

## Church of the Storms

What classes as the ultimate holiday? Sitting in a soggy tent on Aconcagua, waiting for El Nino to blow you down to Tierra del Fuego. Or dosing down in a three Michelin Star gaff for a significant birthday? An expedition to Machu Pichu or romantic getaway to Venice. What is the form; because I've probably broken all the rules with holidays. Not for me the package tour or a trip to saccharine Disneyworld. (Full disclosure; I have been dragged on both – kicking and screaming) – I would much rather take a path least travelled.

I have a list in a journal with all the trips I've ever taken. It makes quite a read. Traveling throughout the UK with my family and all the Scout camps I went on. They started small then built through week long summer camps, up to full blown expeditions where jumping crevasses, skinny-dipping in volcanic pools, and missing U2 at Concha-Y-Toro by five minutes were the name of the game. Check out the vineyard's visitor book. One-page U-Dos, all Edge and Bono - next page U-Quatro -me and my three amigos in crime. We went on to try all thirty-two wines they produced missed the bus and got a lift back to Santiago with all the grape-pickers with whom we watched England verses Chile at Wembley. We managed to convince them all that we'd mistakenly come all the way to Santiago to watch the match.

I still use the U-Quatro moniker; it surfaces in every visitor book I annotate; especially the one at St Winwalloe's. The church of Church Cove. That is where I'd love to be right now. Playing football or cricket on the beach, flying kites, sandcastles of course, and damming the stream that flows diagonally across the sands. We would then search for long lost golden dollars from wrecked Spanish Armada Galleons and scoff coffee and bacon butties; brewed up on an old primus stove. I could then sneak off for my private moment in the church. It is the most tranquil refuge. Outside the 'Church of the Storms', sou-westerlies can howl and the seas can crash but under the upturned ships hulls that form the ceiling, I feel safe, enlightened almost reborn. I'll light a candle for the morning after and write in the visitors' book. We've grown now to become U-Cinco and we are always on one tour or another. These are religiously recorded in the book. I should get t-shirts made up; the beef wellington tour, the eat more chips tour, the margarita tour, I could go on.

As I leave the church, I offer a silent prayer to be able to return soon to my muse; I kissed the statue of Magellan's toe in Punta Arenas once – a guarantee to return, but I'm not sure if that one will ever happen.

I don't ask for much. Buckets, spades and windbreak to protect sand strewn picnic blankets, whatever the weather. Oh, and maybe a cheeky pint of Doom Bar or Proper Job in the Halzepron or the New Inn on the way home.

