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A view of Amantani island, on Lake Titicaca, from Taquile island, in Peru.

Lake Titicaca, Peru.

FOR CENTURIES, 3,200-square-mile Lake Titicaca, which straddles the Peru-Bolivia border at the dizzying height of 12,500 feet, has been a cradle of Andean civilization: situated in the Altiplano, it is the mythical birthplace of the Incas and home to the Uro, Aymara, and Quechua peoples. Until now, infrastructure for travelers has been serviceable at best, and at worst, detrimental to the region's natural and cultural heritage.

In May, Peru's most innovative and eco-minded luxury hotel company will open **Inkaterra Titilaka** (800/442-5042; inkaterra.com; doubles from \$960, all-inclusive). The lodge, set on a windswept peninsula, has 18 rooms offering amenities such as soaking tubs, radiant floor heating, and

stunning lake views. But the main focus is on connecting guests with the surrounding communities. Local farmers will supply food for the restaurant, and excursions will include visits to Titicaca's famous floating islands.

Meanwhile, tour operator **All Ways Travel** (51-51/353-979; titicacaperu.com) has created a program on Anapia that ensures islanders benefit from traveler homestays, and, thanks to UNESCO, the hand-loomed textiles of Taquile island's Aymara people are garnering attention. To top it off, the entire lake region is currently being considered for designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site, giving Machu Picchu some friendly competition.

—MEEGHAN TRUELOVE