

Our neighborhood

Punta Carretas or Punta Brava is a neighborhood in Montevideo whose name refers to the most prominent and dangerous rock spike on the south coast of Montevideo.

History

It is said that its double name depends on where you look at it from: sea or land. Sailors started to call it Punta Brava because the rock spike stretches underwater which caused various shipwrecks. The name Punta Carretas makes reference to the oxcart shape that several sailors saw in the rocks of the place. Thus, they used the expression Punta de las Carretas (Oxcart) to talk about that place. Punta Carretas is located between the neighborhoods Parque Rodó and Pocitos.

Punta Carretas Lighthouse, which was built in 1876, was only visited by fishermen and laundresses for many years. Despite being so close to the city center, this was a deprived area, in which there was even a prison. The prison was inaugurated during the first years of the twentieth century and hindered even more the development of the area. It was not until the fifties that the city finally surrounded the prison giving birth to Punta Carretas neighborhood.

Little by little, Punta Carretas started turning into a typical upper middle class neighborhood. Nowadays it is an upper class neighborhood and the fact that the prison was closed and transformed into a shopping mall in 1994 deeply changed the nature of the neighborhood. What once was a neighborhood in which everybody knew each other and various generations of the same family remained together, is now a neighborhood attracting important investments. The area changed as well as the lifestyle of its neighbors. Also, the value of properties considerably increased.

Places worth visiting

Punta Carretas Lighthouse

It was built in 1876. It is 21 meters high and its light reaches 15 miles away. Every ten seconds it flashes a red light which tells it apart from other lighthouses or buoys. It is still important for fishing boats sailing towards the Banco Inglés (English Sandbank), Buceo Port or the entrance of the Santa Lucía River. In 1962 it was connected to the electricity network.

Punta Carretas Church



Punta Carretas Church in 2007

The church Nuestra Señora del Sagrado Corazón was built between 1917 and 1927. Originally, it belonged to the Order of Friar Minor Capuchin, but at present it is a parish of the Ecclesiastic Curia.

This neo-romanesque church with its tower is a milestone in the neighborhood.

From Jail to Shopping Mall

The impressive wall of Punta Carretas Prison was inaugurated in 1915 and it witnessed spectacular jailbreaks: anarchists in the thirties and Tupamaros (urban guerrilla) in the seventies. Towards the end of 1986 there was a massive prison riot and the decisions made from that moment on, definitely transformed this peaceful neighborhood. A few days after the riot, the prison was evacuated and closed. However, some years were spent discussing the final use of such an impressive building (it covered six blocks). It was finally sold to a Real Estate Consortium which turned the jail into a shopping mall.

The property recycling and remodeling started in 1991, and in 1994 the old prison opened its doors as the Punta Carretas Shopping Center.

Golf Club Uruguay

The Golf Club of Montevideo was founded in 1894. Its surface covers all the area encircled by the west side of Bulevar Artigas, the Rambla (Montevideo's promenade) and the Parque Rodó (Fun Fair).

Parva Domus Republic



Inscription: *Parva Domus Magna Quies* (Small House, Big Rest)

Around 1878 a man called José Achinelli, used to go fishing every Sunday to the Punta Brava. He was fed up with having to carry his fishing rods, food and clothes in the tram every Sunday and decided to rent one of the poor rooms in the area. Its floor was made of earthenware and its walls and ceiling were in terrible condition.

Some of his friends liked the idea of having a place to leave their equipment or just gather with friends for a meal. Tradition has it that while one of them was reading a Jack de Alfonso Daudet book, he saw the phrase "*Parva Domus Magna Quies*" (Small House, Big Rest) and on the spur of the moment wrote it on the door of room N° 4 using a small piece of coal.

Later, they decided to have their own flag. According to tradition, there were members of the two political parties in the country, the Colorado Party and the Blanco Party, but they felt like "brothers", so they designed a flag with a white background, blue stripes and red letters. As *Parva Domus* was getting bigger and bigger, all the rooms were gradually rented and the inner walls of the old building were pulled down so as to make room for everybody.

After a while, they even felt they needed their own anthem, and the great musician Luis Longhider composed the music of the *Marcha Parva Domus* and Fermín Rojas wrote the lyrics.

Viva Parva Domus / Viva la alegría / Gloria a la famosa / Mansión de la alegría / Grandioso fue aquel día / Que impusiste la igualdad / Ostentas majestuosa / Un cetro refulgente / Tu faz habla sonriente / De placer y de amistad.

The following men are some of its hundreds secret citizens: José Irureta Goyena, Juan Zorrilla de San Martín, Isidoro de María, Eduardo Rodríguez Larreta, Eduardo Fabini, Dalmiro Costa, César Zagnoli, etc.

This impenetrable "Republic" has its own Constitution as well. One of its articles states: "*No women, no animals, no inferior beings*" and another one: "*It's strictly forbidden to talk about politics and religion*".

A large white house with green doors and windows, surrounded by a park with trees, statues and gardens was built in the exact place where the demolished old rooms used to be.

Zorrilla Museum



Zorrilla Museum in 2006

Opposite the rocky coastline there is a house which belonged to the poet Juan Zorrilla de San Martín. Around 1910 the first part of the building was built, it only consisted of two zinc rooms and a bathroom. In 1922 the house was finally finished. In 1936 the Government took ownership of the house and on 26th February 1943 it opened its doors to the public.

Tabaré Street

The Zorrilla Museum is situated in this street and it is important in the historical background of the city. It is named after the book Tabaré, the most famous book written by Juan Zorrilla de San Martín.

Distances:

- Port of Montevideo - 5 Kms
- Carrasco International Airport - 20 Kms
- Downtown - 3Km
- Zona América (Montevideo Tax Free Zone) 30 Km
- Punta del Este - 120 Km
- Colonia - 180 Km
- Punta Carretas Shopping Mall - 0.2 Km

Transport:

- Carrasco International Airport <http://www.aic.com.uy/>
- Tres Cruces Bus Terminal <http://www.trescruces.com.uy/>
- Punta del Este Airport, Maldonado Uruguay
<http://www.puntadeleste.aero/>
- Port of Montevideo <http://www.anp.com.uy/>

