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Otahuna Lodge

Tai Tapu, New Zealand

Well before you pull into the circular gravel drive, lodge owners Myles and Hall are standing on the front steps eager to welcome you to their recently acquired, resplendently restored Victorian manor. An intricately hand-carved kauri wood staircase leads from the old-world parlour to the upper level and seven classic, sumptuously furnished suites. Although each has its own layout and décor, all feature original fireplaces, reading nooks, stained glass windows and deep soaking tubs. Fresh flowers, soft classical music and a sheepskin rug placed by the bed at turndown are some of the smaller details that Myles and Hall insist upon – and this is what keeps Otahuna a cut above the rest. Apart from the accommodation itself, the two big draws here are the food and the gardens. The two go hand in hand because outstanding head chef Jimmy plucks some eighty per cent of the ingredients for his menus from Otahuna's extensive grounds, which support fruit, vegetables, herbs and livestock. If you're lucky, Jimmy's homemade prosciutto will feature in one of the dishes on your five-course degustation menu. Produce aside, the gardens and woodlands themselves attract day visitors and locals stream in from nearby Christchurch in early spring to view the annual explosion of daffodils for which Otahuna Lodge has been famous since 1895. www.otahuna.co.nz