



## OTAHUNA LODGE, CHRISTCHURCH

### Rambling estate with top-grade gardens

Built in 1895 as a residence for politician Sir Heaton Rhodes, Otahuna Lodge is a mish-mash of architectural styles (there are 10 chimneys) that hang together in glorious asymmetry. The 30-acre grounds include one of the country's most significant gardens. Designed by AE Lowe (who trained at Kew), it's composed of lakes, woodlands, daffodil fields, lawns for croquet and pétanque, as well as an outdoor pool.

Now a private lodge owned by an American expat couple, it was damaged in the 2011 earthquake and had substantial repairs before reopening. The original wallpaper and ornate wooden carvings are intact, but it's far from stuffy, with king-size beds in the seven suites, contemporary art and Penhaligon's in the bathrooms. The cellar is filled with local wine to go with chef Jimmy McIntyre's elegant, ingredient-driven dishes. Arrive hungry: this is some of the best food in New Zealand. He draws on Otahuna's vegetable gardens, bakes bread daily and makes enough byproducts from the lodge's pigs to supply the kitchen for the following year. The cooking classes are excellent, and historic Akaroa, where you can swim with wild Hector's dolphins in the harbour, and North Canterbury's wine country are an hour's drive away.

*Doubles from about £1,000*

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