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8 Anexos

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 8 de abril de 2006

Brazil's Man in Space: A Mere 'Hitchhiker,' or a Hero?

By LARRY ROHTER

Published: April 8, 2006

BRASÍLIA, April 6 — Since late last month, a Brazilian has been orbiting the Earth aboard the International Space Station, fulfilling a longstanding ambition here. But because of the manner in which Brazil's first astronaut was launched into space, national pride has been mixed with pointed criticisms of weaknesses and deficiencies in the country's three-decade-old space program.

The astronaut, Marcos Pontes, a 43-year-old air force colonel, has become a national idol, stealing headlines even from soccer stars like Ronaldinho. He has waved the Brazilian flag, talked with schoolchildren, reporters and President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and even found himself lionized in a comic book and toys.

But many Brazilian scientists, along with newspaper columnists and editorial writers, have criticized the voyage, which ends early Sunday, as a boondoggle. They argue that the roughly \$10.5 million that Brazil paid Russia to launch Colonel Pontes aboard a Soyuz rocket would have been better spent on research here on Earth or invested in rebuilding a space port destroyed in 2003 in a launching pad explosion that killed 21 scientists and technicians.

"The scientific value of this voyage is almost nil," Ennio Candotti, a physicist who is the president of the Brazilian Society for the Progress of Science, complained to reporters. He also described Colonel Pontes as a "space tourist" and a "paying hitchhiker," and dismissed the astronaut's eight on-board experiments as "simply for show."

Government officials, however, say the gains in putting a Brazilian in space are scientific and political. They want to double the budget of the space program, chronically short of funds, to \$200 million a year, and view increased public support for the effort and understanding of it as the best ways to persuade the Brazilian Congress to loosen purse strings.

"The idea is to give visibility to the program," Sergio Gaudenzi, the director of the Brazilian Space Agency, said in an interview here on Thursday. A decade ago, he added, "China, Brazil and India were all at the same level, but China has surged ahead, and we have been left behind," largely because of a lack of sustained investment.

With more money, Mr. Gaudenzi said, Brazil would be able to build four additional launching pads at its equatorial Alcântara base, considered one of the best launching sites in the world because the Earth's rotation is faster there, making it easier and cheaper to put a vehicle into orbit. Brazil also plans to build and launch up to three geostationary communications satellites, and needs to develop its own rocket in order to do so, he said.

The origins of Colonel Pontes's voyage go back to 1997, when Brazil was invited, at NASA's behest, to be one of 16 nations participating in the International Space Station project. In return for manufacturing certain parts for the station, at an

estimated cost of \$120 million, Brazil would receive the right to send someone into space.

The United States was eager to have Brazil involved because Washington wants to increase scientific exchanges with a country that has excelled in several niches. Brazil is a recognized leader, for example, in the manufacture of medium-size jets, genome mapping and numerous technologies adapted for use in the tropics.

But Brazil informed the consortium in 2001 that it would not be able to meet the first deadline, in part because funds were lacking. It then missed a second deadline, and Colonel Pontes's mission was put on indefinite hold.

During a visit to Russia late last year, Mr. da Silva, rather than lose the money already invested in Colonel Pontes's training, signed an agreement that made the Brazilian astronaut a paying customer aboard a Russian spacecraft. Russia also agreed to help Brazil develop a liquid fuel rocket, the weak spot in a program that has had some success in building and launching satellites.

At the 2003 funeral of the victims of the Alcantara disaster, Mr. da Silva promised that Brazil would still launch its first rocket into space by the time his term ended, at the end of this year. But Mr. Gaudenzi said that target had been abandoned as unrealistic, with 2009 set as the most likely new date for a launching attempt.

Colonel Pontes's space voyage is officially known as the Centennial Mission, a reference to Brazil's pioneering aviator Alberto Santos Dumont. Brazilians are taught that Santos Dumont, not the Wright Brothers, was the first man to fly, before cheering throngs in Paris in 1906. Colonel Pontes has even been photographed aboard the space station wearing one of Santos Dumont's trademark white Panama hats.

"Few have been the moments in which we've been as proud of a Brazilian as we are of you," Mr. da Silva, who must win an October election if he is to have a second term, said during a televised 14-minute conversation with the astronaut on Wednesday. "What we are spending is little compared to what this could represent for Brazilian space policy."

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 9 de maio de 2004

Brazilian Leader's Tippling Becomes National Concern

By LARRY ROHTER

Published: May 9, 2004

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has never hidden his fondness for a glass of beer, a shot of whiskey or, even better, a slug of cachaça, Brazil's potent sugar-cane liquor. But some of his countrymen have begun wondering if their president's predilection for strong drink is affecting his performance in office.

In recent months, Mr. da Silva's left-leaning government has been assailed by one crisis after another, ranging from a corruption scandal to the failure of crucial social programs. The president has often stayed out of the public eye and left his advisers to do most of the heavy lifting. That has spurred speculation that his apparent disengagement and passivity may somehow be related to his appetite for alcohol. His supporters, however, deny reports of heavy drinking.

Though political leaders and journalists are increasingly talking among themselves about Mr. da Silva's consumption of liquor, few are willing to express

their misgivings in public or on the record. One exception is Leonel Brizola, the leader of the leftist Democratic Labor Party, who was Mr. da Silva's running mate in the 1998 election but now worries that the president is "destroying the neurons in his brain."

"When I was Lula's vice-presidential candidate, he drank a lot," Mr. Brizola, now a critic of the government, said in a recent speech. "I alerted him that distilled beverages are dangerous. But he didn't listen to me, and according to what is said, continues to drink."

During an interview in Rio de Janeiro in mid-April, Mr. Brizola elaborated on the concerns he expressed to Mr. da Silva and which he said went unheeded. "I told him 'Lula, I'm your friend and comrade, and you've got to get hold of this thing and control it,'" he recalled.

"No, there's no danger, I've got it under control," Mr. Brizola, imitating the president's gruff, raspy voice, remembers Mr. da Silva replying then. "He resisted, and he's resistant," Mr. Brizola continued. "But he had that problem. If I drank like him, I'd be fried."

Spokesmen for Mr. da Silva declined to discuss the president's drinking habits on the record, saying they would not dignify baseless charges with a formal reply. In a brief e-mail message responding to a request for comment, they dismissed speculation that he drank to excess as "a mixture of prejudice, misinformation and bad faith."

Mr. da Silva, a 58-year-old former lathe operator, has shown himself to be a man of strong appetites and impulses, which contributes to his popular appeal. With a mixture of sympathy and amusement, Brazilians have watched his efforts to try not to smoke in public, his flirtations at public events with attractive actresses and his continuing battle to avoid the fatty foods that made his weight balloon shortly after he took office in January 2003.

Aside from Mr. Brizola, political leaders and the news media alike seem to prefer to deal in innuendo, but do so with relish. Whenever possible, the Brazilian press publishes photos of the president bleary-eyed or ruddy-faced, and constantly makes references both to weekend barbecues at the presidential residence at which the liquor flows freely and to state events at which Mr. da Silva never seems to be without a drink in his hand.

"I've got a piece of advice for Lula," the gadfly columnist Diogo Mainardi wrote in late March in *Veja*, the country's leading newsmagazine, reeling off a list of articles containing such references. "Stop drinking in public," he counseled, adding that the president has become "the biggest advertising spokesman for the spirits industry" with his very conspicuous consumption of alcohol.

A week later, the same magazine printed a letter from a reader worrying about "Lula's alcoholism" and its effect on the president's ability to govern. Though some Web sites have been complaining for months about "our alcoholic president," it was the first time the mainstream national press had referred to Mr. da Silva in that manner.

Historically, Brazilians have reason to be concerned at any sign of heavy drinking by their presidents. Jânio Quadros, elected in 1960, was a notorious tippler who once boasted, "I drink because it's liquid"; his unexpected resignation, after less than a year in office during what was reported to be a marathon binge, initiated a period of political instability that led to a coup in 1964 and 20 years of a harsh military dictatorship.

Whether or not Mr. da Silva really has a drinking problem, the issue has seeped into the public consciousness and become the subject of gibes. When the government spent \$56 million early this year to buy a new presidential plane, for instance, the columnist Claudio Humberto, a sort of Matt Drudge of Brazilian politics, sponsored a contest to give a tongue-in-cheek name to the aircraft.

One winning entry, recalling that the United States president's plane is called Air Force One, suggested that Mr. da Silva's jet should be designated "Pirassununga 51," which is the name of the most popular brand of cachaça. Another suggestion was "Powered by Alcohol," a pun referring to a government plan to encourage cars to use ethanol as fuel.

Speculation about the president's drinking habits has been fed by various gaffes and faux pas that he has made in public. As a candidate, he once offended residents of a city regarded as a haven for gays by calling it "a factory that manufactures queers," and as president, his slips in public have continued and become part of Brazilian political folklore.

At a ceremony here in February to announce a large new investment, for example, Mr. da Silva twice referred to the president of General Motors, Richard Wagoner, as the president of Mercedes-Benz. In October, on a day honoring the nation's elderly, Mr. da Silva told them, "when you retire, don't stay at home bothering your family, find something to do."

Abroad, Mr. da Silva has also stumbled or spoken ill-advisedly. On a visit to the Middle East last year, he imitated an Arab accent in speaking Portuguese, mispronunciations and all; and in Windhoek, Namibia, he said the city seemed to be so clean that it "hardly seems like Africa."

Mr. da Silva's staff and supporters respond that such slips are only occasional, are to be expected from a man who likes to speak off the cuff and have nothing to do with his consumption of alcohol, which they describe as moderate in any case. As they see it, he is being held to a different and unfair standard than that of his predecessors because he is Brazil's first working-class president and received only a sixth-grade education.

"Anyone who has been at a formal or informal reception in Brasília has witnessed presidents sipping a shot of whiskey," the columnist Ali Kamel wrote in the Rio de Janeiro daily *O Globo* recently. "But you'll have read nothing in that respect about other presidents, just about Lula. That smacks of prejudice."

Mr. da Silva was born into a poor family in one of the country's poorest states and spent years leading labor unions, a famously hard-drinking environment. Brazilian press accounts have repeatedly described the president's father, Aristides, whom he barely knew and who died in 1978, as an alcoholic who abused his children.

Stories about drinking episodes involving Mr. da Silva are legion. After one night on the town when he was a member of Congress during the late 1980's, Mr. da Silva got off the elevator at the wrong floor of the building where he lived at the time and tried to batter down the door of an apartment he mistakenly thought was his own, according to politicians and journalists here, including some who are former residents of the building.

"Under Lula, the capirinha has become the national drink by presidential decree," the daily *Fôlha de São Paulo* said last month in an article about Mr. da Silva's association with alcohol and referring to a cocktail made with sugar-cane liquor.

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 13 de janeiro de 2005

Beaches for the Svelte, Where the Calories Are Showing

By LARRY ROHTER

Published: January 13, 2005

RIO DE JANEIRO, Jan. 6 - Fat Brazilians? In a body-conscious society whose gifts to global culture include the girl from Ipanema, the tanga bikini and Gisele Bündchen and other supermodels, the idea seems heretical. Yet a controversial government study released late last month confirms it: Brazil is experiencing an epidemic of obesity.

According to the report, conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics and issued right as summer arrived and people began flocking to the beaches in skimpy clothing, just over 40 percent of Brazil's adult population is overweight. Overall, 1 adult in 10, or more than 10 million people, are obese, by international standards, compared with fewer than four million who were deemed to be undernourished.

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva immediately disputed the findings. Since taking office two years ago this month, the left-leaning Workers' Party government that he leads has always maintained that hunger, not obesity, is Brazil's main social problem and, as a result, has made a Zero Hunger program the centerpiece of its health and public welfare agenda.

"Hunger isn't something to be measured by research," Mr. da Silva contended. "Not everyone wants to recognize that they are going hungry. They are ashamed." But the statistics show what nutritionists and doctors regard as undeniable proof of an alarming growth of obesity since the mid-1970's, when the survey was first done in its current form. As elsewhere around the world, the main culprits, they say, are an unbalanced diet and a sedentary lifestyle, with some variants that are particularly Brazilian.

Brazilians have, for example, a pronounced sweet tooth, perhaps natural in a country that is the world's largest exporter of sugar. People routinely sprinkle sugar on naturally sweet fruits like pineapple or papaya, and it sometimes seems that half the mass of a *cafézinho*, the espresso coffee consumed everywhere in the country, is sugar, not liquid.

"Brazil and the United States are the countries that have the highest levels of consumption of sugar in the world, accounting for about 19 percent of calories," said Carlos Augusto Monteiro, a nutritionist at the University of São Paulo who was a consultant to the government study. "Consumption of soft drinks, for example, has grown 400 percent in the last 30 years, and we think that could play an important role in Brazil's growing fatter."

In addition to incorporating increasing amounts of fatty, processed foods in recent years, the Brazilian diet is also unusually heavy in starches and other carbohydrates. A typical luncheon plate, especially in the countryside or in poor neighborhoods, will contain not only a small piece of meat and beans for protein but also rice, potatoes, pasta, bread and cassava too.

Like people in more economically developed countries, Brazilians also lead a more sedentary life these days. Between 1940 and 2000, Brazil's population, now 175 million, went from being 80 percent rural and 20 percent urban to 80 percent

urban and 20 percent rural, which has resulted in a marked decrease in physical activity.

Brazilian notions of what is considered beautiful or sexy may also be a factor in encouraging plumpness. Traditionally, the idealized feminine form here has been the "guitar-shaped body," a woman with a slender bust and waist and an ample rear end.

"American men may focus on breasts, but the Brazilian man has always wanted something to grab on to," said Constanza Pascolato, one of the country's leading commentators on issues of esthetics, fashion and beauty. "Women were always being told, 'You have to eat or else you're going to look like a stick,' and were encouraged to be fleshy."

While that preference may still be strong, especially in rural areas and among the poor, the urban middle and upper classes seem to have succumbed to the global preference for slimness. Dr. Monteiro noted that in São Paulo there are now clinics to treat anorexia and bulimia, problems that barely existed 30 years ago but are appearing now because of the "mixed messages that are being sent" through the media about desirable body types.

The poor, who the study found are the group most likely to be overweight, receive the same messages but do not have the money to explore other options. Jose Roberto Lucena, for example, is a street vendor here who stands 5 feet 7 inches tall, weighs 231 pounds and worries about his health but argues that he is doing the best he can raising a family on wages of less than \$200 a month.

"I certainly can't afford to go to a gym, and though I know that vegetables are good for me, they are very expensive," he complained. "My 5-year-old daughter is overweight too, and even after the doctor ordered her on a diet last month, it's been hard to get her to eat things like salad."

Some commentators here have suggested that Mr. da Silva's unwillingness to accept the study may stem in part from his personal history. As he never tires of reminding Brazilians and the foreign leaders he meets, he experienced hunger himself as a poor peasant child and can vividly recall the sensation of going to bed on an empty stomach.

Today, though, Mr. da Silva is one of those Brazilians who struggles to keep his weight under control. With a mixture of sympathy and amusement, the national press has chronicled his efforts to limit his consumption of barbecue, beer and buchada, a fatty tripe dish native to his home region that is the bane of nutritionists.

"The truth is that Lula's hunger has not faded away," the columnist Arnaldo Bloch speculated recently in the Rio daily O Globo. "As much as the president eats and drinks and eats and drinks, the hunger and thirst remain. It is a hunger and thirst that is ancestral, that returns to strike daily" and which he, like others who were once poor, "has never overcome."

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 12 de janeiro de 2006

Brazil Is Awash in Energy (Except for Natural Gas)

By PAULO PRADA

Published: January 12, 2006

RIO DE JANEIRO - In these times of excruciating oil prices, Brazil is in a position many nations would envy.

With 11.24 billion barrels in oil reserves, it produces 1.7 million barrels a day, 90 percent of its needs, a turnaround from once being almost entirely dependent on imports. In alternative fuels, it is a pioneer, turning one of its biggest crops, sugar, into ethanol. The fuel, either as pure ethanol or mixed with gasoline, now accounts for around a third of what goes into gas tanks in Brazil.

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has been crowing about Brazil's achievements in energy. In November, he inaugurated an oil platform in the bay of this verdant city, donning a hard hat and praising the rig for helping the country wean itself from imported oil. A week earlier in Brasília, he lauded Brazil's advances in renewable fuels, stating that in a few years "the entire world will take notice."

But to Vito Joseph Mandilovich, vice president for operations at two power plants run by AES Eletropaulo, the boast rings a little hollow. Twice this year, one of AES's plants in southern Brazil sat idle for weeks when its supply of natural gas, imported from Argentina, disappeared.

"It brought us to a halt," Mr. Mandilovich said. His company is partly owned by the AES Corporation of Arlington, Va.

Despite major strides in oil production and trailblazing development of renewable fuels, Brazil's energy picture is marred by its inability to meet soaring demand for natural gas. There is no clear estimate of how much natural gas Brazil would consume if the gas were available, but plants occasionally go dark and gas distributors are turning away clients. Existing shortfalls limit new investment in gas-fueled plants and power generators.

"There's an imbalance," said Rafael Schechtman, director of the Brazilian Infrastructure Center, a consulting firm here. "Natural gas lags an otherwise healthy energy sector."

Indeed, as Brazil became a star in energy self-sufficiency, natural gas was something of an afterthought. Demand began in the 1990's, when the government decided to reinforce Brazil's hydroelectric power grid with plants fueled by natural gas. Industry, facing environmental pressures and higher oil prices, also sought gas to replace the fuel oil that fired engines and furnaces.

Because Brazil at the time had discovered few reserves at home, it relied upon imports from gas-rich neighbors, like Argentina and Bolivia. A \$1.8 billion 2,000-mile pipeline from Bolivia, financed mostly by *Petróleo Brasileiro*, or Petrobras, Brazil's state-controlled energy company, feeds Brazil half its needs.

But in 2003, Petrobras found huge gas deposits off the state of São Paulo in the Santos basin. Initially, Petrobras estimated that the new find tripled the country's gas reserves to more than 600 billion cubic meters total. While the fields will help Brazil reduce its reliance on foreign suppliers, Petrobras is reluctant to forecast exactly how much they could yield. At present, Brazil boasts proven reserves of 326 billion cubic meters. The fields, however, would help Brazil move toward self-sufficiency in gas.

But the fields are still untapped. Petrobras said in 2005 that it would invest \$15 billion through 2010 to develop them and double an existing 2,500-mile network of pipelines. The first gas would be produced in 2008. But the rising cost of steel, coupled with the sheer scale of Brazil's geography, makes a precise project timetable sketchy. Though Brazil is on its way to tapping the gas, it will no doubt come too late to address current need and pent-up demand.

"Existing supplies don't match the growth in demand," said Sophie Aldebert, an associate director at Cambridge Energy Research Associates, who is based here.

Critics blame Brazil's government for failing to spur investment in the pipelines and distribution networks that could bring more natural gas from Bolivia as well as from existing domestic fields to more parts of the country. Laws that could stimulate that investment are mired in Congress, leaving the onus on Petrobras, the country's dominant wholesale supplier, to set the development agenda.

"Petrobras controls supply and decides where and when to increase it," said Luis Domenech, president of Companhia de Gás de São Paulo, or Comgás, the distributor in Brazil's most populous state. Until the investment rules are clearer, he said, "companies remain reluctant to compete with Petrobras."

But Petrobras rejects the notion that Brazil's gas fortunes rest solely on its shoulders. Though it recognizes its position as a near monopoly - only a handful of other companies supply regional distributors - the company was partly privatized in 1997 and its obligations lie more with private investors than in public service.

"We're not obliged to meet any demand at any price," Ildo Sauer, Petrobras's director for gas and energy, said recently.

From a black leather armchair in his spacious office in the Petrobras tower in Rio, Mr. Sauer points to wall maps illustrating a web of possible gas ducts in Brazil and throughout South America.

The problems in supply, he said, are just symptoms of the immaturity of Brazil's gas market: there are shortfalls precisely because nobody expected demand to grow so fast. "Any sector would be envious to have this kind of growth and investment," he said.

Still, the shortfalls are hampering development.

In the northeastern state of Bahia, factories and other industrial clients are pressing Bahiagás, the regional distributor, to supply more. While there is demand for at least 6.5 million cubic meters a day in Bahia, the company said, it is able to get only 3.5 million from Petrobras. Until a Petrobras-led consortium completes a new pipeline next year, the company is losing at least 1.56 million reais (\$660,000) a day in potential revenue.

"I'm turning customers away," complains Petrônio Lerche Vieira, president of Bahiagás.

With demand nationwide projected to grow more than 15 percent annually in coming years, future supply is even shakier and could steer manufacturers away from natural gas.

Besides industrial users, homeowners in Brazil's big cities are switching to natural gas. Also, growing numbers of heavily used vehicles are converting to the fuel. Instead of popping a gasoline cap at the rear of their taxis, cabbies in cities like Rio and São Paulo are increasingly lifting their hoods and pumping natural gas into their tanks.

"Demand is moving into a variety of other uses, but future growth remains dependent on supply," said Carlos Senna Figueredo, an energy consultant in Rio for the National Confederation of Industry, a manufacturing trade group based in São Paulo.

Doubts cloud the supplies Brazil is getting from its neighbors, too.

Contracts from Argentina, facing an energy squeeze because investment has withered since a financial meltdown earlier this decade, are faltering. Also, Argentina is required by law to suspend exports if it needs its gas at home. And

Evo Morales, Bolivia's nationalist president-elect, has vowed to renegotiate agreements with foreign investors, with Petrobras being the biggest of them. [On Wednesday, Mr. Morales said he would cancel any contracts giving foreign companies ownership rights to the country's gas, according to Bloomberg News. Petrobras currently has rights to 17.5 percent of Bolivia's gas. Petrobras had no comment on Wednesday.]

Other leaders around the region have talked of a host of potential new sources, like a transcontinental pipeline to carry gas from Venezuela southward, but those projects could be slow getting off the ground.

Energy projects and policy, after all, are political hot potatoes in a region where economic fortunes often rely on the price and demand for commodities.

"The need for more gas is clear, but the political landscape is not," Francisco Bugallo, president of generation in Brazil for the Spanish power company Endesa. "The balance between supply and demand for energy is always a sensitive issue."

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 24 de janeiro de 2006

World Business Briefing | Americas: Brazil: Ethanol Requires \$10 Billion Investment By 2012

Published: January 24, 2006

Brazil's sugar cane industry needs \$10 billion of investment by 2012 as rising demand for ethanol leaves sugar makers short of cane and drives up the price of sugar to record highs, the country's agriculture minister said. Brazil, the world's largest sugar producer, needs to build 73 new mills to convert sugar cane into ethanol and to plant an additional 2.5 million hectares of cane, an increase of almost 50 percent, the agriculture minister, Roberto Rodrigues, said in Brasília. Brazil produces 5.5 million hectares of sugar cane, about half of which goes to produce ethanol, a motor fuel. Concern that more of the world's sugar cane crop will be used to produce ethanol and less for sugar sent raw sugar prices to a 24-year high in New York. In Brazil, ethanol is cheaper than gasoline. "Ethanol is strategic for the country," Mr. Rodrigues told reporters in a hallway as he came out of a ministry meeting with Brazilian sugar and ethanol industry executives. He said he expected demand for ethanol to double over the next eight years.

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 2 de fevereiro de 2006

News Analysis

Much Talk, Mostly Low Key, About Energy Independence

By SIMON ROMERO

Published: February 2, 2006

HOUSTON, Feb. 1 — Industry experts say that if President Bush wants to make a push to reduce the country's oil consumption, there are some solutions at hand. But with names like carbon composites and new metal alloys, they may seem

banal and do not create much buzz.

Perhaps the most significant step the nation could take in reducing oil dependence is to change the way cars are produced, according to the Rocky Mountain Institute, an energy research organization that has consulted for the Department of Defense. Automobiles, for instance, use about 9 million barrels of the 20 million barrels or so of oil that the United States consumes each day. Trucks, heavy machinery and some power plants consume the rest.

Improving the efficiency of hybrid engines, like those used in the Toyota Prius, and using advanced metal alloys and carbon composites instead of heavier steel to make cars could double or triple the miles per gallon in these automobiles.

"We could reduce our consumption by four to five million barrels a day by going down this pathway," said Odd-Even Bustnes, a principal at the Rocky Mountain Institute. "What the president said yesterday is a step in the right direction, but I'm not sure it's a step of the right magnitude."

Conservation of oil has not been a priority for the administration, which has avoided pressuring Detroit to produce fewer sport utility vehicles and more energy-efficient cars.

In fact, overall federal funding for research and development in energy efficiency has declined 14 percent since 2002, adjusted for inflation. Among the federally sponsored projects are the president's Freedom Car hydrogen vehicle program, according to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.

Some measures that President Bush left out of his state-of-union address could also bring big payoffs: measures that might actually curb oil consumption like greater fuel-efficiency rules for cars, a gasoline tax or increasing ethanol imports from Brazil.

While President Bush did propose more use of alternative fuels, what he left unsaid was that producing such "renewable" fuels, like hydrogen or ethanol from corn, requires large amounts of petroleum. As if to remind Americans of oil's paramount importance in the economy, Barry Russell, president of the Independent Petroleum Association of America, said, "many alternative fuel options depend on petroleum or natural gas for their effective development."

Still, some of the president's proposals advance the discussion of what the United States needs to do to become less dependent on oil. Ethanol, for instance, could be made from materials in addition to corn, like switch grass, a kind of grass that grows abundantly on the prairies of the Plains.

"Ethanol is mandating additional diversity to the pool of motor fuels," said Daniel Yergin, chairman of Cambridge Energy Research Associates. "The definition of oil is being widened."

The administration has also declined to consider tax increases on gasoline, perhaps fearful of angering American motorists. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated in 2004 that a new gasoline tax of 46 cents a gallon, up from today's federal gasoline tax of 18 cents a gallon, would reduce gasoline consumption by 10 percent over the next 14 years.

That leaves as a centerpiece of the administration's new energy strategy an emphasis on ethanol, which is rising in favor among alternative fuel sources. Ethanol production from corn in the United States still relies on subsidies, but ethanol made from sugarcane in Brazil competes handily with gasoline. In fact, it was only after Brazil's government exposed ethanol to market forces in recent years that its success became clear.

Brazil's sugarcane industry produces about 160,000 barrels of oil-equivalent a

day, assisting the country in achieving self-sufficiency in oil sometime this year, according to David G. Victor, director of the program on energy and sustainable development at Stanford University. Still, unlike Japan and China, which have plans to import Brazilian ethanol, the Bush administration has retained a 54 cent tariff on every gallon of imported ethanol.

"It's remarkable that we're not taxing fuel from Saudi Arabia while we're taxing fuel from Brazil," said Gal Luft, a co-director of the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, a research organization in Washington that specializes in energy issues.

The Bush administration instead opted to support the development of a domestic industry for cellulosic ethanol, which would use plant fiber now discarded as waste to produce a transportation fuel. The technology is promising but not thought to be commercially viable until the next decade. In the meantime, the government continues to support traditional ethanol made from corn, a process that consumes large quantities of expensive natural gas.

Most eye-catching among the new measures was the call to replace 75 percent of imported oil from the Middle East by 2025. Such an objective is nonthreatening to the oil industries controlled by the regimes of that region, given the rising economies of China and India. Oil is a fungible commodity that is bought and sold on a global market, so other countries could easily take the place of the United States as buyers of Saudi oil.

In fact, the administration may have avoided measures to aggressively curb oil consumption because it understands such moves might end up weakening American and European oil companies. Since each barrel of oil enters into a global pool that is traded daily, higher-cost producers — in places like the tar sands of Alberta, the North Sea off Britain or Norway, or the Gulf of Mexico in the United States — would be the first to halt production if the United States were to lower its oil purchases and thus ease market prices.

High oil prices enable companies in these costly areas to compete with a nation like Saudi Arabia, where it costs less than \$5 a barrel to produce oil. That also helps explain why divorcing an economy from a reliance on imported oil can be painful, as Brazil's early experiments with ethanol showed when the government was forced to absorb losses from the program.

The reliance of the American economy on oil from unstable countries is an issue that presidents might still be grappling with in 2025, just as three decades ago the first ambitious, and subsequently abandoned, efforts began to wean the nation off imported oil in the aftermath of the 1970's oil shocks.

"The idea of independence from oil imported from the Middle East," said Mr. Bustnes of the Rocky Mountain Institute, "will be achieved the day we are oil-free."

Heather Timmons contributed reporting from London for this article and Edmund L. Andrews from Washington.

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 8 de fevereiro de 2006

Op-Ed Columnist

No More Mr. Tough Guy

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
Published: February 8, 2006

I've always thought Dick Cheney took national security seriously. I don't anymore. It seems that Mr. Cheney is so convinced that we have no choice but to be dependent on crude oil, so convinced that conservation is just some silly liberal hobby, that he will never seriously summon the country to kick its oil habit, never summon it to do anything great.

Indeed, he seems determined to be a drag on any serious effort to make America energy-independent. He presents all this as a tough-guy "realist" view of the world. But it's actually an ignorant and naïve view — one that underestimates what Americans can do, and totally misses how the energy question has overtaken Iraq as the most important issue in U.S. foreign policy. If he persists, Mr. Cheney is going to ensure that the Bush team squanders its last three years — and a lot more years for the country.

Listen to Mr. Cheney's answer when the conservative talk show host Laura Ingraham asked him how he reacted to my urgings for a gasoline tax to push all Americans to drive energy-saving vehicles and make us energy-independent — now.

"Well, I don't agree with that," Mr. Cheney said. "I think — the president and I believe very deeply that, obviously, the government has got a role to play here in terms of supporting research into new technologies and encouraging the development of new methods of generating energy. ... But we also are big believers in the market, and that we need to be careful about having government come in, for example, and tell people how to live their lives. ... This notion that we have to 'impose pain,' some kind of government mandate, I think we would resist. The marketplace does work out there."

What is he talking about? The global oil market is anything but free. It's controlled by the world's largest cartel — OPEC — which sets output, and thereby prices, according to the needs of some of the worst regimes in the world. By doing nothing, we are letting their needs determine the price and their treasuries reap all the profits.

Also, why does Mr. Cheney have no problem influencing the market by lowering taxes to get consumers to spend, but he rejects raising gasoline taxes to get consumers to save energy — a fundamental national interest.

Don't take it from me. Gregory Mankiw of Harvard, who recently retired as chairman of President Bush's Council of Economic Advisers, wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* on Jan. 3 about his New Year's resolutions: "Everyone hates taxes, but the government needs to fund its operations, and some taxes can actually do some good in the process. I will tell the American people that a higher tax on gasoline is better at encouraging conservation than are heavy-handed [mileage standards]. It would not only encourage people to buy more fuel-efficient cars, but it would encourage them to drive less."

Mr. Cheney, we are told, is a "tough guy." Really? Well, how tough is this: We have a small gasoline tax, but Europe and Japan tax their gasoline by \$2 and \$3 a gallon, or more. They use those taxes to build schools, highways and national health care for their citizens. But they spend very little on defense compared with us.

So who protects their oil supplies from the Middle East? U.S. taxpayers. We spend nearly \$600 billion a year on defense, a large chunk in the Persian Gulf. But

how do we pay for that without a gas tax? Income taxes and Social Security. Yes, we tax our incomes and raid our children's Social Security fund so Europeans and Japanese can comfortably import their oil from the gulf, impose big gas taxes on it at their pumps and then use that income for their own domestic needs. And because they have high gas taxes, they also beat Detroit at making more fuel-efficient cars. Now how tough is that?

Finally, if Mr. Cheney believes so much in markets, why did the 2005 energy act contain about \$2 billion in tax breaks for oil companies? Why does his administration permit a 54-cents-a-gallon tax on imported ethanol — fuel made from sugar or corn — so Brazilian sugar exports won't compete with American sugar? Yes, we tax imported ethanol from Brazil, but we don't tax imported oil from Saudi Arabia, Venezuela or Russia.

"Everyone says we need a new Marshall Plan," said Michael Mandelbaum, a foreign policy expert and the author of "The Case for Goliath." "We have a Marshall Plan. It's our energy policy. It's a Marshall plan for terrorists and dictators."

How tough is it, Mr. Cheney, to will the ends — an end to America's oil addiction — but not will the means: a gasoline tax? It's not very tough, it's not very smart, and it's going to end badly for us.

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 26 de março de 2006

Investing

On the Ethanol Bandwagon, Big Names and Big Risks

By NORM ALSTER

Published: March 26, 2006

VINOD KHOSLA was a founder of Sun Microsystems and then, as a partner at Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, the Silicon Valley venture capital firm, he helped a host of technology companies get off the ground.

These days, Mr. Khosla, 51, is still investing in technology, but much of it has nothing to do with the world of network computing in which he made his name. He is particularly excited about new ways of producing ethanol — the plant-derived fuel that, he says, could rapidly displace gasoline. "I am convinced we can replace a majority of petroleum used for cars and light trucks with ethanol within 25 years," he said. He has already invested "tens of millions of dollars," he said, in private companies that are developing methods to produce ethanol using plant sources other than corn.

Mr. Khosla isn't the only big-name entrepreneur to embrace ethanol. Sir Richard Branson, chairman of the Virgin Group, plans to invest \$300 million to \$400 million to produce and market ethanol made from corn and other sources, said Will Whitehorn, a director of the company. Virgin expects to announce soon the site of its first production facility, probably in the eastern United States, with a second one likely to follow in the West, Mr. Whitehorn said.

Bill Gates has also made a move into the ethanol market. Cascade Investment, Mr. Gates's private investment firm, has declared its intention to buy \$84 million in newly issued preferred convertible securities in Pacific Ethanol, according to

William Langley, its chief financial officer. The company, which is based in Fresno, Calif., and is publicly traded, says it hopes to become the leader in the production and distribution of ethanol in the Western states.

Ethanol derived from corn now accounts for 3 percent of the American automotive fuel market. Most cars in the United States can already handle fuel that is up to 10 percent ethanol, and as many as five million are so-called flex-fuel vehicles that can use a fuel called E85, which is 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline.

The current excitement over ethanol derives from research that has cut the cost of converting nonfood plant matter like grasses and wood chips into alcohol. Mr. Khosla says he believes that such ethanol, called cellulosic ethanol, will eventually be cheaper to produce than both gasoline and corn-derived ethanol.

Can investors whose pockets are not as deep jump into the ethanol market? Yes, but they are taking a big risk. Picking long-term winners among the companies that make ethanol — or, for that matter, develop other alternative energy technologies — is a very uncertain business. The few public companies that focus on ethanol are typically unprofitable. Pacific Ethanol, for example, has not yet had a profitable quarter and will not until at least the fourth quarter, when its first plant is scheduled to begin production, Mr. Langley said.

Few mutual funds focus on alternative energy companies. "We are not going to start a dedicated alternative energy fund, period," said Wenhua Zhang, a technology analyst at T. Rowe Price. The company is avoiding the sector "for the same reason we didn't start an Internet fund in 2000: a dedicated very narrow sector fund with a single focus typically has a much higher risk."

Some publicly traded companies with operations linked to ethanol include Novozymes and Danisco, both based in Denmark, and Diversa of San Diego; all three have said they have made major gains in reducing the cost of the enzymes needed to produce ethanol from cellulose. Bigger, more diversified companies like Archer Daniels Midland and Monsanto have ethanol operations, too, though ethanol is but one of many businesses for these giants.

Two mutual funds that focus on alternative energy include some ethanol companies among their holdings. The New Alternatives fund holds shares of Abengoa and Acciona Energía, two Spanish companies investing in ethanol production. Another option is the PowerShares WilderHill Clean Energy Portfolio, an exchange-traded fund that tracks a basket of 40 alternative energy companies. Robert Wilder, who created the index on which the fund is based, said that it currently includes just two companies with significant ethanol interests: Pacific Ethanol and MGP Ingredients, an ethanol producer in Atchison, Kan.

Mr. Wilder said he expects to add other companies involved with ethanol. "It's very elegant," he said. "We can take an agricultural waste product we currently pay to get rid of and convert it into fuel."

But many ethanol companies are privately held, making them inaccessible to most investors. And there is certainly room for skepticism about ethanol's future. After all, corn ethanol has been around for years, and even with a current spike in demand, the industry commands only a 3 percent share of the market. Mr. Khosla counters that soaring energy prices have made corn-based ethanol more competitive, while research advances in breaking down cellulose into simple sugars have cut the cost of making ethanol from other sources.

"Ethanol is cheaper to produce, unsubsidized, than gasoline today," he said. "As these technologies ramp up, they will be cheaper — unsubsidized — than gasoline

even if petroleum drops to \$35 a barrel."

Brazil has proved that ethanol can be made competitively from sugar, said Daniel M. Kammen, a professor in the energy and resources group at the University of California, Berkeley. He estimates the cost of producing ethanol from sugar — including raw materials and processing — at \$6 to \$7 per gigajoule (a unit of energy) versus \$14 a gigajoule for gasoline. In Brazil, roughly 70 percent of new vehicles are equipped to handle ethanol, and the country has been able to curb its dependence on foreign oil and turn ethanol into a growing export industry.

But cellulosic ethanol, the kind produced from nonfood plant matter, has some advantages over food-based ethanol. Because cellulosic ethanol is derived from plant waste, wood chips or wild grasses like miscanthus and switchgrass, it would not require costly cultivation; that would mean savings on labor, pesticides, fertilizers and irrigation.

And it is superior to corn-derived ethanol in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, Professor Kammen said. He expects cellulosic ethanol to catch on quickly. "I think you can really see ethanol comprising 25 to 30 percent of gasoline consumption within 10 years," he said.

FOR that to happen, automakers would need to build more flex-fuel cars. The cost of adding this capability to new cars has been estimated at roughly \$100 a vehicle. And ethanol would need to be much more readily available at gas stations. Mr. Khosla has been lobbying in Washington for government help in both areas.

Smaller investors may be advised to just sit back and study developing opportunities. "This is an area where investors have to be patient and build up slowly," Mr. Khosla said.

But he said the potential payoff justifies his own aggressive bets. And ethanol's success, he said, would mean that more energy spending would flow to rural America. "You get a fuel that's cheaper and greener than gasoline," he said. "It gives us energy security."

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 10 de abril de 2006

With Big Boost From Sugar Cane, Brazil Is Satisfying Its Fuel Needs

By LARRY ROHTER

Published: April 10, 2006

PIRACICABA, Brazil — At the dawn of the automobile age, Henry Ford predicted that "ethyl alcohol is the fuel of the future." With petroleum about \$65 a barrel, President Bush has now embraced that view, too. But Brazil is already there.

This country expects to become energy self-sufficient this year, meeting its growing demand for fuel by increasing production from petroleum and ethanol. Already the use of ethanol, derived in Brazil from sugar cane, is so widespread that some gas stations have two sets of pumps, marked A for alcohol and G for gas.

In his State of the Union address in January, Mr. Bush backed financing for "cutting-edge methods of producing ethanol, not just from corn but wood chips and stalks or switch grass" with the goal of making ethanol competitive in six years.

But Brazil's path has taken 30 years of effort, required several billion dollars in incentives and involved many missteps. While not always easy, it provides clues to the real challenges facing the United States' ambitions.

Brazilian officials and scientists say that, in their country at least, the main barriers to the broader use of ethanol today come from outside. Brazil's ethanol yields nearly eight times as much energy as corn-based options, according to scientific data. Yet heavy import duties on the Brazilian product have limited its entry into the United States and Europe.

Brazilian officials and scientists say sugar cane yields are likely to increase because of recent research.

"Renewable fuel has been a fantastic solution for us," Brazil's minister of agriculture, Roberto Rodrigues, said in a recent interview in São Paulo, the capital of São Paulo State, which accounts for 60 percent of sugar production in Brazil. "And it offers a way out of the fossil fuel trap for others as well."

Here, where Brazil has cultivated sugar cane since the 16th century, green fields of cane, stalks rippling gently in the tropical breeze, stretch to the horizon, producing a crop that is destined to be consumed not just as candy and soft drinks but also in the tanks of millions of cars.

The use of ethanol in Brazil was greatly accelerated in the last three years with the introduction of "flex fuel" engines, designed to run on ethanol, gasoline or any mixture of the two. (The gasoline sold in Brazil contains about 25 percent alcohol, a practice that has accelerated Brazil's shift from imported oil.)

But Brazilian officials and business executives say the ethanol industry would develop even faster if the United States did not levy a tax of 54 cents a gallon on all imports of Brazilian cane-based ethanol.

With demand for ethanol soaring in Brazil, sugar producers recognize that it is unrealistic to think of exports to the United States now. But Brazilian leaders complain that Washington's restrictions have inhibited foreign investment, particularly by Americans.

As a result, ethanol development has been led by Brazilian companies with limited capital. But with oil prices soaring, the four international giants that control much of the world's agribusiness — Archer Daniels Midland, Bunge and Born, Cargill and Louis Dreyfuss — have recently begun showing interest.

Brazil says those and other outsiders are welcome. Aware that the United States and other industrialized countries are reluctant to trade their longstanding dependence on oil for a new dependence on renewable fuels, government and industry officials say they are willing to share technology with those interested in following Brazil's example.

"We are not interested in becoming the Saudi Arabia of ethanol," said Eduardo Carvalho, director of the National Sugarcane Agro-Industry Union, a producer's group. "It's not our strategy because it doesn't produce results. As a large producer and user, I need to have other big buyers and sellers in the international market if ethanol is to become a commodity, which is our real goal."

The ethanol boom in Brazil, which took off at the start of the decade after a long slump, is not the first. The government introduced its original "Pro-Alcohol" program in 1975, after the first global energy crisis, and by the mid-1980's, more than three quarters of the 800,000 cars made in Brazil each year could run on cane-based ethanol.

But when sugar prices rose sharply in 1989, mill owners stopped making cane available for processing into alcohol, preferring to profit from the hard currency

that premium international markets were paying.

Brazilian motorists were left in the lurch, as were the automakers who had retooled their production lines to make alcohol-powered cars. Ethanol fell into discredit, for economic rather than technical reasons.

Consumers' suspicions remained high through the 1990's and were overcome only in 2003, when automakers, beginning with Volkswagen, introduced the "flex fuel" motor in Brazil. Those engines gave consumers the autonomy to buy the cheapest fuel, freeing them from any potential shortages in ethanol's supply. Also, ethanol-only engines can be slower to start when cold, a problem the flex fuel owners can bypass.

"Motorists liked the flex-fuel system from the start because it permits them free choice and puts them in control," said Vicente Lourenço, technical director at General Motors do Brasil.

Today, less than three years after the technology was introduced, more than 70 percent of the automobiles sold in Brazil, expected to reach 1.1 million this year, have flex fuel engines, which have entered the market generally without price increases.

"The rate at which this technology has been adopted is remarkable, the fastest I have ever seen in the motor sector, faster even than the airbag, automatic transmission or electric windows," said Barry Engle, president of Ford do Brasil. "From the consumer standpoint, it's wonderful, because you get flexibility and you don't have to pay for it."

Yet the ethanol boom has also brought the prospect of distortions that may not be as easy to resolve. The expansion of sugar production, for example, has come largely at the expense of pasture land, leading to worries that the grazing of cattle, another booming export product, could be shifted to the Amazon, encouraging greater deforestation.

Industry and government officials say such concerns are unwarranted. Sugar cane's expanding frontier is, they argue, an environmental plus, because it is putting largely abandoned or degraded pasture land back into production. And of course, ethanol burns far cleaner than fossil fuels.

Human rights and worker advocacy groups also complain that the boom has led to more hardships for the peasants who cut sugar cane.

"You used to have to cut 4 tons a day, but now they want 8 or 10, and if you can't make the quota, you'll be fired," said Silvio Donizetti Palvequeres, president of the farmworkers union in Ribeirão Preto, an important cane area north of here. "We have to work a lot harder than we did 10 years ago, and the working conditions continue to be tough."

Producers say that problem will be eliminated in the next decade by greater mechanization. A much more serious long-term worry, they say, is Brazil's lack of infrastructure, particularly its limited and poorly maintained highways.

Ethanol can be made through the fermentation of many natural substances, but sugar cane offers advantages over others, like corn. For each unit of energy expended to turn cane into ethanol, 8.3 times as much energy is created, compared with a maximum of 1.3 times for corn, according to scientists at the Center for Sugarcane Technology here and other Brazilian research institutes.

"There's no reason why we shouldn't be able to improve that ratio to 10 to 1," said Suani Teixeira Coelho, director of the National Center for Biomass at the University of São Paulo. "It's no miracle. Our energy balance is so favorable not just because we have high yields, but also because we don't use any fossil fuels to

process the cane, which is not the case with corn."

Brazilian producers estimate that they have an edge over gasoline as long as oil prices do not drop below \$30 a barrel. But they have already embarked on technical improvements that promise to lift yields and cut costs even more.

In the past, the residue left when cane stalks are compressed to squeeze out juice was discarded. Today, Brazilian sugar mills use that residue to generate the electricity to process cane into ethanol, and use other byproducts to fertilize the fields where cane is planted.

Some mills are now producing so much electricity that they sell their excess to the national grid. In addition, Brazilian scientists, with money from São Paulo State, have mapped the sugar cane genome. That opens the prospect of planting genetically modified sugar, if the government allows, that could be made into ethanol even more efficiently.

"There is so much biological potential yet to be developed, including varieties of cane that are resistant to pesticides and pests and even drought," said Tadeu Andrade, director of the Center for Sugarcane Technology. "We've already had several qualitative leaps without that, and we are convinced there is no ceiling on productivity, at least theoretically."

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 15 de setembro de 2006

Op-Ed Columnist

The Energy Harvest

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

Published: September 15, 2006

São Paulo, Brazil

Any time that OPEC got a little too overzealous in pushing up oil prices back in the 1970's, the legendary Saudi oil minister Sheik Ahmed Zaki Yamani was fond of telling his colleagues: Remember, the Stone Age didn't end because we ran out of stones.

What he meant was that the Stone Age ended because people invented alternative tools. The oil age is also not going to end because we run out of oil. It will end because the price of oil goes so high that people invent alternatives. Mr. Yamani was warning his colleagues not to get too greedy and stimulate those alternatives.

Too late — oil at \$70 a barrel has done just that. One of the most promising of those alternatives is ethanol, an alcohol fuel made from corn, sugar cane or any biomass. I came to Brazil to try to better grasp what is real and what is not in the ethanol story, because no country has done more to pioneer sugar ethanol than Brazil.

My impression, after talking to a range of Brazilian experts, is that not only is ethanol for real, but we have not even begun to tap its full potential. With just a few technological breakthroughs, Brazil really could be the Saudi Arabia of sugar and we could actually achieve that energy dream of getting "barrels from bushels."

Since the 1970's oil shocks, Brazil has, with lots of trial and error, made ethanol part of its daily life. It hits you the minute you drive into a gas station in São

Paulo, where you need two things: a credit card and a calculator. In rough numbers, sugar ethanol now sells here at a little over \$2 a gallon and gasoline at a little more than \$4 a gallon. Because sugar ethanol gets only about 70 percent of the mileage of gasoline, drivers here do the math each day and figure out if ethanol is at least 30 percent less than the price of gasoline. If it is, many will fill 'er up with sugar cane.

Brazilians have that luxury because there are 34,000 gas stations here that offer both gasoline and ethanol (compared with around 700 in the U.S.) and because 70 percent of new cars sold here can run on either gasoline or sugar ethanol. As a result, Brazil has replaced about 40 percent of its gasoline consumption with sugar ethanol.

I visited the Cosan sugar mill northwest of São Paulo, Brazil's largest, where you fly in over an ocean of green sugar cane. The cane is harvested onto big lorries and trucked to the Cosan distillery. There, the juice is extracted and converted to either crystal sugar or ethanol. The remaining cane waste — called bagasse — is used to fuel huge steam boilers that produce enough electricity to both power the refining process and leave a surplus to be sold back to the grid.

It's important to understand this process to appreciate just how "much more energy we could get from sugar cane" with just a few more breakthroughs, explained Plinio Mario Nastari, one of Brazil's top ethanol consultants.

Think of each stalk of sugar cane as containing three sources of energy. First, the juice extracted from the cane is already giving us ethanol and sugar. Second, the bagasse is already heating very low-technology, low-pressure boilers, giving us electricity. But if Brazil's refiners converted to new high-pressure boilers, you could get three times as much electricity.

Finally, when the cane is harvested the tops and leaves are often just left in the field. But this biomass is rich in cellulose, the carbohydrate that makes up the walls of plant cells. If the sugar locked away in cellulose also could be unlocked — cheaply and easily by a chemical process — this biomass could also produce tons of sugar ethanol. There is now a race on to find that process.

A breakthrough is expected within five years, and when that happens it will be possible to extract "more than double" the amount of ethanol from each sugar stalk, said José Luiz Oliverio, a senior V.P. at Dedini, the Brazilian industrial giant, which has a pilot cellulosic ethanol project.

I asked Brazilian experts what they'd do if they were the U.S. president. The consensus answer: Require U.S. oil companies to provide ethanol fuel pumps at all their gas stations, require U.S. auto companies to make all their new cars flex-fuel and improve mileage standards, and get rid of the crazy 54-cent tariff we've imposed on imported sugar ethanol (to protect our farmers). And then let the market work.

Demand for ethanol would soar. This would push us faster down the innovation curve, so we'd solve the cellulosic ethanol problem quicker, and that would strengthen the democrats in our hemisphere and weaken the petrocrats in the Middle East. If only we were as smart as Brazil ...

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 20 de setembro de 2006

Dumb as We Wanna Be

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

Published: September 20, 2006
 São Paulo, Brazil

I asked Dr. José Goldemberg, secretary for the environment for São Paulo State and a pioneer of Brazil's ethanol industry, the obvious question: Is the fact that the U.S. has imposed a 54-cents-a-gallon tariff to prevent Americans from importing sugar ethanol from Brazil "just stupid or really stupid."

Thanks to pressure from Midwest farmers and agribusinesses, who want to protect the U.S. corn ethanol industry from competition from Brazilian sugar ethanol, we have imposed a stiff tariff to keep it out. We do this even though Brazilian sugar ethanol provides eight times the energy of the fossil fuel used to make it, while American corn ethanol provides only 1.3 times the energy of the fossil fuel used to make it. We do this even though sugar ethanol reduces greenhouse gases more than corn ethanol. And we do this even though sugar cane ethanol can easily be grown in poor tropical countries in Africa or the Caribbean, and could actually help alleviate their poverty.

Yes, you read all this right. We tax imported sugar ethanol, which could finance our poor friends, but we don't tax imported crude oil, which definitely finances our rich enemies. We'd rather power anti-Americans with our energy purchases than promote antipoverty.

"It's really stupid," answered Dr. Goldemberg.

If I seem upset about this, I am. Development and environmental experts have long searched for environmentally sustainable ways to alleviate rural poverty — especially for people who live in places like Brazil, where there is a constant temptation to log the Amazon. Sure, ecotourism and rain forest soap are nice, but they never really scale. As a result, rural people in Brazil are always tempted to go back to logging or farming sensitive areas.

Ethanol from sugar cane could be a scalable, sustainable alternative — if we are smart and get rid of silly tariffs, and if Brazil is smart and starts thinking right now about how to expand its sugar cane biofuel industry without harming the environment.

The good news is that sugar cane doesn't require irrigation and can't grow in much of the Amazon, because it is too wet. So if the Brazilian sugar industry does realize its plan to grow from 15 million to 25 million acres over the next few years, it need not threaten the Amazon.

However, sugar cane farms are located mostly in south-central Brazil, around São Paulo, and along the northeast coast, on land that was carved out of drier areas of the Atlantic rain forest, which has more different species of plants and animals per acre than the Amazon. Less than 7 percent of the total Atlantic rain forest remains — thanks to sugar, coffee, orange plantations and cattle grazing.

I flew in a helicopter over the region near São Paulo, and what I saw was not pretty: mansions being carved from forested hillsides near the city, rivers that have silted because of logging right down to the banks, and wide swaths of forest that have been cleared and will never return.

"It makes you weep," said Gustavo Fonseca, my traveling companion, a Brazilian and the executive vice president of Conservation International. "What I see here is a totally human dominated system in which most of the biodiversity is gone."

As demand for sugar ethanol rises — and that is a good thing for Brazil and the developing world, said Fonseca, "we have to make sure that the expansion is done

in a planned way.”

Over the past five years, the Amazon has lost 7,700 square miles a year, most of it for cattle grazing, soybean farming and palm oil. A similar expansion for sugar ethanol could destroy the cerrado, the Brazilian savannah, another incredibly species-rich area, and the best place in Brazil to grow more sugar.

A proposal is floating around the Brazilian government for a major expansion of the sugar industry, far beyond even the industry’s plans. No wonder environmental activists are holding a conference in Germany this fall about the impact of biofuels. I could see some groups one day calling for an ethanol boycott — à la genetically modified foods — if they feel biofuels are raping the environment.

We have the tools to resolve these conflicts. We can map the lands that need protection for their biodiversity or the environmental benefits they provide rural communities. But sugar farmers, governments and environmentalists need to sit down early — like now — to identify those lands and commit the money needed to protect them. Otherwise, we will have a fight over every acre, and sugar ethanol will never realize its potential. That would be really, really stupid.

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 14 de outubro de 2007

36 Hours in São Paulo

By SETH KUGEL

Published: October 14, 2007

IT may be the ugliest, most dangerous city you'll ever love. Gray high-rises stretch to the horizon, graffiti blankets downtown, where those who can afford it drive bulletproof cars, and power lines form a wire mesh that seems to block out the sun. But São Paulo, Brazil's biggest and most modern city, also has plenty of flair. Sip caipirinhas at a glamorous bar surrounded by the city's upper crust, accessorized with \$10,000 Panerai watches on one arm and a fashion model on the other. Shop at obscenely luxurious stores like Daslu, a boutique so exclusive that customers often arrive by helicopter. Or sit in a cafe on Oscar Freire Street and watch the rich and the beautiful pass by.

Friday

3 p.m.

1) CULTURE PARK

Get downtown before rush hour and head to Luz, a once-drug-infested neighborhood that has been spruced up. Swing through the Estação da Luz (Praça da Luz, 1), a late-19th-century train station that has been beautifully renovated, before strolling through the Praça da Luz, a palm-lined garden where bands play sertanejo music (Brazilian country tunes) from a gazebo-like bandstand. Fanciful sculptures dot the lush grounds. Among them are the coconut-size beaded necklaces by the Brazilian artist Lygia Reinach that are draped across trees like moss. If you want more Brazilian art, head inside the Pinacoteca do Estado (Praça da Luz, 2; 55-11-3324-1000), a gorgeously restored museum that features some of the country's best artists.

6 p.m.

2) FOAMY BREW

The quality of a bar in São Paulo is measured in large part by its chopp (SHO-pee), the Brazilian-style draft beer. And the pouring process is as much an art for Brazilians as Guinness-pouring is to the Irish. The undisputed chopp masters can be found at Bar Léo (Rua Aurora, 100; 55-11-3221-0247; www.barleo.com.br), a German-themed joint in the city's gritty center. To test the barman's skills, ask for a leitinho (lay-CHEEN-yo), all head and no beer. It may sound crazy to the foam-phobic American beer guzzler, but the all-head beer is so creamy, you may just become a convert.

8 p.m.

3) CAETANO ATE HERE

Despite its beery name, Bar Brahma (Avenida São João, 677; 55-11-3333-0855; www.barbrahmasp.com) serves traditional Brazilian dishes like pastéis de carne seca (fried pastries filled with dried beef) and stroganoff served with rice and covered in potato sticks (entrees start at 20 reais, or \$11, at 1.86 reais to the dollar). Wash it down with chopp, while sampling some Música Popular Brasileira or MPB (literally, Brazilian Popular Music). Or sit outside on the terrace, which overlooks the intersection of Avenida Ipiranga and Avenida São João. As everyone will tell you, this is where Caetano Veloso's soulful song "Sampa" starts out. Legend has it that Caetano wrote the song from there.

Saturday

9 a.m.

4) 24-HOUR BREAD

If you missed the after-party feeding frenzy the night before, don't worry. Galeria dos Pães, or Bread Gallery (1645 Rua Estados Unidos; 55-11-3064-5900; www.galeriadospaes.com.br), a 24-hour food market, is still going strong at breakfast time. Pick up a chicken croquette at the snack bar or, better yet, graze the buffet breakfast (17.80 reais) in the mezzanine. Help yourself to fresh-squeezed orange juice, strong espresso with steamed milk, pastries, cheeses and cold cuts. Those last two may seem a bit like American lunch, but this is a traditional Brazilian breakfast.

10:30 a.m.

5) HOW THE 1 PERCENT LIVES

Income inequality is a fact of life in Brazil, and if you're coming from breakfast at the Galeria dos Pães, you can check on how the rich are doing by strolling through the upscale Jardim América neighborhood, ending up at the upscale but more businesslike Avenida Paulista, one of the city's more walkable thoroughfares. Stop into the Art Museum of São Paulo (Avenida Paulista, 1578; 55-11-3251-5644; www.masp.uol.com.br), known locally as MASP (MAHS-pee), a striking Brutalist-style building that is missing a ground floor. Four huge pillars lift the concrete-and-glass box off the ground.

2 p.m.

6) WIRELESS SHOPPING

Take a cab to ritzy Rua Oscar Freire, where Rodeo Drive meets Newbury Street in Boston, with cafes like Santo Grão (Oscar Freire, 413; 55-11-3082-9969) and

high-end shops like Calvin Klein and La Perla sharing pricey real estate with Brazilian brands like Cris Barros and Osklen, known for its cool surfwear (No. 645; 55-11-3083-7977; www.osklen.com). The whole street was renovated last year: the city put in benches and streetlights and, most remarkably, buried the power lines, providing a brief respite from the city's infernal wire-crossing madness. To a weary tourist, that's a luxury in and of itself.

8 p.m.

7)FOR FINE DINING

Picking a fine restaurant is like finding hay in a haystack. On weekends, affluent Paulistanos pack into Rodeio (Rua Haddock Lobo, 1498; 55-11-3474-1333; www.churrascariarodeio.com.br), a high-end steakhouse where picanha (top sirloin) is grilled before your eyes. Instead of letting your steak get cold, the graceful service doles out smaller, just-cooked portions. The show extends to the grilled heart of palms, which is sliced open before you, and the arroz rodeio, a crunchy rice dish made with potato sticks, chives, egg and tiny pieces of bacon that are tossed together like a salad. Dinner runs about 75 reais a person.

Midnight

8)SAMBA OFF THE CALORIES

You've done the gritty thing, you've done the elite thing, now take a taxi (25 to 30 reais) to Vila Madalena and do the bohemian thing. The neighborhood, where the main streets are bustling and walkable, is full of affordable, unassuming clubs with live music. If you're into samba (or want to learn what all the fuss is about), pop into Salve Simpatia (Rua Mourato Coelho, 1329; 55-11-3814-0501), which brings a bit of Rio's energy with feverish drums and playful sculptures. Paulistanos aren't known for their dance moves, but if you're still feeling shy, take your (chokingly strong) caipirinha (10 reais) to the balcony and watch from above. For a quieter scene, a guitar player strums and sings at the tiny Feitiço de Águila (Rua Inácio Pereira da Rocha, 618; 55-11-3813-8868; www.feiticodavila.com.br).

Sunday

9 a.m.

9)GET THEE TO A MONASTERY

Unlike the traffic nightmare during the week, downtown São Paulo can feel like a ghost town on weekends. One exception is São Bento (Largo de São Bento; 55-11-3328-8799; www.mosteiro.org.br), a stately monastery and church that draws huge crowds on Sundays. It's not so much a religious thing as a cultural event, with Gregorian chants accompanying the 10 a.m. Mass. Get there early if you plan to get a seat.

11 a.m.

10)AT THE MERCADÃO

Embrace the crowds at the city's grand old Paulistano Municipal Market (Rua da Cantareira, 306; 55-11-3228-0673; www.mercadomunicipal.com.br), more informally called the Mercadão. The 135,000-square-foot space is packed with fresh fish, ripe cheese and strange fruits (try jabuticaba, a purplish-black fruit that looks like a giant grape). The market is also famous for pastéis de bacalhau, fried pastry pockets stuffed with salt cod. One of the best can be found at Hocca Bar

(55-11-3227-6938; www.hoccabar.com.br), where the not-too-fishy, not-too-salty pastéis is 7.50 reais. Get one person to wait in line, while the rest of you stake out a table. When the food is this good, things in this city of 11 million can get a little crowded.

1 p.m.

11) A WALK IN THE PARK

Burn off those cod calories at Ibirapuera Park (Avenida Pedro Álvares Cabral; 55-11-5574-5177), a 400-acre oasis of green in a city of gray. Designed by Roberto Burle Marx, a celebrated Brazilian landscape architect, the park has jogging and bike trails, pick-up soccer games, children's playgrounds and plenty of nooks to explore. There are also buildings and museums to stroll, many designed by the architect Oscar Niemeyer. Worth checking out is the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo (55-11-5085-1300), a Modernist concrete box that houses a rich assortment of Brazilian artists and a sculpture garden.

Don't leave the park without trying a refreshing water coconut, sold by vendors everywhere.

The Basics

Several airlines fly between New York and São Paulo, including American, Delta, Continental, Japan Airlines and the Brazilian airline TAM. A recent online search found fares starting at \$890 for early November. Better deals can sometimes be found through BACC (800-222-2746; www.bacctravel.com), a New York City travel agency specializing in travel to Brazil.

At the top of the lodging heap is Unique (Avenida Brigadeiro Luís Antônio, 2700; 55-11-3055-4710; www.hotelunique.com.br), a chic hotel in the affluent Jardim Paulista district. The sleek rooms, which offer good views, start at \$430.

Fasano (Rua Vittorio Fasano, 88; 55-11-3896-4000; www.fasano.com.br), centrally located near the Avenida Paulista, opened in 2003 with 30s-style design. Rates start at \$440.

For a more affordable stay, try the Mercure Apartments Executive One (Rua Santa Justina, 210; 55-11-3089-6222; www.accorhotels.com.br) in the fashionable Itaim Bibi/Vila Olímpia neighborhood. Rooms start at \$73 on weekends.

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 25 de fevereiro de 2007

36 Hours in Rio de Janeiro

By SETH KUGEL

Published: February 25, 2007

So you missed Carnival in Rio de Janeiro last week. No worries. Many residents, known as Cariocas, missed it as well, fleeing the tourist onslaught for vacation homes and more intimate Carnivals around Brazil. But the party never stops. With the Pan-American Games coming in July, streets are being spruced up and the beaches swept. Clean public restrooms at Copacabana beach — who would have thought it? Good thing, too, since the city is glued to its sandy shoreline. When the sun fails to appear, Cariocas can become flustered and confused — sort

of like ants whose hill was just destroyed by an 8-year-old.

Friday

3 p.m.

1) MOUNTAIN CLIMBING

Throw anti-cliché caution to the wind and take the cog railway to the top of Corcovado (Rua Cosme Velho 513; 55-21-2558-1329; 36 Brazilian reais or about \$17 at 2.16 reais to the dollar). That is where the iconic statue of Christ the Redeemer presides over Rio. You can see the famous Sugarloaf Mountain, the island-pocked Guanabara Bay and the beaches outlining the coast like links of white sausages. Even better, you can make fun of the inevitable sightseer aping the statue's outstretched arms for a photo. "Turistas chatos" means "annoying tourists" in Portuguese, should that phrase come to mind.

7 p.m.

2) CAIPIRINHA LESSONS

The caipirinha, a cocktail of muddled lime, sugar, ice and the sugar cane liquor known as cachaça, has become a global bar standard. Try it on its home turf, at the Academia da Cachaça (Rua Conde Bernadotte 26; 55-21-2529-2680; www.academiadacachaca.com.br) in the upscale neighborhood of Leblon. You can choose among hundreds of artisanal brands, including Lua Cheia, a fruity, intense cachaça aged for two years (4.20 reais). After a couple of caipirinhas, you might want to turn to the place's Brazilian dinner menu; an escondidinho (16.80 reais), a traditional dish of dried beef served under cheesy mashed yuca, makes for a good appetizer if you cannot wait for dinner.

9 p.m.

3) DESIGNER SALADS

All-you-can-eat churrascarias, or steakhouses, are a dime a dozen, but lighter alternatives also appeal to the bikini-clad set, for obvious reasons. Doce Delícia (Rua Dias Ferreira 48; 55-21-2249-2970), a colorful and modern restaurant in Leblon (with another branch in Ipanema, at Rua Anibal de Mendonca 55) serves dishes like salmon in soy and ginger sauce (29.50 reais), design-your-own salads (15.50 reais with ingredients like palm hearts and papaya) and tempting desserts like a chocolate mousse cake (7 reais).

11 p.m.

4) A LOCAL DRAFT

You could head to one of Leblon's chic and expensive clubs, but save the party for tomorrow and try a more traditional Rio setting: the ultra-social, old-fashioned bars known as botequins, where locals young and old gather for conversation and drinks. The beverage of choice is the Brazilian style of draft beer known as chopp (SHOW-pee), and that usually means a Brahma Pilsener. For a bit more variety, head to Botequim Informal (Rua Humberto de Campos 646, Leblon; 55-21-2259-6967; and other locations) which serves darker chopp as well (3.80 reais).

Saturday

9 a.m.

5) JUICING UP

Juice stands are a way of life in Rio, and they offer a dizzying Portuguese menu of

fruits like caqui (persimmon) and graviola (soursop) for about 3 reais. You can't go wrong with tangerine juice and a grilled ham-and-cheese sandwich at Polis Sucos, a popular chain that has a stand in the middle of the Ipanema neighborhood (Rua Maria Quitéria 70A; Ipanema; 55-21-2247-2518). For a supposedly healthier, if more caloric start, order a shake made from açai (ah-sigh-EE), a high-energy purple palm fruit from the Amazon, often mixed with bananas and topped with granola (about 5 reais).

10:30 a.m.

6) A SAHARA STROLL

Rio is more than just its beautiful coastline. Explore its less touristy center, in the pedestrian-friendly shopping area known as Saara (Portuguese for Sahara), named in part for its Lebanese shops. This is where working-class Cariocas shop for everyday items like bargain clothes and patriotic green-and-yellow party streamers. The people-watching is great, but so is the mannequin-watching: the Brazilian ideal of beauty is reflected in the generously proportioned backsides. Off-beat souvenirs abound, like a Rio public school T-shirt (about 4 reais) at Paraíso das Crianças (Rua de Alfândega 364; 55-21-2242-6577). There are also several churches in the area, including the São Jorge Church (Rua de Alfândega 382) with its odd display of wax body parts.

1 p.m.

7) ANTI-RIO RIO

Climb up most hills in Rio and you end up in a favela, one of the city's squatter slums notorious for poverty and violence. Santa Teresa is the picturesque exception, a hilltop neighborhood that is considered Rio's artsy anti-beach. Arrive on an ancient tram called a bonde and stroll its twisting streets, filled with great little restaurants and unusual gift shops like La Vereda (Rua Almirante Alexandrino 428; 55-21-2507-0317). Instead of the typical yellow soccer shirts and Havaiana flip-flops, in this shop you'll find paintings by local artists (100 to 1,200 reais), soapstone carvings from Minas Gerais, and cardboard models of favelas.

4 p.m.

8) OLD BOOKS, MODERNIST HOME

With its charming garden and three floors filled with art and furniture, the Chácara do Céu Museum (Rua Murinho Nobre 93; 55-21-2507-1932, www.museuscstromaya.com.br/chacara.htm.) feels like someone's house. And, in fact, it is. The name means Country House in the Sky, and the building, a Modernist structure, is the former home of the French-born industrialist Raymundo Ottoni de Castro Maya, who was an avid collector of Brazilian, European and Asian art. Equally fascinating is his impressive library of old Portuguese and French titles. Admission is 2 reais.

7 p.m.

9) TASTE THE AMAZON

Amazonian cuisine is a mystery, even to most Brazilians, so the appearance of a romantic hilltop spot like Espírito Santa in Santa Teresa (Rua Almirante Alexandrino 264; 55-21-2508-7095; www.espiritosanta.com.br), which opened two years ago, has exposed the locals to new flavors. They are found in dishes like

piranha soup, steamed tambaqui (an Amazonian fish) and tacacá, a soupy stew made with mandioca root, shrimp and a dark green leaf known as jambu, which causes a slight numbing sensation in the mouth. Dinner is about 40 reais.

11 p.m.

10) DANCE TO THE MUSIC

Dancing the night away in Rio can be done in many settings, from the chic and pricey clubs of Leblon to the sweaty open-air dance floors in São Cristóvão, a neighborhood in northern Rio. But if you're looking for traditional Brazilian rhythms, head to the nightclub-filled district of Lapa, a seedy but pleasant area with dollar beers and friendly crowds. For a mellower atmosphere among the clubs there, try a spot like Sacrilégio (Avenida Mem de Sá 81; 55-21-3970-1461, cover 18 reais) where an easy-going crowd dances to live Brazilian music.

Sunday

10 a.m.

11) THE U.F.O. ACROSS THE BAY

Get up early and take a 20-minute ferry ride across Guanabara Bay to the Niterói Museum of Contemporary Art, also known as the MAC (Mirante de Boa Viagem; 55-21-2620-2400; www.macniteroi.com.br; 4 reais), designed by the Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer. It resembles a flying saucer, and offers excellent views of the bay and Rio. On exhibition through March 17 is "Greek Gods in Contemporary Temples," with sculptures on loan from the Pergamon Museum in Berlin; contemporary works from the collection of João Sattamini; and statues of orixás (Yoruba spirits) from the Casa do Pontal Museum in Rio. Barcas S/A runs the ferries every 30 minutes on weekends, leaving from the downtown Praça XV de Novembro (55-21-4004-3113; 2.10 reais).

1 p.m.

12) PALMS AND CIRCUMSTANCE

In Rio, your station in life is pretty much defined by which beach you go to for a suntan. Unless you're looking for young prostitutes and their balding admirers, skip Copacabana Beach. Instead, go to Ipanema Beach, its equally famous neighbor one cove over. The beach is delineated by lifeguard stations, or postos, and anywhere near Posto 9 makes for good beautiful-people-watching. Settle into a rented beach chair, buy a bag of the crunchy snacks called Biscoitos Globo, and catch a bit of the amazing hybrid of soccer and volleyball known as futevolei.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Flights to Rio from the New York area require a layover in Miami or São Paulo; they start about \$980 on American Airlines from Kennedy Airport. Cheaper flights, some on the Brazilian airline TAM can sometimes be found through BACC Travel in New York (800-222-2746). A taxi from Antonio Carlos Jobim International Airport to Ipanema is about 60 reais, about \$27 at 2.16 reais to the dollar.

If you want to stay near the beach, Ipanema is cleaner and safer bet over Copacabana. On the higher end is the Caesar Park Hotel (Avenida Vieira Souto 460; 55-21-2525-2525; www.caesarpark.com.br), a 222-room hotel centrally situated on the beach. Rooms from \$285 (it prices in U.S. dollars) a night.

On the lower end is Casa 6 (Rua Barão de Torre 175; 55-21-2247-1384;

www.casa6ipanema.com), a small and clean hostel with several private rooms, with shared (120 reais for two) or private baths (150 reais). It's on a charming street with other hostels and boarding houses, and an easy walk to the beach. To blend in with the locals, try Cama e Café (literally bed-and-breakfast), a booking service that matches travelers with hosts in the historic Santa Teresa neighborhood (from 95 to 190 reais; 55-21-2224-5689; www.camaecafe.com.br).

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 26 de março de 2006

NEXT STOP

In Brazil, an Exotic Buffet for the Adventurous Set

By SETH KUGEL

Published: March 26, 2006

YOU could call Manaus the anti-Rome. No roads lead to this Amazonian capital, unless you happen to be coming into Brazil from southern Venezuela. The only impressive buildings were built practically in a day, during the short-lived rubber boom of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. And pizza? Sure, they have it, but topped with tropical fruits like tucumã or cupuaçu and served with packets of mayonnaise.

A city of about a million and a half, perched on the Rio Negro some six miles upstream from where it joins the Amazon, Manaus is not so much a tourist destination as a way station for adventurers who fly in for rain forest treks or pass through on a boat trip downriver to Belém.

While much of it is grimy and virtually shuts down on Sunday, Manaus is a fascinating port city, buzzing with activity six days a week. Flat-screen TV's may be manufactured in a free trade zone nearby and fleets of modern taxis may arrive by boat, but the lack of a road to Bahia or Brasília or São Paulo still gives Manaus a quirky sense of bustling isolation. People here often have striking indigenous faces rather than the blond to bronze to black spectrum of many Brazilian cities.

And there is plenty to do, especially with your taste buds. Visitors can feast on the often-surprising cuisine from Amazônia (a region of nine states, including Amazonas, of which Manaus is the capital), from fresh fish with tongue twister names, to fruits so exotic they make guava seem humdrum.

Between meals, and especially before breakfast, the teeming downtown port and markets buzz with activity, equally fascinating for microeconomics professors and lovers of cheap pineapples. And in April or May, visitors can end the day with opera. Really.

A good way to build up an appetite is to spend an early morning down at the docks. No need to join a longshoreman's union, just bound down the rickety wooden steps to the countless romantically rustic, brightly colored riverboats docked along the piers. Merchandise streams in every direction: banana bunches hanging from workers' shoulders, boxes of pineapples or of two-liter bottles of soda balanced on their heads.

Many of those boats also carry Amazonians up and down the river (sleeping in hammocks on longer trips), so the docks also serve as the central bus depot. The port is where boats start excursions to the Meeting of the Waters, where the dark Rio Negro meets the sandy-colored Rio Solimões (what Brazilians call the upper

Amazon).

What makes the confluence so special is that the rivers don't immediately take to each other, flirting and nipping at each other's waters, forming patterns reminiscent of a layered cocktail or elementary-school science experiment. Trips run by Manaus's many tour operators stop there as part of a daylong trip down the river (which costs about 100 reais a person, around \$48 at 2.18 reais to the dollar), but you can also hire a boat at the port to take you just to the meeting of the waters and back in a few hours.

Much of the merchandise coming off the boats is headed to the covered markets nearby. Merchants there sell everything from medicinal roots to apples brought in from São Paulo to Manaus T-shirts. The exterior of the Mercado Central, built during the rubber boom, verges on the glamorous, modeled after Les Halles. Inside, however, it is all Brazilian, including a fish market where workers filet massive pirarucu, and chop the ugly croaking bodó fish in half.

Much of what you see at this and other nearby markets — including a prodigious variety of local fish and fruit — will make it to your plate later in the day. The fruit varieties that are nearly omnipresent in Manaus are nearly absent in the United States. Brazilophiles will be familiar with açai (pronounced ah-sah-EE), the berry of a local palm that has gained a reputation for being a big energy booster and antioxidant source.

Even in Manaus, it's difficult to find this dark blue berry in its original form; you're more likely to encounter it in a slightly gritty shake and sometimes blended with banana and topped with granola. The flavor is difficult to describe. Apple, grape and blueberry with a hint of chocolate? Raspberry-pear with a touch of mud?

You can get it anywhere, but it's a specialty at Açai e Companhia, a pleasant, upscale (for Manaus) restaurant in the wealthy Vieiralves section of the town, a short taxi ride from the city, where the dining area has a straw roof and bamboo walls. The açai there is unsweetened, compared with the version at sandwich bars in Rio de Janeiro.

Aside from açai, there is cupuaçu, a white fruit with skin like a kiwi's. In sweets shops like Confeitaria Alemã, downtown at Rua Jose Paranaguá, 126, you'll find cupuaçu in cakes, flans and a great torte that also has doce de leite — caramel. Guaraná, somewhat known in America as a powder or syrup in energy shakes, is also everywhere, as is the rusty orange, refreshing suco de taperebá, which a few might know as yellow mombin juice.

If fruit isn't your thing, there is always fish. Minimalist fish lovers will be in heaven: seafood is everywhere, fresh and simply prepared. The species are as fun to pronounce as they are to eat: tambaqui, tucunaré, jaraqui, pacu and the enormous pirarucu, fresh or dried and salted like codfish. Restaurants, even the best ones, are hardly fancy, like the Canto da Peixada, in the center of town, where the menu mixes and matches kinds of fish, cuts of fish and the ways it can be cooked: grilled, fried, in shrimp sauce, etc.

FOR all its bustling commerce, Manaus is probably most famous for its startling salmon-colored opera house, so out of place amid streets of functional, grime-covered buildings that it might as well be an igloo. The Teatro Amazonas was completed in 1896, when Manaus was the world's ultraproperous rubber capital and could afford to import the best architects from Europe.

Teatro Amazonas actually merits two visits, first for the tour of its glorious interior, where English-speaking guides point out that painted into the domed

ceiling is a trompe l'oeil view from under the Eiffel Tower, and have visitors put on cartoonishly huge slippers to step onto the ballroom floor of rare woods like jacarandá.

Even outside of opera season, nighttime performances beckon visitors back for plays, a film festival, even the Amazonas Jazz Band. There are also free evening concerts on the adjoining cafe-lined plaza. This year's Amazonas Opera Festival, the 10th annual, runs from April 23 to May 30, and includes performances of both Verdi's and Rossini's versions of "Otello," performed by separate Brazilian and international casts.

Entertainment of a less formal kind can be found near the beach. Though it has no ocean, Manaus's residents love the beach. Luckily, they happen to have a nice one out at Ponta Negra, about eight miles upriver in the cleaner, slightly sterile part of town that also houses the Tropical, Manaus's most upscale hotel. Though the width of the beach varies greatly through the year, the nearby open-air restaurants and cafes like Laranjinha always have live entertainment ranging from an awful Michael Jackson impersonator to samples of a regional music and dance style known as *boi-bumbá*.

Truly motivated visitors can also dive into Manaus's youthful and spirited — if inelegant — night life. Top Brazilian artists often play at the Sambódromo, the cutely named concert stadium, but the real scene is at enormous dance spots outside the city center, mostly outdoors, that play Brazilian rhythms for big crowds; several are "balnearios," sort of like populist country clubs, where for a few reais you can go swimming during the day and attend a packed dance concert and drink caipirinhas late into the night.

Most tourists, however, will be content to go to bed early, since the real action in the city goes on around dawn, to the rhythm of the market and the taste of yellow mombin juice.

If You Go

GETTING THERE, GETTING AROUND

Most flights to Manaus from the United States connect in São Paulo. Flights for late April start at around \$1,050. Travelers making at least four flights within Brazil should consider asking their carrier at booking for a heavily discounted Brazil Air Pass for domestic travel, starting around \$479 for four flights.

The port, the center and the Teatro Amazonas area are within walking distance of one another, but beyond that, Manaus's expensive but plentiful taxis are the way to go.

WHERE TO STAY

The country and area telephone codes for Manaus are 55-92.

Good hotels are scarce, but to stay in the city center not far from the port, your best bet is the Best Western Lord Manaus, Rua Marcílio Dias, 217; phone 3622-7700. Doubles start at 127 reais a night, about \$60 at 2.18 reais to the dollar.

The top hotel is the 594-room Tropical, but it is far from the center, on the Estrada da Ponta Negra, 2123-5000; www.tropicalhotel.com.br. From about 260 reais.

WHERE TO EAT

Canto da Peixada, considered by some the best fish restaurant in the city, is a pleasingly simple place with entrees from 10 to 23 reais. It is at Rua Emílio Moreira, 1677, in Praça 14 de Janeiro; 3234-3021.

Galo Carijó is another fish restaurant near the port, with dishes around 20 reais; Rua dos Andradas, 536; 3233-0044.

Açaí e Companhia, with everything from açaí to fish to duck, is upscale by Manaus standards; Rua Acre, 98, in the Vieiralves section; 3635-3637. Expect to pay about 70 reais for dinner with a drink.

A good spot for tacacá, the shrimp soup (5 reais), is the stand at Praça da Polícia near Avenida Getulio Vargas and Avenida 7 de Setembro; you can find inexpensive pastries at Confeitaria Alemã, Rua José Paranaguá, 126; 3215-2254.

At the self-service Glacial ice cream shop at Rua Henrique Martins, 585, 3233-6767, you can try as much of the tropical-flavored ice cream as you can fit into a bowl for 14.50 reais a kilogram (2.2 pounds).

THE OPERA

The 10th Amazonas Opera Festival runs April 23 through May 30, and includes Verdi's "Otello," Rossini's "Otello," Almicare Ponchielli's "Gioconda" and the Brazilian composer Antônio Carlos Gomes's "Fosca." Seats are 5 to 50 reais. The Teatro Amazonas is on Rua Eduardo Ribeiro; 3622-2420.

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 6 de novembro de 2006

NEXT STOP

In Lapa, Rio de Janeiro, the Samba Never Stopped

By IRIN CARMON

Published: November 26, 2006

IN the whitewashed bohemian outpost of Santa Teresa, far from the Rio de Janeiro of tourist mythology, the beach hedonism of Zona Sul neighborhoods like Ipanema and Copacabana seems almost irrelevant. Here, local artists have claimed 19th-century hilltop villas that are sandwiched between squatter slums and offer stunning views of the coast.

At lunch in unpretentious Bar do Mineiro, a grizzled artist offered advice on how to spend an evening out in Rio. "There is no soul in the Zona Sul," he said. "If you are going out, you must only go to Lapa."

He was talking about Santa Teresa's neighbor, which shares the same historic architecture and still-dubious reputation as Santa Teresa. The two are linked by the bonde, a precarious but unforgettable tram that passes over Lapa's aqueduct, and by the stairs connecting the Convento de Santa Teresa to Rua Joaquim Silva in Lapa.

Lapa offers an alternative to the slick, soulless clubs of the Zona Sul (or South Zone), whose anxiousness to convey international-style exclusivity cannot allay the nagging feeling that Rio's real action lies elsewhere. Revitalization has begun to take place farther afield, in places like Lapa, the scene of a rebirth of samba, where spontaneity and history commingle.

"The moment we're living in will be remembered as a historical one in the history of Rio samba, and a great part of that is because of Lapa," the samba musician and singer Nilze Carvalho, 37, told me.

The exodus of middle-class night life — even concerts and bars — to glittering shopping malls in Rio probably reflects security concerns as much as it does

creeping Americanization. But for the traveler, this isn't just boring, it's depressing.

Luckily, not all Cariocas, as residents of Rio are called, are into fortress socializing. Considering the options, Cristiano Nogueira, the 31-year-old author of the guidebook "Rio for Partiers," said: "I want the fear. I want the drama. I want the sweat."

Lapa offers all three in spades. Getting to Lapa — 20 minutes and a 25-reais cab ride (about \$12 at 2.2 reais to the U.S. dollar) from the Zona Sul — can seem like a trek, but if it were any closer to shore, it would doubtless be spoiled, as Copacabana has long been, beset by overexposure, seediness and Disney-like garishness. As it is, Lapa's charm exists in the gentle mildewing of its colonial-era architecture, in its sense of unfolding transformation.

At the neighborhood's heart is the Arcos da Lapa aqueduct, which, despite having been built in 1723 by slaves, is curiously modernist in its starkness. At night, it is surrounded by blithe, raucous activity. On one side of the aqueduct, fans line up for the sweeping tents of Circo Voador, a semi-outdoor music club; on the other, the square is jammed with revelers and vendors selling bottles of Skol beer. Cobblestones and sidewalks receive the scuttle and strut of impromptu samba. Gaggles of musicians swing cavaquinhos, the diminutive guitars that give samba music its characteristic tink, sidling up to drinkers slumped in plastic chairs in the street.

In the early decades of the 20th century, Lapa was a rowdy neighborhood of ill repute, of the best sort. Known as the Montmartre of South America, its streets were studded with cabarets, brothels and casinos, until the dictator Getulio Vargas put his foot down in the 1940s.

That era lives on in two narratives: that of the malandro, the shiftless but debonair seducer immortalized in a pop opera by a Rio native son, Chico Buarque, and the tempestuous black bisexual drag queen Madame Satã, subject of an eponymous 2002 movie. (The gender-bending legacy is now carried by the transvestites lining Lapa's streets, their outfits only a few degrees skimpier than the average nonprofessional Carioca.) In "Madame Satã," Lapa is more than a backdrop — it is a character in a drama of marginality, the apotheosis of feverish creativity and full-throttle pageantry.

Before rebirth came decay. The new cult of beachgoing moved Rio's center of action to the shore, and in 1960, when Rio lost its crown as the nation's capital to Brasília, deterioration in Lapa and the surrounding area accelerated. Marco Araújo, 40, the manager of the pioneering samba house Carioca da Gema, put it bluntly: "Lapa was dead, but musicians from Rio still remembered it as their symbol of samba."

Later, samba, commonly recognized as the Brazilian national art, also fell out of vogue, said Mr. Araújo. "Young people preferred to go to clubs and discos," he said. "But when they came here to Lapa, they rediscovered the samba that was their childhood."

He compared it to the resurgent popularity of cachaça, the potent sugar cane liquor that provides the national cocktail, the caipirinha, with its kick. "Cachaça and samba walk together on the same road," he said.

The past five years have brought increased gentrification, but Lapa's grungier corners and poor lighting initially gave some pause. "At first, when we opened this place, people were scared to come," said Elma Cola, an owner of Rio Scenarium, one of the most successful samba houses to shake up the

neighborhood. It only takes one look down the atrium balcony, with its three-floor view of revelers of all ages, to see that people have changed their minds.

Lively yet genteel, this sprawling spot is as accessible to older couples watching the performances from tables as it is to bright young things alternating between samba and international-pop dance floors.

The slightly overproduced, museum-meets-boudoir décor is no accident; by day, antiques stores and an outdoor fair help drive Lapa's recovery.

"The crime isn't so bad in Lapa," said the Brazilian director Domingos de Oliveira, 69. He was about to take to one of the Rio Scenarium stages, once home to a cabaret in Lapa's first heyday, to preside over his own samba-infused cabaret. "The drug traffickers have sympathy for the place," he said, chuckling.

A neighborhood improvement association dominated by business owners like Plínio Fróes, another Rio Scenarium owner, has been named Novo Rio Antigo (New Antique Rio), a nod to history. Nelson Porto, a 27-year-old designer who cofounded the Web site www.lanalapa.com.br, which focuses on Lapa's night life and cultural offerings, pointed out that Lapa was one of the few neighborhoods in Rio where the original pre-20th-century architecture survives. He cringed at the mention of the modernist towers of the Zona Sul, testaments to a midcentury building boom that now seems dated and tacky.

Many musicians who have enjoyed a sudden growth in audience and venues appreciate the difference. Ms. Carvalho said, "Playing the songs written by the old composers alongside our own songs, in the buildings with the original architecture, even people who don't know samba can feel the connection."

"This is where the emotions are happening," Mr. Porto said. "People work or live there, and they come here to have fun."

That kind of natural joy is on display at Clube dos Democráticos, an old ballroom with fading touches of grandeur and a spirit that is very much flourishing.

Its Wednesday night forró party is doubtless one of Lapa's most popular events. The rustic accordion-driven genre originating in Brazil's northeast may seem a tad folksy for a city hooked on glamour, but the Cariocas transforming the classy dance hall into a sweaty pit seize on its sensuality.

Languid and tanned, they begin dancing even while waiting in line, shimmying up the grand staircase, and clasping each other the moment they step onto the tiled floor.

"It can scare the upper class that Lapa is a totally democratic place that brings together a mix of classes," said Mr. Porto. Mr. Fróes cited a study commissioned by Novo Rio Antigo that found a tremendous socioeconomic diversity in Lapa's nighttime population. Upscale institutions like the air-conditioned, loftlike Estrela da Lapa may charge a cover that ensures a more moneyed crowd, but Lapa's energy crackles in the streets as much as within walls.

There are the spontaneous street parties near the Arcos, the crush of bodies hypnotized by the music. There are the circles of listeners from all walks of life, gustily singing along with every word, so engrossed that they barely notice the still rare but increasing presence of foreigners. Self-consciousness is irrelevant. In this moment, these streets welcome all.

VISITOR INFORMATION

GETTING THERE

Flights from New York to Rio begin at about \$990. Flights from Los Angeles

begin at about \$900.

HOTELS

Accommodations are scarce in Lapa. Your best bet is to stay on the more established beach-side strip of the Zona Sul, or South Zone, where visitors from the United States are often charged in dollars.

The Copacabana Palace (Avenida Atlântica 1702, Copacabana Beach; 55-21-2548-7070; www.copacabanapalace.com.br) is the grand stalwart, though its surroundings have not maintained their glamour. Doubles are from around \$370.

The Caesar Park Hotel (Avenida Vieira Souto 460, Ipanema Beach; 55-21-2525-2525; www.caesarpark-rio.com), in the prime people-watching spot, is a more updated, business-class hotel. Doubles are around \$300.

The Hotel Marina All Suites in Leblon (Avenida Delfim Moreira 696, Leblon Beach; 55-21-2172-1001; www.marinaallsuites.com.br) is the closest Rio gets to a boutique design hotel, with standard doubles going for 753 reais (about \$340 at 2.2 reais to the U.S. dollar.)

SAMBA

Carioca da Gema (79 Avenida Mem de Sá; 55-21-2221-0043, www.barcariocadagama.com.br) lays claim to being one of the first casas do samba to return to Lapa. A slightly older crowd isn't shy about thronging the air-conditioned dance floor. Entrance ranges from 14 to 16 reais. Closed on Sundays.

Mangue Seco (23 Rua do Lavradio; 55-21-3852-1947) milks nostalgia with a retro décor and an impressive cachaça collection. No charge Mondays and Tuesdays; other days 10 to 12 reais; closed Sundays.

Rio Scenarium (20 Rua do Lavradio; 55-21-3147-9005; www.rioscenarium.com.br) is big, glitzy and accessible, with an antiques-laden room for every proclivity. Entrance is 15 reais on weekdays, 25 on weekends; closed Sundays and Mondays.

Clube dos Democráticos (91 Rua do Riachuelo; 55-21-2252-4611). With a cameo in the film "Madame Satã," this circa-1867 ballroom embodies Lapa's marriage of historical setting and youthful vitality. Open Wednesdays through Sundays; 8 to 12 reais.

Estrela da Lapa (69 Avenida Mem de Sá; 55-21-2507-6686; www.estreladalapa.com.br) is large and glossy, without being anonymous or excessively chic. Closed Sundays and Mondays; 15 to 25 reais.

Centro Cultural Carioca (237 Rua Sete de Setembro; 55-21-2252-6468; www.centroculturalcarioca.com.br). The floor-to-ceiling windows that typify Lapa here offer a view of a plaza with stunning Portuguese-style architecture; the stage is 100 percent Brazilian. Usually around 15 reais; closed Sundays.

Jornal The New York Times – New York, 28 de outubro de 2007

A Town Where All the World Is a Bar

By SETH KUGEL

Published: October 28, 2007

BELO HORIZONTE, in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, has managed to

become the country's third-largest city while remaining almost completely unknown to the outside world. If tourists — more drawn to the sybaritic pleasures of Rio de Janeiro or the urban clamor of São Paulo — know it at all, it is because they may pass through it on their way to Ouro Preto and Diamantina, treating it as a little more than a refueling stop as they head toward those picturesque colonial-era mining towns.

Its international anonymity was born of no coastline and thus no beaches, no famous Carnival and thus no February madness, and no big attractions save a few buildings designed by Oscar Niemeyer that pale next to his famous works in Brasília.

But Beagá, the city's nickname (from the pronunciation of its initials in Portuguese), does have a claim to fame: as the bar capital of Brazil. Not bars as in slick hotel lounges or boozy meat markets, but bars as in botecos, informal sit-down spots where multiple generations socialize, drink beer and often have an informal meal. If you believe the local bluster, there are 12,000 bars in the city, more per capita than anywhere else in the country. Why, no one is completely sure, but one theory has turned into a popular saying: “Não tem mares, tem bares.” Loosely: “There are no seas, thus there are bars.”

And though tourist guidebooks barely make mention of them, they make for a great way for travelers to dive into the social life of a city whose metropolitan area has exploded in recent decades to over five million inhabitants. The best time to come is for the eighth annual Comida di Buteco competition in April, when some 40 of the top bars square off in categories like hygiene, beer frugidity, service and most importantly, best tira-gosto — or appetizer. Winners are decided not just by judges but by public ballot, giving Belo-Horizontinos a flimsy excuse to go out every night for a month.

If you miss it, don't worry. Every night of the year seems to have something of a party feel in this off-the-radar screen hot spot. Get your feet wet at Mercearia Lili (Rua São João Evangelista, 696, Santo Antônio, 55-31-3296-1951), a regular participant in Comida di Buteco. It is one bar of many in Santo Antônio, an upscale neighborhood of steep hills that require superhuman parallel parking skills or, preferably, use of the city's metered taxis.

The bar is typical in many ways, not least of which is the furniture: yellow plastic tables and chairs, with the maroon Skol beer logo, spilling out onto the sidewalk (600-milliliter bottles of the Pilsener Skol, to be shared in small glasses, are the citywide order of choice). The buzz of conversation and the clink of bottles — not a D.J. — provide the soundtrack; grey hair and what in the United States would be underage youth share the tables.

Not far away is Via Cristina (Rua Cristina, 1203, Santo Antônio, 55-31-3296-8343). It's more upscale with tables covered in green and white checkerboard tablecloths, uniformed waiters and a wall of cachaça — hundreds of different bottles of the sugar cane liquor — that the bartenders use a library-style bookshelf ladder to reach. Their entry in this year's contest was the Raulzito, a fritter-like pastry filled with dried beef that can be had for two reais (about \$1.10 at 1.84 reais to the dollar)

If there were a Comida di Buteco award for “Hardest to Get To,” the Freud Bar (no address, Nova Lima, 55-31-8833-9098, freudbar.com for map) would win every year. The place is plunked down in the middle of some woods outside the city, down a winding unpaved road. The bar is built into a hill, warmed by a bonfire, and has a few tables actually in the surrounding trees. It has live music

(blues and rock), and serves a limited but creative menu, like mulled wine, or a cup of squash, mozzarella and chicken soup (3.50 reais), a nice break from the bean and pork rind soup that is available at just about every boteco.

Botecos are not just nighttime affairs, as you'll find if you head to the city's Central Market on a weekend afternoon. Sure, there are stands selling fruit, meat, the state's famous cheese, live dogs and birds (as pets), and live hens (as dinner). But the market is also full of uproarious, packed bars like Lumapa, where authorities must chain off a chokingly slender pedestrian walkway so the non-beer-drinking shoppers can get by. A calmer choice is Casa Cheia (Central Market, store 167, Centro, 55-31-3274-9585) a sit-down place serving all its past Comida di Buteco creations, like the Mexidoido chapado, a mishmash of rice, vegetables, four kinds of meat, and quail eggs.

It is also worth heading to the more far-flung neighborhoods to see some of the quirkiest takes on the bar theme. (With 11,999 competitors, you do what you can to stand out.) The ultra-informal Bar do Caixote (Rua Nogueira da Gama, 189, João Pinheiro, 55-31-3376-3010) literally means "Bar of the Crate," and sure enough, the tables and chairs are wooden crates. The overall winner of the 2007 Comida de Buteco, Bar do Véio, or "Bar of the Old Guy" (Rua Itaguaí, 406, Caiçara, 55-31-3415-8455) is in an outer neighborhood and your cab driver may have trouble finding it, but anyone in the area can direct you. Their simple dish of chunks of pork and tiny golden-fried balls of potato served with a standout pineapple and mint sauce was the 2007 tira-gosto winner.

When you need a bar break, take an afternoon trip to the Pampulha neighborhood, where several Niemeyer buildings stand, including his famous Church of São Francisco de Assis. The neighborhood also houses Belo Horizonte's most famous restaurant, Xapuri (Rua Mandacaru, 260, Pampulha, 55-31-3496-6198), the best place in town to try the traditionally rustic cuisine of Minas Gerais. And Sunday morning, you can find unusual gifts at the Hippie Fair (a.k.a. the Feira de Arte e Artensanato da Afonso Pena), two long blocks on Avenida Alfonso Pena crammed with clothing, jewelry, household goods and crafts. When you're done, stop at food stalls at either end for fried fish or coconut sweets, or pop into the beautifully landscaped Municipal Park just below the fair to relax. In either place, you won't be far from a vendor ready to crack you open a can of Skol. In Belo Horizonte, the world's a bar.

VISITOR INFORMATION

HOW TO GET THERE

Flights from New York to Belo Horizonte usually require a stop in São Paulo. A recent Web search showed round-trip fares on TAM Brazilian Airlines starting at about \$1,100 for travel in November.

WHERE TO STAY

The Mercure Belo Horizonte Lourdes (Avenida do Contorno, 7315, 55-31-3298-4100; www.mercure.com), part of a dependable chain, is modern and there's always a taxi waiting out front for you. Double rooms start at 174 reais on weekends and 245 reais during the week (\$95 and \$133 at 1.84 reais to the U.S. dollar).

PORTUGUESE BAR PRIMER

Cerveja (sare-VAY-zha): beer; Garrafa (ga-HAHF-ah): bottle; Chopp (SHO-pee): draft beer; Mais uma!: I'll have another!; Desce mais uma rodada: One more round; Saideira (sah-ee-DARE-a): One last round.