

PLANT SPIRIT SHAMANISM

Amazon Retreat - November 2018

with Howard G Charing

www.shamanism.co.uk

Two week Retreat November 3rd – 17th 2018 Extension week Nov 18th - 24th

Vision plants catalyze our inherently visionary and potentially mystical dimensions of consciousness. may they be recognized and honored for the powerful and sacred substances that they are, proof of the importance and infinite vastness of the subtle inner worlds of imagination and illumination, and may they open an endless source of inspiration for new universal sacred art.

ALEX GREY

INTRODUCTION

This is a 14 day retreat with Howard G Charing, author of 'The Accidental Shaman', and co-author of 'Plant Spirit Shamanism' and 'The Ayahuasca Visions of Pablo Amaringo'. We will be working at the Amaru Spirit Centre. During the two week Retreat (10 days in the lodge) we will be offering five Ayahuasca ceremonies. There is also the option of an extension week allowing the participant to move deeper in their plant diet. On the extension week we offer an additional four ceremonies.

Howard has been holding Plant Medicine Retreats since the 1990s, and over the years the programme has been continually developed resulting in a number of innovative practices. As an example, on our Retreats, the Ayahuasca is brewed in situ, and you are welcome to participate in the preparation, this means that you know where the medicine comes from and what the ingredients are.

During the Ayahuasca ceremonies, each participant is offered an individual *limpieza* and *curación* (cleansing & healing). This includes a *rastreo* (a traditional divination through psychic means) and from this diagnosis the shaman will proscribe a personalised plant medicine programme. This unique fusion of powerful healing practices can really help to clear unwanted, unhelpful, and tangled inappropriate energetic and emotional attachments that are often the hidden source of disease.

Currently, we work with three shamans; Elias and Sarah are indigenous Shipibo who work together in ceremony. Together they chant traditional Shipibo icaros weaving a fascinating and beautiful polyphonic harmony with male and female voices. Our other shaman is Antonio, a powerful Mestizo shaman who excels at diagnosis and advising of an appropriate plant diet.

Although there is an emphasis on 'retreat' space with the plants, there are a number of additional activities all focused on personal healing, wellbeing, and communion with the plants; such as plant and mud baths, tobacco juice purges, these as well as the personalised plant medicines are all included in the programme. The medicine programme we offer will leave you rejuvenated and filled with vitality.

Additional options, these are not included in the programme; are the services of a traditional bonesetter (she is very good – she fixed a painful lumbar problem for me), and Nicky Bovey an old friend now residing in Iquitos who offers a very deep Coca Leaf

Divination and a profound healing ceremony. I have known him since the early 1990s, and he has developed a solid synthesis of psychic healing modalities over the years.

An additional feature of our programme and one that you should take into consideration is that unlike other Retreats, domestic Peru flights and hotels are included in the package.

About the Amaru Spirit Centre



Amaru Spirit is based in the Amazon rainforest, located by the Itaia River near Iquitos, Peru. Amaru Spirit is run by David 'Slocum' Hewson, and his partner, Yolita. Both are dedicated to healing the body and spirit through cleansing, nutrition and the sacred use of ayahuasca.

Slocum and Yolita believe that a modern understanding of nutrition and physical cleansing can be added to the ancient shamanic art of healing the body and spirit through ayahuasca, and the two are necessary and synergistic. Over the past years Slocum has deservedly gained a reputation as a nutritional expert.

Eating predominantly raw foods and super foods, while limiting fats, salt, sugar and spicy condiments is an important prerequisite for working creatively with ayahuasca and the plant diet. The Amazon contains some of the most nutrient-rich foods on the planet. The fruits and vegetables that grow here are often described as 'superfoods', and the nutrition we will enjoy on this retreat deserves a special mention not just because it is delicious and made from local fresh produce. The Amazon contains an extraordinary wealth of fruits and plants of unparalleled healing value in a wide variety of illnesses. Many of these are part of the daily diet and in cleansing regimes which are the specialty of Amaru Spirit.

The accommodation is in comfortable traditional cabins or tambos. The beds benefit from comfortable mattresses and fly nets. The ayahuasca is prepared and brewed here at the lodge, and participants are welcome to help prepare the brew.

To view photos of Amaru Spirit;
www.flickr.com/photos/hgcharing/sets/72157629707927539/

The Maloca



Our ceremonies are held in a beautiful, spacious purpose designed Maloca. Great care and detailed attention has been made to the construction of this wonderful ceremonial and meditational space. The design incorporates Sacred Geometric principles and high quality materials that enhance the Ayahuasca experience. Although this may appear to some as 'hype', it is in fact far from it. The floor has been constructed with such precision and exactitude that there is not the usual floor 'wobble', 'bounce', and 'shake' typical of constructions of the region when people are moving. So if you are lying down on the mattress there is no shaking to disturb you. The Maloca was opened November 2014, and our group was privileged to have participated in the inauguration ceremony.

About the Plant Diet

In addition to Ayahuasca we will be offering traditional shamanic diet plants that expand our sensory awareness, and enhance visionary perception. The magical world to which we are transported by plants is not accessible through the verbal rational mind but through dream language. Thus dreams act like doorways during a plant diet and connect us with the plant spirit. The plants are;

Guayusa (*Piper callosum*) has the effect of giving lucid dreams (being aware that you are dreaming). With this plant you may experience that the boundary between sleeping and being awake is far more fluid than you had anticipated.

Ajo Sacha (*Mansoa alliacea*) has the quality of unfolding and enhancing our senses. People report that their senses of sight, hearing and smell become much sharper and gain the ability of an expanded affinity with the rainforest.

Bobinsana (*Calliandra angustifolia*) has the quality of reinforcing a person's spiritual connection to the natural world, and invoking beautiful and colourful dreams.

Huingo (*Crescentia cujete* L) enhances lucid dreaming. It generates a mellow dreaming state.

About Ayahuasca

After being virtually ignored by Western civilization for centuries, there has been a huge surge of interest in Ayahuasca in the last twenty years or so. There is a growing belief that it is a kind of 'medicine for our times', giving hope to people with 'incurable' diseases like cancer and HIV, drug addictions and inspiring answers to the big ecological problems of modern civilization.

Without a doubt entheogens offer a potential to explore and transform human consciousness thereby acting as an enabler to bring an inclusive spirituality to our society and help to alleviate the alienation from nature that has brought humanity to a grave ecological crisis.

Spirituality is at the centre of the Ayahuasca experience. Purification and cleansing of body, mind, and spirit in a shamanic ceremony can be the beginning of a process of profound personal and spiritual discovery and transformation. This process can continue indefinitely even if one never drinks Ayahuasca again.

Ayahuasca is the jungle medicine of the upper Amazon. It is made from the ayahuasca vine (*Banisteriopsis Caapi*) and the leaf of the Chacruna plant (*Psychotria Viridis*). The two make a potent medicine, which takes one into the visionary world. The vine is an inhibitor, which contains harmala and harmaline among other alkaloids, and the leaf contains vision-inducing alkaloids. As with all natural medicines, it is a mixture of many alkaloids that makes their unique properties. For example, Peyote, the cactus used by the North Native Americans, is said to contain 32 active alkaloids, so when one of those alkaloids, mescaline is synthesised in a laboratory, contrary to popular opinion, the result is not at all the same.

The oldest known object related to the use of ayahuasca is a ceremonial cup, hewn out of stone, with engraved ornamentation, which was found in the Pastaza culture of the Ecuadorian Amazon from 500 B.C. to 50 A.D. It is deposited in the collection of the Ethnological Museum of the Central University (Quito, Ecuador). This indicates that ayahuasca potions were known and used at least 2,500 years ago. Ayahuasca is a name derived from two Quechua words: aya means spirit, ancestor, deceased person, and huasca means vine or rope, hence it is known as vine of the dead or vine of the soul. It is also known by many other local names including yage, caapi, natema, pinde, daime, mihi, & dapa. It plays a central role in the spiritual, religious and cultural traditions of the Indigenous and Mestizo (mixed blood) peoples of the upper Amazon, Orinoco plains and the Pacific coast of Colombia and Ecuador.

Floral Baths

We will be offering *los baños florales* (floral baths), for ritual cleansing and to draw in creative and other benign energies. In this the individual is bathed in flowers which have been soaking in water for many hours. These baths are used to cleanse unhelpful energies, removing blockages so that the benign universal energy can correct the imbalance. These special baths help us to connect with and draw upon the strength and courage within ourselves, to overcome obstacles, and to lead a purposeful and productive life in accordance with our soul's intention.

The Icaros

Integral to the ceremony are the chants that the shaman sings. These are known as Icaros, and the chant will direct the nature of the ceremony or visionary experience for the group and for individuals as the shaman during the ceremony will chant specific Icaros for that person's needs.

The words of the chants in indigenous languages are often symbolic stories telling of the ability of nature to heal itself. For example the crystalline waters from a stream wash the unwell person, while coloured flowers attract the hummingbirds whose delicate wings fan healing energies etc. You might see such things in your visions but the essence which cures you is perhaps more likely to be the understanding of what is happening in your life, allowing inner feelings to unblock so that bitterness and anger can change to ecstasy and love. To awaken from the 'illusion of being alive' is to experience life itself.

There are several different kinds of Icaros. At the beginning of the session, their purpose is to invoke the *mareación* or effects, in the words of Javier Arevalo, 'to render the mind susceptible for visions to penetrate, then the curtains can open for the start of the theatre'.

Other Icaros call the spirit of Ayahuasca to open visions 'as though exposing the optic nerve to light'. Alternatively, if the visions are too strong, the same spirit can be made to fly away in order to bring the person back to normality. There are Icaros for calling the 'doctors', or plant spirits, for healing, while other Icaros call animal spirits, which protect and rid patients of negative energies.



About Slocum

Slocum has spent his working career as an artist, and the last 10 years have been largely dedicated to painting subjects from the Peruvian Amazon. He strongly believes in the connection between creativity, in all its forms and the healing process. Therefore at Amaru Spirit all visitors are encouraged to express themselves in a variety of forms, or whatever comes most naturally. His extraordinary art work can be viewed at;

www.amaruspirit.org/artwork. Slocum also made a contribution of a portrait of Pablo in the book 'The Ayahuasca Visions of Pablo

Amaringo' published by Inner Traditions (2011).

About Howard G Charing

Howard G. Charing, born in London, and has lived in the Netherlands, the USA, and Peru. He worked in the computer industry from 1970 to 1991, ultimately a senior manager in Amdahl Corporation (USA) where he was responsible for communications and systems for European operations (across twelve countries). He quit the industry following an elevator crash in which he suffered serious injuries; a broken neck and severe spinal damage. In this accident he had a near-death experience that transformed his life. This accident closed the door to his 'normal' prosaic life, however new doors leading to exploration and adventure opened.



Over the last 25 years he has become acknowledged as an international workshop leader on shamanism, an author and visionary artist. For over twenty years he has worked with some of the most respected and extraordinary shamans and elders in the Andes, the Amazon Rainforest, and the Philippines. He has run training and developmental courses on behalf of the prestigious Foundation for Shamanic Studies (USA), and for many years worked with Eagle's Wing Centre for Contemporary Shamanism one of the foremost training organisations in Europe.

His books are; Plant Spirit Shamanism (Destiny Books USA) 2006, The Ayahuasca Visions of Pablo Amaringo (Inner Traditions USA) 2011, The Accidental Shaman (Destiny Books USA) 2017. He has written numerous articles that include original source field interviews of indigenous shamans. He has been featured on TV, and magazines, and his art work has been publicly exhibited.

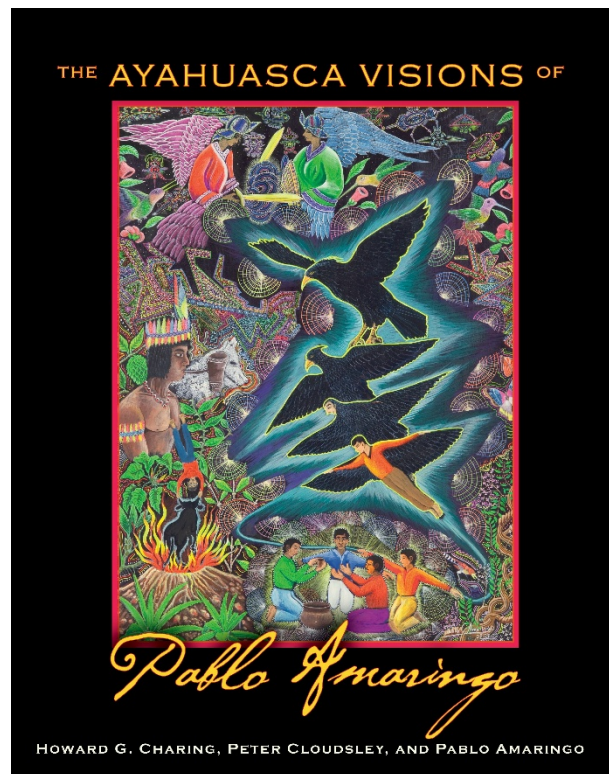
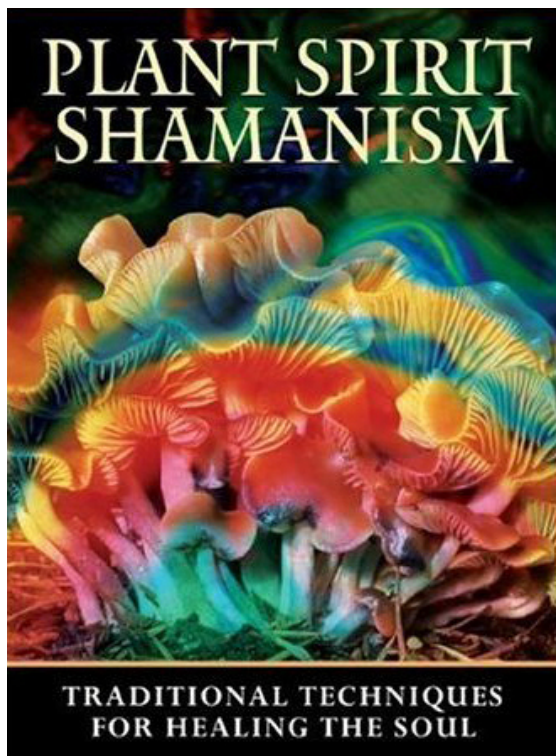
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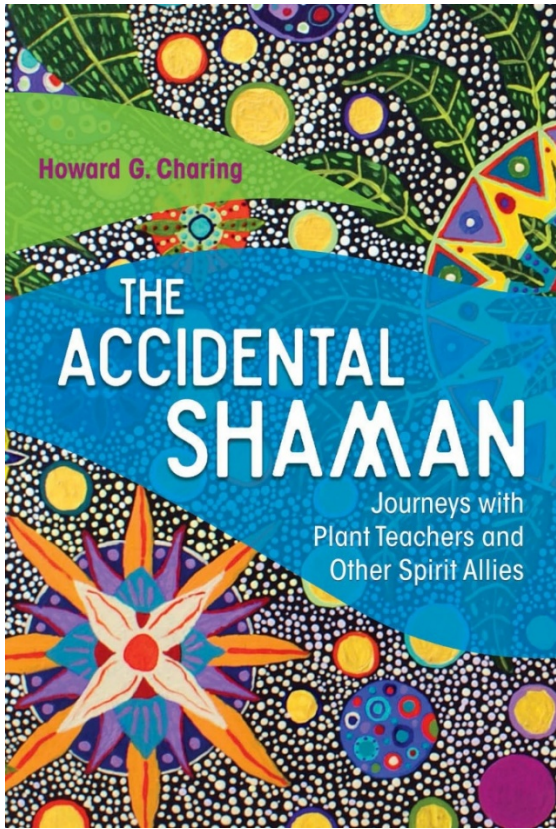
Shamanic Art Gallery:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/hgcharing/sets/72157620870862800/>

The Ayahuasca Visions of Pablo Amaringo:

www.ayahuascavisions.com





Preparing for Ayahuasca

An integral element of this preparation is to undertake a diet intended to reduce excessive sugar, salt, oils, pork, fat, and spicy food in the body in preparation to be in communion with the spirit of Ayahuasca. Reduction of these should commence as soon as one commits to the experience.

Pork in particular is considered to be impure and is studiously avoided by Ayahuasca practitioners. Complete abstinence from pork and lard for at least two weeks prior to the first ceremony is recommended to participants to reduce the impact of the purge. It is also recommended that this abstinence continue for at least two weeks after the final ceremony.

In the initiatory diet for those seeking personal cleansing and healing, chicken, fish, wild game meat, fruits, and vegetables may be eaten but with little if any salt, sugar, oils or spices. The cleansing effect and strength of the visionary experience can be greatly enriched by one's commitment to these preparations.

Sexual abstinence also forms part of the diet and is a traditional requirement of Ayahuasca cleansing and healing. We recommend abstinence from sexual activity for a few days prior to the ceremony, and to continue a day or two after the last ceremony.

MEDICAL PRECAUTIONS

It is important to know that, in some cases, the consumption of Ayahuasca in combination with some groups of prescription & non-prescription medicines can bear health risks.

1. Prescription Medicines

If you are taking prescription medication (including antibiotics), are subject to high blood pressure, have a heart condition, or are under treatment for any health condition), you need to consult your Doctor or Physician. Those with a condition of chronic high blood pressure should not drink Ayahuasca.

1.1 Anti-depressants

Ayahuasca (Banisteriopsis Caapi) contains MAOI's (monoamine oxidase inhibitors) generally in the form of harmine and harmaline therefore Medical consultation is essential if you are taking Prozac or other antidepressants affecting serotonin levels, i.e. serotonin selective re-uptake inhibitors (SSRI).

SSRI's block the reuptake of serotonin in the brain and because MAOI's inhibit breakdown of serotonin, the combination of MAOI's and SSRI's can lead to too high levels of serotonin in the brain. SSRI's are much more common than MAOI's which are found in some anti-depressants. It is advised that you consult your Doctor or Physician about the use of temporary monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOI).

These medications generally require a period of six to eight weeks to completely clear the system and must be reduced gradually.

2. Non-Prescription Medicines

Non-prescription medications such as antihistamines, dietary aids, amphetamines and derivatives, and some natural herbal medicines, i.e. those containing ephedrine, high levels of caffeine, or other stimulants, may also cause adverse reactions. We recommend that you discontinue all such medications, drugs, and herbs for at least one week prior to and following work with Ayahuasca.

3. Recreational Drugs

Avoid all recreational drugs, in particular MDMA (Ecstasy), cocaine, heroin. Also do not drink alcohol on the day of the ceremony.

4. Mental Health

Those with a history of psychiatric disorder, instability, or have a diagnosed mental disorder should not drink Ayahuasca.

5. Herbal Remedies

Use of herbal remedies for depression such as St John's Wort (which also influence the serotonin levels) need to be discontinued as per 2 above.

Please note on booking you will receive a detailed document regarding preparation for ayahuasca and the plant diet.

THE PLANT SPIRIT SHAMANISM RETREAT 2018

Summary Itinerary and Costs.

Two week Retreat November 3rd – 17th

Extension week Nov 18th – 24th

Day 1 (Saturday 3rd November)	Arrive in Lima & transfer to Hotel
Day 2	Leave Lima, fly to Iquitos and overnight.
Days 3 - 12	Go to Amaru Spirit Lodge by boat. The 2 week group returns to Iquitos on Nov 15 th .
Day 13	2 week group returns to Iquitos and overnights there. Participants on extended week continue at lodge.
Day 14	2 week group returns to Lima & transfer to Hotel Participants on extended week continue at lodge.
Day 15 (Saturday 17th November)	2 week group – International flights Participants on extended week continue at lodge.
Days 16 – 19	Participants on extended week continue at lodge.
Day 20	Return to Iquitos and overnight
Day 21	Return to Lima & transfer to Hotel
Day 22 (Saturday 24th November)	International flights

Please Note: Accommodation is shared throughout the programme.

For those who prefer single rooms at the hotels there is a supplement of US\$ 150 subject to availability.

PLANT SPIRIT SHAMANISM 2018 RETREAT

Please Note: Most costs in Peru are US\$ based, and because of the extreme fluctuations in the currency exchange rates over the past months, it is no longer practical to cost this Retreat programme in any other currency. So the programme is priced in US\$. Please note that payment can be made in other currencies, Euros, RON, or Pound Sterling albeit at the US\$ FX rate at time of payment.

Costs

Two Week Retreat: US\$2595

Three Week Retreat: US\$3845

Payment via bank transfer, please note that Credit and Debit cards can be used via PayPal.

What the Price Includes:

Lima – Iquitos return flights.

Two nights Hotel in Lima

Two nights Hotel in Iquitos

Breakfast throughout plus all meals at the lodge.

The Plant Spirit Shamanism programme.

All ceremonies and services from shamans at the Retreat Centre.

A Personalised and supervised Plant Diet

What is not included in the price.

International Flight from your country to Peru.

Hotel to airport transfers in Peru

Additional nights before or after the Retreat (I can book them for you).

Additional tips & gratuities

Payment Schedule.

1. To reserve your place US\$ 600 Non-Refundable deposit
2. The final balance payable by September 1st 2018

Cancellation Policy.

If cancellation is necessary, the deposit is non-refundable. For cancellation participants must send cancellation notice by email to; shamanism@yahoo.com

The receiving date determines the cancellation date.

Time Prior to Start	Cancellation Fee
Up to 31 days	50% of tour price
30 days or less	75% of tour price

Journey facilitator

Howard G. Charing

Phone Enquiries: Tel: 0741 260 588, International +40 741 260 588

email: shamanism@yahoo.com

Personal Travel & Health insurance is highly recommended for this journey. It is your responsibility to obtain this insurance.

THE PLANT SPIRIT SHAMANISM 2018 RETREAT – BOOKING FORM

Name (as in passport)	
Address & Postcode	
Date of Birth	
Telephone number	
Email address	
Passport Number	
Nationality	

AGREEMENT

THE PLANT SPIRIT SHAMANISM 2018 RETREAT

This Agreement is between Howard G Charing (“the Organiser”) on the one part and _____(your name) on the other part (“the Participant”).

1. The Participant has agreed to take part in medicine ceremonies with the Organiser and their assistants.
2. The Organiser will do their utmost to ensure the safety and comfort of the Participant.
3. The Participant has agreed to make any confidential disclosures (in writing) at the time of booking regarding their medical conditions and/or use of medication as outlined in the guidelines supplied by the Organiser. The Participant also agrees to inform the Organiser of any change in their medical circumstances.
4. The Organiser has recommended to the Participant prior to entry into this Agreement that he or she seek and obtain medical advice as to the effect of plant medicines singly and in combination with any medication they are taking.
5. The Participant has the option of taking any, all, or none of the plant medicines on offer and should he or she wish to take them, has conducted appropriate research into the likely effects.
6. The Participant has been advised that ayahuasca is a hallucinogenic brew and is clear on the meaning of this. The Participant has conducted other research where appropriate to satisfy his or herself of the effects that may be produced.
7. The Participant and the Organiser reiterate their understanding that by signing this Agreement the Participant accepts full responsibility for participating in plant medicine ceremonies.

SIGNED:

DATED:

(The minimum age for participants is 18 years)

SOME FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS FROM THE RETREATS

This was my first trip to Peru and my first experience in the Amazon. The entire trip was expertly coordinated and the accommodations throughout were always comfortable. Howard was an integral part of our group, and his attention to us made the trip a success from start to finish. He travelled with us and looked after us, always ready to take care of anything that might have come up.

Amaru Spirit Center in the Amazon jungle is a beautiful space envisioned along ideas of sustainable and holistic living. Everywhere the feeling was peaceful and protected. My tambo was spacious, with lovely views of the jungle plants and wildlife. The food was always delicious and thoughtfully prepared to work synergistically with the natural treatments available. Slocum and the entire staff were caring, available, and interested to see that everyone was safe, comfortable, and guided. I received several different treatments that were tailored to my specific needs, so ultimately they were conducive to my healing and growth. Working with visionary plants, and with both the physical and the spiritual techniques that I learned in this carefully arranged and supportive environment, was a personally transformative experience.

Sheryl S.

I've been to Peru a few times and from my first experience nothing was the same, everything is new in the new light of consciousness.

During the time I have been in Amaru Spirit Lodge in November 2013, I felt that it was a holistic experience. The people I meet there, Slocum and his team are amazing. They created a really nice place close to nature, with a clean and comfortable lodge in the middle of the jungle, in harmony with local tradition and nature. The Ayurvedic food philosophy mixed with the jungle energy, the psychological and spiritual support provide by Howard, Slocum and Roman the local shaman, and the whole group energy and shamanic ceremonies with ayahuasca, all this elements created for me an amazing experience.

Slocum is an artist and a spiritual man... and much more than this, and his art transfers to everything he does. I'm very glad I choose to have this experience in that place with these people. I really felt that I choose the quality over the quantity this time. A soft inner quality of mine that I start to see and feel. Thank you Howard for being such a good friend and sharing this experience.

Simona P

Now, as far as I am concerned, the trip to Peru has opened a new door into my life. But I was looking for it. It doesn't come just like that. Needed some previous activities and also a big openness for anything that life, Mother Nature, Madre Ayahuasca, Pachamama or other sources might bring into your life. As you said that night in the maloka's door, I am not the

same I used to be after this experience. So maybe considering some previous informal activity, if people without any experience might take part.

Also where treating with couples, it is good for the couple to come together, to have the same experience, not just one of them. The location is perfect for what happened there. The food was great! The people there, especially Slocum, are of a great help.

I loved this travel, the greatest of my life. I'll go again!

Radu D

To start, the location of the Amaru Spirit lodge was perfect for me. I felt totally at peace at this beautiful place. My tambo was spacious, comfortable, and well equipped. The food was simply delicious, and served and prepared in such a delightful manner by the super friendly and always happy kitchen staff.

The ayahuasca ceremonies were powerful and life transforming. Slocum was always there taking care of people; he was competent and the limpezias he did with Roman the shaman were just an amazing experience. Roman was very friendly and interested in my visionary experience.

The whole journey was well organised by Howard, it was a 'stress-free' experience, I didn't have to worry about the details, and I felt super safe, throughout the entire journey. Howard's guidance was invaluable in preparing for the ayahuasca and jungle experience.

Anca D