



ESCAPE

# 100% PURE LUXURY

Fancy a restorative mini-break in New Zealand? Book yourself into Otahuna Lodge for an indulgence unlike any other, writes **Elle Lovelock**.

**W**hen you have only 48 hours to enjoy a romantic getaway at a luxury lodge, what do you do first? If you're my partner, you go for a run. Not one to exert myself too much while on holiday, I take the opportunity to have a lie in and a long bath before heading down to the banquet that has been laid on for breakfast.

We're staying at Otahuna Lodge, just 20 minutes' drive south of Christchurch in New Zealand's South Island. Originally built in 1895 for Sir Heaton Rhodes, a high-profile politician in the region, Otahuna has recently been transformed into a five-star lodge. With seven grandly appointed suites – each with a different decorative theme – there is plenty of room to accommodate a full house of 14 guests.

The names of the suites offer a hint of the delights inside. The Botanical Suite is full of pretty floral linens and artworks. The Polo Suite has a Ralph Lauren feel.

We are lucky enough to be staying in the Rhodes Suite, the stately former bedroom of Sir Heaton himself.

Otahuna is one of many luxury lodges in New Zealand. More lavish than a B&B and more intimate than a hotel, these fabulous venues are ideal for travellers who want high-end service with the comforts of home. There's something for everyone, whether you're the outdoorsy type or someone who appreciates fine wines and a well-stocked library.

Armed with maps and tips from locals, we explore the area over two days. The landscape is magnificent. On our first day we take a winding road south, heading towards the quaint fishing village of Akaroa. Although the weather is dry, the mountains are enveloped in fog – the Land of the Long White Cloud has turned on the charm for the tourists.

On day two we stay closer to the outskirts of Christchurch and visit the shipping port of Lyttelton. This particular

weekend, there's a growers' market in town, with a cornucopia of local produce to savour. Yum.

Dinner at Otahuna is a five-course, wine-matched extravaganza. Many of the ingredients, such as porcini mushrooms, are grown on the property and the menu is created only from in-season produce.

Feeling dozy after the feast, we are thankful for the proximity of our bedroom. After all this indulgence, I promise myself that when we travel in the future I'll get up and join my partner on his run. Then again, this kind of luxury holiday doesn't come round very often ...

**H&G**

**For information on travelling in New Zealand, go to [www.newzealand.com](http://www.newzealand.com).**



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