

# Dream Weavers

text: Jenny Lyon photography: Vicky Aguirre and Carl Wilson

They met as backpackers in South America and along the way became fascinated by the traditional woven craft of Argentina. Now they've opened a new venture championing the art and its makers.



Carl Wilson and Vicky Aguirre



*Pampa* is a Quechuan word used to describe the fertile lowlands in South America; it also refers to nature more generally, a way to describe the earth and its abundance. Two photographers and partners, Argentinian Vicky Aguirre and Australian Carl Wilson, started their company, Pampa, two years ago inspired by their travels in Vicky's homeland, Argentina, and a desire to celebrate the indigenous art of the place.

With an ancient tradition of sheep and llama farming, the natural progression to weaving is an inherent part of Argentinian culture. The vibrant colours and strong geometric shapes are instantly recognisable in the fabrics of the place, with each town specialising in their own designs and techniques, created on their backyard looms.

Vicky and Carl met in Chile at the end of a backpacking/surfing trip that Carl had made to South America and they found kindred spirits in each other. The decision to look into introducing Australians to the work of the indigenous communities in Vicky's country came about after realising how rarely they saw examples of it when they both returned to Australia.

"The thought of helping native communities keep their art alive by purchasing their pieces, which gives them some financial support to continue, was a very appealing idea," Carl recalls. "We also get to tell their story through our photography, which we both have a passion for; these are just some of the factors that made our decision to start this project a very easy one." →



The couple returned to Argentina and began their research, and after almost a year they were introduced to the artists by a group of volunteers from Vicky's family's church group. This group supports the weavers in every way they can to ensure the continuation of their crafts and by providing clean water, clothes, food and so on.

"Since I was a kid, the native community was a topic that always caught my attention. I was always reading those books that seemed boring for most young children, about Argentinian history and aboriginal communities. Becoming a photographer with a photojournalist eye, and then meeting Carl who is very like-minded, were also influences in the path to the beginning of Pampa. So I guess Pampa was a result of my story, Carl's story and the story we are building together," says Vicky.

The process of making a single rug is long and intensely laborious. It starts from selecting a fleece, which is then washed, dried, handspun using a traditional spindle and then hand-dyed. The colours of each dye can be determined by the local flowers and plants, or for more intense colours the artists will use synthetic dyes. The rugs are then woven on the loom that is in almost every home's backyard. The thickness of the thread as well as differing weaving techniques will give each rug an individual character.

Says Vicky, "We would love to think that our clients feel admiration and respect for these weavers, for this art in extinction. I would love them to feel a connection to this vast immense nature where these rugs come from. I would like them to feel the love, sacrifice and hard genuine work each single piece has devoted to it."

[koskela.com.au](http://koskela.com.au)  
[pampa.com.au](http://pampa.com.au)



Handcrafted healthy  
wooden floorboards

**mafi**

: walk on art

[mafi.com.au](http://mafi.com.au)

Sydney | Melbourne | Brisbane | Singapore

