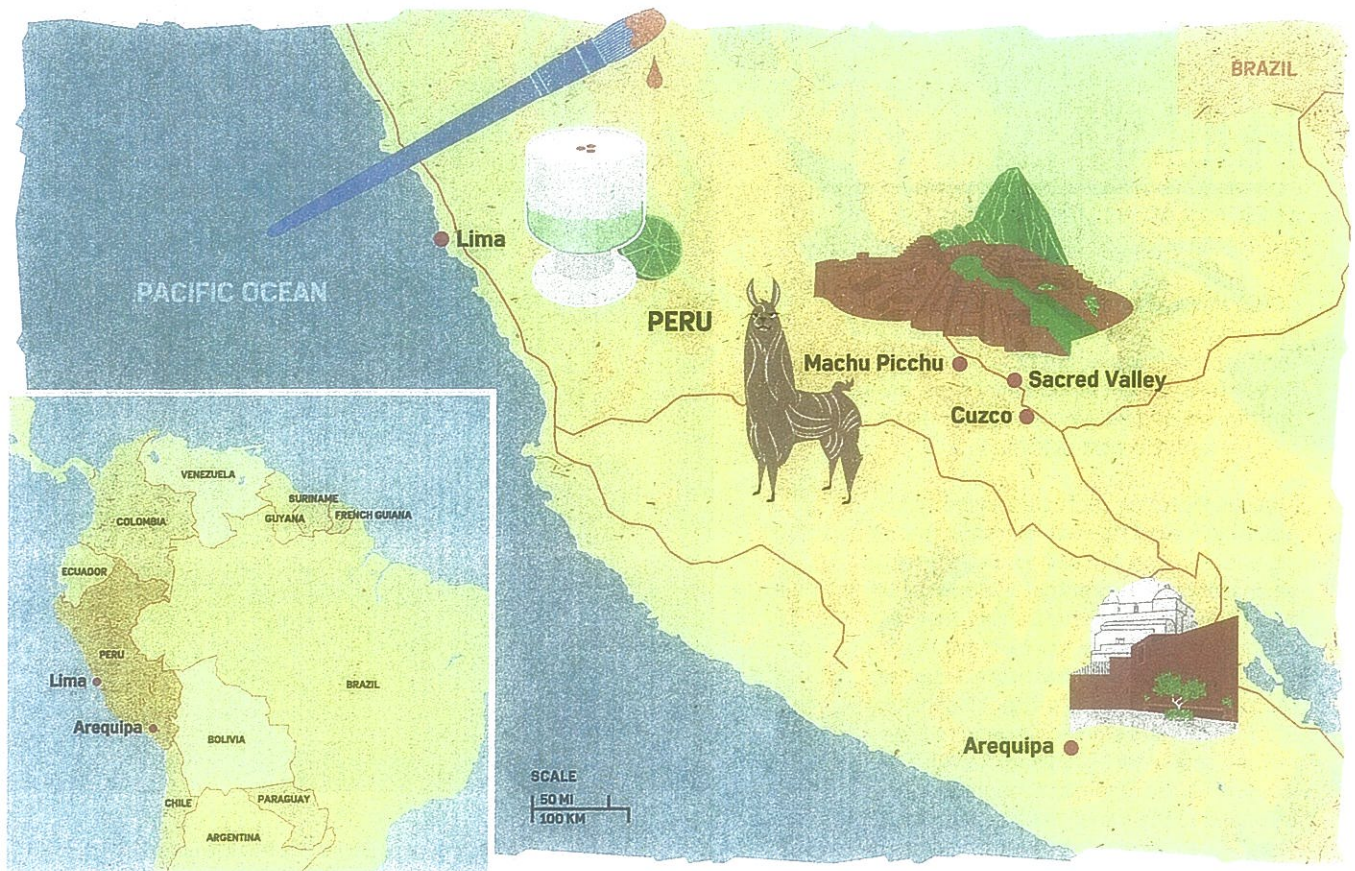




■ El Restaurant Cordano in Lima



head was severed from his body and the two parts were buried separately in the cathedral. Neither ended up in the chapel, which for more than a century supposedly housed the conquistador's remains. In 1985, finally, Pizarro's true remains replaced the impostor's.

Across the street from the presidential palace lies El Restaurant Cordano, a bar and restaurant that's been a hangout for Peruvian heads of state since 1905—and is equally known for its *butifarra* (roasted country ham) sandwiches. Add a side of *choclo* (starchy large-kerneled corn) and the Peruvian beer Cusqueña.

Beyond downtown, consider exploring two lively districts perched high above the Pacific Ocean: Miraflores and Barranco, an artsy area with old mansions, busy restaurants, interesting shops, ocean-view parks and Second Home Peru (secondhomeperu.com), a lovely, eight-room guesthouse off a quiet residential street that's run by the daughter of Peruvian sculptor Victor Delfin. If you're lucky, you may even happen upon the artist painting in his studio, built into an oceanside cliff below the guesthouse's sculpture-dotted grounds. The first morning of our 14-day trip, we followed the sound of music down steps to an eccentric building beside a swimming pool. A vigorous man in his 80s, Delfin graciously put down his paint-smear palette and gave us a tour.

Other Barranco highlights include Peruvian folk art gallery Artesanias Las Pallas, contemporary crafts gallery Dédalo (dedaloarte.blogspot.com) and MATE, a nonprofit cultural hub opened in 2012 by Lima-born photographer Mario Testino. Here you may encounter, as we did, huge Testino photos of supermodels and actresses—both clothed and . . . not.

AREQUIPA

Reports of Arequipa's beauty are not exaggerated. This proud southern Andean city is full of elegant Spanish colonial buildings—churches, mansions, even a bank—constructed from creamy volcanic stone with elaborately carved façades. The city also is a jumping-off point for trekkers exploring Colca Canyon, one of the world's deepest.

Among the most spectacular sites here is a monastery with a surprisingly racy past. Founded in 1579 and later enlarged, Monasterio de Santa Catalina was home to the daughters of wealthy Spanish families. But instead of a simple cloistered life, the young nuns lived well, with servants and slaves, and reportedly partied with visiting musicians. Not amused, Pope Pius IX sent a Dominican nun in 1871 to impose decorum.

Today, a few nuns live at the monastery, but there's little sign of them. A self-contained world behind stone walls, the place feels like a quiet