

BRAZIL: 12th-20th SEPTEMBER 2014

RICHARD WEBB

INTRODUCTION

Although I have visited Brazil on ten previous occasions I had never visited Emas NP and was keen to look for Pampas Cat, seen twice by Wildwings on their 2013 tour, and Hoary Fox with an outside chance of Giant Armadillo. I also decided to day-trip Nazare Paulista to look for Buffy-tufted Marmoset which I had dipped on back in 2004.

I also considered visiting the Giant Armadillo project that Jon Hall and Phil Telfer had visited but the extortionate cost, over £1000 for a two-night stay at the nearby lodge including transfers, and the fact that I prefer my mammals not to be radio-tagged if I can avoid it, made me decide against it and to say it was a good decision is an under-statement.

Nazare Paulista was a success and I found **Buffy-tufted Marmosets** relatively easily. Emas was even more successful as although I missed Pampas Cat (and Puma seen by two previous trips) I did see 3 **Hoary Foxes** and a mind-blowing **Giant Armadillo** down to touching distance for 40 minutes. The supporting cast included a fruit-eating **Maned Wolf**, 6-7 **Brazilian Tapirs**, two **Giant Anteaters** including one at close range with a young one on its back on the journey back to Campo Grande.

LOGISTICS

Timing

I timed my trip for the end of the dry season which is often productive as mammals concentrate near water. However in hindsight slightly later would probably have been better as I suspect you would see more on the tracks in Emas on nights after rain. In addition the sugar harvest was late this year and consequently the roads outside the park, particularly the main road from Chapada de Ceu and the road off towards Pousada Pontal das Emas were very dusty as a consequence of the large number of vehicles going backwards and forwards to the sugar mills throughout the day, and night.

Accommodation.

- 11th & 12th** **Sao Paulo – Hotel Matiz (www.bookings.com)** – conveniently located close to the international airport with a good restaurant and room service but over-priced.
- 13th** **Campo Grande – Hotel Alkimia (www.bookings.com)** – small but good rooms, good breakfast with restaurants nearby for evening meal. Better value for money than Hotel Vale Verde at £30 (90 reais) for a single.
- 14th-16th** **Emas – Margie’s home** – only room for a couple of people but excellent accommodation and food.
- 17th-19th** **Emas – Pousada Recanto das Emas (www.pousadare.chapceu.com.br)**– nice chalets with excellent meals.
- 20th** **Campo Grande – Hotel Vale Verde (www.bookings.com)** – conveniently located close to the main roundabout as you come into Campo Grande from the airport but over-priced at £55 (165 real) for a single.

Car hire.

Sao Paulo - I hired a small 2WD car for £25 per day from Thrifty through Holiday Autos, If arriving in terminal 3 Thrifty does not have a desk there and you have to call them and they collect you and take you to the depot. One of the other car hire desks kindly did this for me. However it may be more convenient to hire with someone who has a desk at the airport. The car was fine but you get caught for a £7 cleaning charge when you return the car. Slightly ironic as the car was clean whereas at Campo Grande it was filthy and there was no charge! In addition I ended up returning the car to the depot as it had a faulty warning light.

Campo Grande – I again hired a 2WD this time with Unidas through Holiday Autos. The cost for 9 days was £330 including full insurance. In hindsight I wish I had paid £200 more for a 4WD as the extra height would have been useful in Emas. For my first 3 days in Emas we used Margie’s pick-up which was very useful but the kilometre charge for the hire meant it would have worked out cheaper to hire a 4WD in Campo Grande.

ITINERARY

- 12th Afternoon visit to Nazare Paulista
13th Morning at hotel in Sao Paulo, late afternoon flight to Campo Grande.
14th Drive to Emas arriving late afternoon. Late afternoon / evening visit to Emas NP.
15th Morning around the marshes near Margie's farm and short visit to Emas NP. Late afternoon/evening visits to Emas NP.
16th Morning and late afternoon/evening visits to Emas NP with brief visit
17th Morning in the park, late afternoon and evening in park the latter including a drive to the far end of the park.
18th Morning in áreas around the park. Late afternoon and evening within the park.
19th Morning visit to Emas NP. Late afternoon / evening around park with a short visit to the park at the end of the spotlighting sesión.
20th Early morning in áreas outside the park before returning to Campo Grande with a couple of stops on route.

MAMMALS

Giant Armadillo

Priodontes maximus

Emas NP - 15th – unbelievable views of a male along a track less than 100m from the gate at 2100. Watched at close range for 40 minutes at one point walking back past the vehicle so close that I could have reached down to touch it. Mainly watched walking away from us but frequently turned after standing on hind legs to feed from the banks along the track. Sadly the photos are all over-exposed and most ended up being deleted (I should have used video) but a fabulous animal.



Six-banded (Yellow) Armadillo

Euphractus sexcinctus

- 14th – two dead on route from Paraiso to Chapada de Ceu.
- 16th – one mid-morning at a burrow in farmland north of Margie's farm.
- 19th – one late afternoon along main track from park entrance to the administration centre.
- 19th – one mid-evening along a track south-west of Margie's farm.



Nine-banded Armadillo
Dasypus novemcinctus

- 20th – one dead on the road near Paraiso.

Southern Tamandua
Tamandua tetradactyla

- 20th – two dead along the road from Paraiso to Camapua.
- 20th – one dead on the road west of Camapua.

Giant Anteater
Myrmecophaga tridactyla

- 19th – one in the marshes south-west of Margie's farm.
- 20th – a female carrying a young one on its back in a patch of cerrado, c.15 kms west of Paraiso.

Azara's Agouti
Dasyprocta azarai

- 14th – one shortly after dawn in the cerrado área south-west of Margie's farm.

Black-fronted Titi
Callicebus nigrifrons

- Nazare Paulista – Heard 2.9 kms from the main road.

Maned Wolf
Chrysocyon brachyurus

- 19th – a fabulous individual feeding on fruit alongside the main road a km south of the park entrance. A stunning individual.

Crab-eating Fox
Cerdocyon thous

- Emas NP – 15th (3), 16th (1), 17th (3), 18th (2).
- Outside park, 14th (1), 15th (1) 19th (4)

Hoary Fox
Lycalopex vetulus

- Emas NP – good views of singles on the 14th, 15th & 17th..



Striped Hog-nosed Skunk
Conepatus semistriatus

- All records outside park.
- 15th - 2 along the track bordering the south side of the park shortly after dawn.
- 16th – 3 post-dawn in the farmland south of Margie's farm.
- 18th – Two shortly after dawn along the edge of the marsh north of Margie's farm.
- 19th – One at night in the same área as on the 18th.

Crab-eating Raccoon
Procyon cancrivorous

- 16th one at the small marsh north of Margie's farm at 2300.

Buffy-tufted Marmoset
Callithrix aurita

- A group of six including one juvenile at Nazare Paulista. Great views.

Pampas Deer
Ozotoceros bezoarticus

- Emas NP & surrounding farmland, 14th (2), 15th (14), 16th (8), 17th (6), 18th (18 inc a newborn fawn), 19th (8) 20th (2).



Red Brocket
Mazama americana

- One near Pousada Barcelos on 16th & 19th, both early morning.

Marsh Deer
Blastocerus dichotomous

- 18th – one the cerrado área south-west of Margie’s farm mid-morning.

White-lipped Peccary
Tayassu pecari

- Emas NP all records inside park.
- 15th – 21+ feeding near the administration centre mid-morning.
- 16th – c.40 late afternoon on main track about 20 kms from park entrance. Seven after dark along track to Poco Capivara.
- 17th – 8 near the administration centre early morning.
- 19th – 16+ along the main track c.15 kms from the administration centre mid-morning, 1+along the track along the south side of the park after dark.



Collared Peccary
Dicotyles tajacu

- 15th – Emas NP – one on the main track between the gate & admin centre.
- 20th – Four in farmland bordering the cerrado south-west of Margie’s farm.



Brazilian Tapir
Tapirus terrestris

- 15th - one alongside the main road c.500m from the park gate, a second c.6 kms further south again just west of main road.
- 17th – one along the track between the entrance gate and Pousada Barcelos.
- 19th –all on evening drive. Two in the small marsh north of Margie’s farm another female showing superbly near the main road and a 4th probably the same individual as seen on the 17th along the track between the entrance gate and Pousada Barcelos.

OTHER POSSIBILITIES

Water Opossum (Yapok)
Chironectes minimus

Emas - occurs commonly in the Rio Formosa in the park but virtually impossible to see. Has also been found in the river between the park entrance and Pousada Recanto das Emas.

White-eared Opossum
Didelphis albiventris

Emas - occurs around the park entrance and administration centre.

Southern Tamandua
Tamandua tetradactyla

Emas – present but difficult to see.

Brazilian Porcupine
Coendou prehensilis

Emas – seen a couple of weeks prior to my trip in the forest near Pousada Barcelos.

Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth *Bradypus variegatus*

Nazare Paulista – seen on my 2004 trip.

Pampas Cat
Felis pajeros

Emas - occurs in and around the park and is the subject of a long-term research project in the área. However it is not easy Margie having only seen one in 20 years living in the área. Nevertheless Wildwings had two sightings of a total of three animals on their tour in 2013.

Puma
Felis concolor

Emas - occurs commonly in and around the park preying particularly on Pampas Deer, Phil Telfer et al saw three between the park entrance and Pousada Recanto das Emas and Wildwings had a male in the park on their 2013 tour. We found what appeared to be a freshly-killed deer in the north of the park but were unable to determine its killer as Jaguars also occur in this part of the park.

Jaguar
Panthera onca

Emas - another species that is the subject of a long-term reserach project in the park. Largely restricted to the east end of the park, see comments under Puma.

Jaguarundi
Felis yaguarondi

Emas - one was seen in Emas the day before my arrival.

SITES

NAZARE PAULISTA

I first visited NP in 2004 and saw my first **Black-fronted Titis** and Brown-throated Sloth but missed **Buffy-tufted Marmoset**.

With a day to spare at the start of the trip I decided to try for the marmoset again. As with Jon Hall's recent trip I arrived early afternoon which was less than ideal and spent three hours wandering up and down the road from the entrance to the Ipe Research Station. However this area has been seriously degraded since my previous visit with houses going up along the road and a lot of traffic along the road. After speaking to a local who said that the **marmosets** were common, particularly first thing in the morning, I decided to try further along the road and eventually found a group of six 3.3 kms from the main road in a small but excellent patch of forest which would probably also warrant attempts at spotlighting. I also heard the **titis** 2.9 kms from the main road.

Jon's directions are slightly misleading so if you are driving yourself from Sao Paulo take the Dutra (SP-060) east from the international airport for c.50 kms and then turn north on the SP-065 signposted Campinas. Head north for 39 kms passing the sign for Bairro Moinho at km 45. Two kms further on pass a second sign for Bairro Moinho at km 47 and a km or two further on take the return on the right hand side (easily missed) back under the SP-065 and then back south on the SP-065. At km 47 there are two roads to Bairro Moinho. Take the first, a dirt track, rather than the second paved track. Ipe is 1.1 kms down the dirt track on the right. Half a km or so after Ipe the track goes through a small village and enters some nice forest particularly 2.9 to 3.7 kms from the main road. Shortly after this the forest opens out and there is a small shop on the left if you need refreshments. Tolls to/and from Nazare Paulista totalled 25.2 reals.

EMAS NP

Emas NP covers 1,320 km² of savannah cerrado to the east of the Pantanal and can be accessed from Brasilia, Cuiaba or Campo Grande. It is one of South America's premier mammal watching sites although a massive fire in 2010 destroyed large swathes of the park and the mammal populations are still recovering, e.g. Giant Anteaters were formally a common site but one of the guides said they are no longer found inside the park. However although the numbers are greatly reduced they do still occur with several sightings reported in birding reports over the past few years. The park has a superb mammal fauna including Giant and Six-banded Armadillo, Giant Anteater, Maned Wolf, Hoary Fox, Jaguar, Puma, Pampas Cat, Brazilian Tapir and apparently Water Opposum.

I drove in from Campo Grande which is about 330 kms from the park. Head north from Campo Grande towards Cuiaba. After c.100 kms turn right opposite the San Pedro gas station towards Camapua. Drive east for 40 kms to Campupua (beware of the speed humps as you come into the town). From Camapua head east for 130 kms to Paraiso (there are some nice patches of cerrado on route), and then head towards Chapadao do Sul. From CDS continue east for another 50 kms to Chapadao do Ceu. In CDC continue straight on, on a dirt road. After c.25 kms you reach a large sign for Satal Fazenda Santo Antonio do Pontal alongside a smaller sign for Pousada Pontal das Emas. To reach the park go straight on for another couple of kms. Alternatively turn left here if you are heading for the pousada. Pousada Recanto das Emas (Fazenda Santo Antonio do Pontal) is on the left after another 6 kms.

Note: when you drive from Campo Grande to Emas you cross a time-zone and the clocks go forward one hour when you reach Goias state.

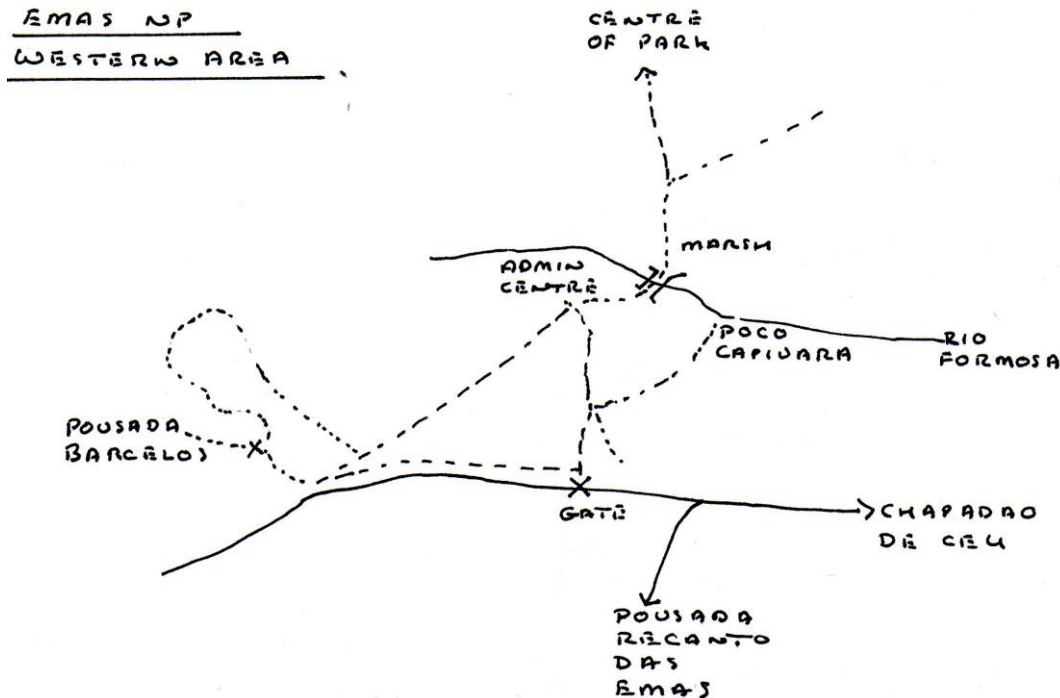
Where I can avoid it I don't use guides as I prefer to find things myself. However I had previously been told you needed guides at all times in Emas so I hired guides throughout my stay. Although this is true if you want to go spotlighting in the park you most definitely do not need to take a guide with you during the day if you stay on the main tracks. However hiring a guide does enable you to explore tracks not available if you don't have a guide.

I used Margie Peixoto for the first three days, and a birding guide Andre for the remainder of the visit. A trainee guide, Bel, also joined us for a few spotlighting sessions. Margie emppeixoto@uol.com.br organised my accommodation, access to the park etc. I spent the first three nights at Margie's house, c.15 kms from the park entrance and the second three nights at Pousada Recanto das Emas 8 kms from the park. Both provided excellent accommodation.

The costs were very reasonable, accommodation including all meals £50 (150 real) per day, guide fees £67 (300 real) per day, entry fees £4 (13 real) per day.

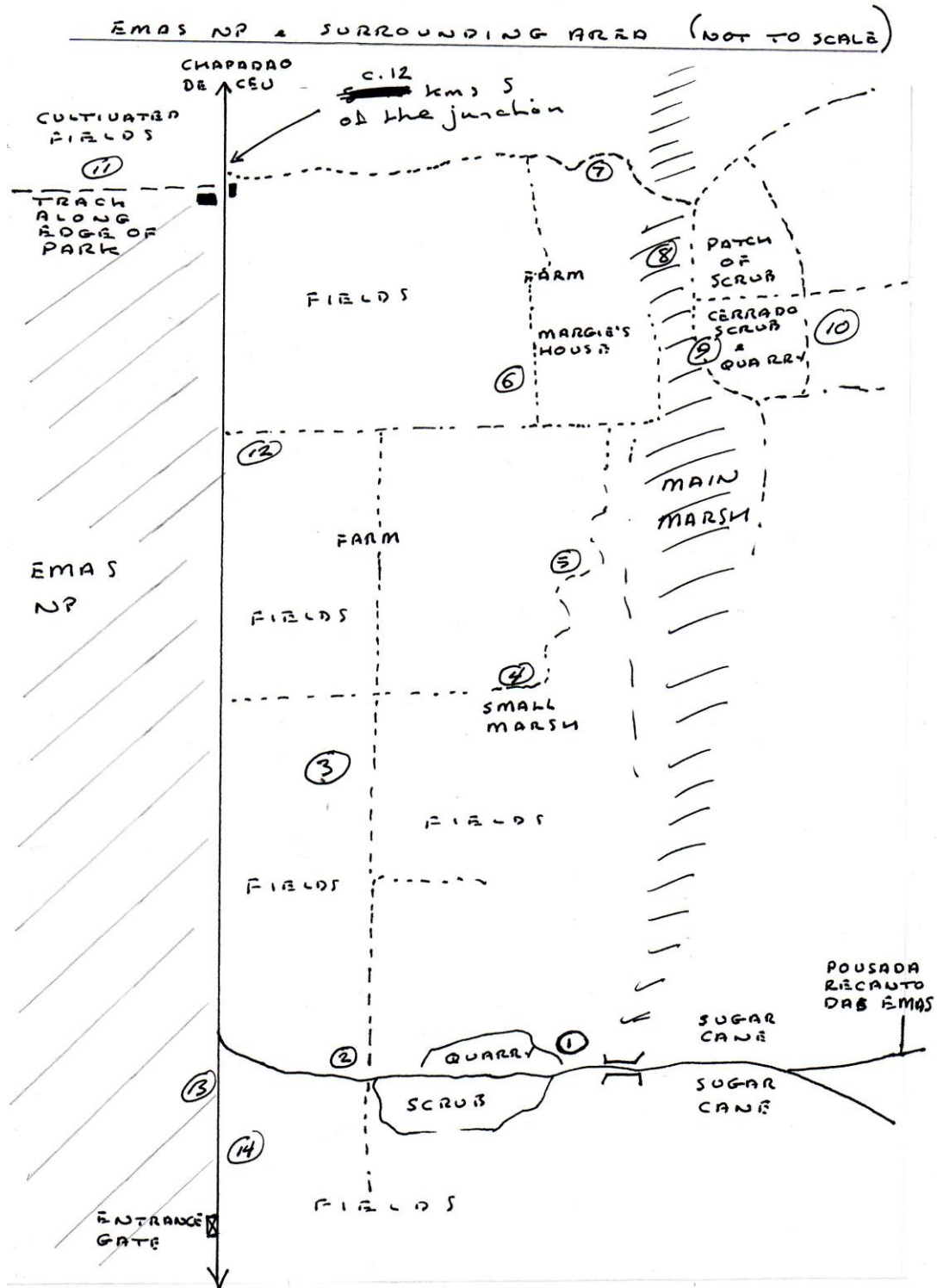
A new pousada, (Pousada Barcelos?), is just being established on the edge of the park. I was not able to check out the accommodation here but the location adjacent to a forested area is superb and is likely to turn up a number of mammals. We saw two species of deer here and Andre had seen Brazilian Porcupine here a few weeks prior to my visit.

We spent days exploring the tracks within the park and the farmland and marshes outside the park. Within the park we mainly explored the western half of the park although we did drive to the eastern limits on one night. Within the park it is essentially a case of driving tracks looking for mammals although it is hard work as the vegetation is quite thick. Unfortunately we did not have any late afternoon rain which might have encouraged mammals out onto the tracks. We spent a lot of time spotlighting the area around the 23.1 km triangle formed by the track that runs along the edge of the park from the entrance gate to Pousada Barcelos, the track from Pousada Barcelos to the administration centre and the track from the entrance gate to the administration centre but also drove out along the main track to km 31 and beyond on 4 occasions. Unfortunately the map I have for the park itself does not scan at all but I have included a sketch map below.



The area outside the park provided far more sightings of mammals. The map below shows some of the best areas outside the park.

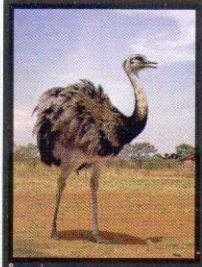
- 1 Water Opossum has been seen in the river and Phil Telfer et al had 3 Pumas between the river and quarry.
- 2 Brazilian Tapir in the fields here.
- 3 Pampas Deer common in the fields here. Also Crab-eating Fox.
- 4 Small marsh with 2 Brazilian Tapirs, Crab-eating Raccoon & Striped Hog-nosed Skunks all seen in the fields here.
- 5 Six-banded Armadillo & Striped Hog-nosed Skunks here the latter along the edge of the marsh.
- 6 Crab-eating Fox.
- 7 Six-banded Armadillo and Striped Hog-nosed Skunk along the track here.
- 8 Giant Anteater & Marsh Deer in the marsh here.
- 9 Crab-eating Fox and Azara's Agouti in the cerrado scrub and quarry. Margie has seen Pampas Cat here.
- 10 Collared Peccary.
- 11 Pampas Deer, White-lipped Peccary and Striped Hog-nosed Skunk along this track with lots of evidence of Brazilian Tapir here.
- 12 Brazilian Tapir in the fields here.
- 13 Maned Wolf feeding on fruit at the edge of the road.
- 14 Brazilian Tapir in the fields here.



CAMPO GRANDE TO EMAS NP

Although I did not have much time to explore in part because of torrential rain on the drive back to Campo Grande I did explore a small patch of cerrado on the south side of the road c. 15 kms west of Paraiso where I found a **Giant Anteater** carrying a young one and several other patches looked worthy of investigation. Judging by the numbers of armadillos and Southern Tamanduas dead on the road it's a rich area.

In addition the road from Chapadao do Sul to Chapadao do Ceu runs through a superb área of short grassland that looks excellent for spotlighting and in hindsight spending a night in Chapadao do Ceu would probably have been worthwhile.



POUSADA RECANTO DAS EMAS. M.S

Fazenda Santo Antônio do Pontal

www.pousadare.chapceu.com.br

Apenas 8,2 Km do Portão Bandeiras do Parque Nacional das Emas (PNE) Patrimônio nacional da humanidade.



O Parque Nacional das Emas, com 131800ha contém a maioria das unidades de paisagem do cerrado (campo limpo, campo sujo, stricto sensu) e formações florestais (vereda, mata ciliar, mata de galeria, mata seca e cerradão). O visitante encontra inúmeras maravilhas na extensa flora e fauna do cerrado (lobo guará, cachorrinho do mato, veado, tamanduá, tatu, queixada, anta e uma enorme diversidade de aves como ema (a maior ave brasileira)



A Pousada é uma casa com 2 quartos com um banheiro, uma suíte, sala com TV, cozinha, lavanderia (com máquina de lavar roupas automática) e área com churrasqueira.