

An aerial photograph of a luxurious lodge complex in New Zealand. The scene features a large, well-maintained green lawn that serves as a golf course, with several buildings scattered across it. One prominent building has a grey roof and a chimney. To the right, a river flows through a dense forest, with white rapids visible. A road winds through the trees in the upper right corner. The overall atmosphere is serene and scenic.

# *Outward* BOUND

NEW ZEALAND'S SPECTACULAR SUPER LODGES HAVE BROUGHT GRAND STYLE TO THE GREAT OUTDOORS. MARION HUME  
REVIEW'S FOUR OF THE BEST, FROM NORTH TO SOUTH ISLAND, AS WELL AS SOME MORE DOWN-TO-EARTH OPTIONS

retouching, and also call in at Arrowtown, an almost comically picturesque old gold-mining settlement. The journey to Whare Kea Lodge from Queenstown should take about 90 minutes.

The lodge is perhaps a slightly controversial choice, given the competition in these parts. The interiors, for example, are nowhere near as glorious as the other Super Lodges. It looks like what it was and still occasionally is: a family's second home (it is owned by the Myer family of Australia). But its location is absolutely wonderful, the views over Lake Wanaka peerless, and the staff warm yet never forelock-tugging. The chef cooks his heart out, then relaxes with you over a glass of Central Otago Pinot Noir and happily shares his recipes for fresh fig and brie tart with watercress and pomegranate molasses, or for the shaved fennel and blood-orange salad with olive salsa that accompanied the seared Aoraki salmon.

But beyond all of these positive attributes, Whare Kea has one trump card no one else can play: Whare Kea Chalet, 6,000ft up on the edge of Mount Aspiring National Park. Climbing up to the chalet would take several days using ropes and crampons. Fortunately, guests can reach it in 20 minutes, courtesy of Charlie Ewing, owner of the nearby Cattle Flat Station in the Matukituki Valley, who pilots his chopper as if it were as familiar to him as driving a tractor – which it probably is. Overnight stays at the chalet (for up to four guests, plus the chalet host and a mountain guide) are only available in summer, although in the winter, when there are often 12ft snowfalls, guests can fly up for lunch.

*Whare Kea Lodge & Chalet, Mt Aspiring Road, Wanaka (00 64 3 443 1400; www.wharekealodge.com). Doubles from about £445, half board*

## OTAHUNA LODGE

For your last stop on the Super Lodge circuit, consider somewhere to do absolutely nothing, except perhaps stroll into a 19th-century orchard and pick an apple to munch while you discuss with the chef what he should harvest for dinner.

Otahuna is a chauffeur-driven ride from prim, pretty and slightly spooky Christchurch (see Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures*, starring a teenage Kate Winslet). A stately place, Otahuna once employed master gardeners from Kew and Blenheim Palace to teach the 11 full-time local gardeners and their apprentices. All to keep the sweeping daffodil lawn, ornate Japanese maples, banks of lavender and the arbour of oak trees up to the standards demanded by local dignitary Sir Heaton Rhodes and his young wife Jessie, for whom this home was built in 1895.

When Miles Refo and Hall Cannon visited in 2005, the Category I-listed building was in a sorry state. Yet the two Americans were so taken with it, they decided to give up their real-estate and publishing careers in Manhattan and relocate to the other side of the world to restore it. After all

► from about £155

**Type** Graciously hosted B&B

**Why** The hosts, a relaxed check-out time, views of the lake; and the price includes pre-dinner drinks as well as breakfast

## OUTSIDE WELLINGTON

► **Wharekauhau Lodge and Country Estate.** Pailiser Bay, Wairarapa (00 64 6 307 7581; www.wharekauhau.co.nz).

Cottages from about £605 for two, including breakfast, pre-dinner drinks and four-course dinner

**Type** Super Lodge

**Why** The contrast between the pounding surf on the black sand of Pailiser Bay and the airy yet snug private cottages. The view from the bathtub is especially good

► **Whangaimoana Garden**

**Retreat.** Featherston (00 64 6 307 7736; www.martinborough.com/whangaimoana). Suites from about £55

**Type** Self-catering in a wing of the Edwardian-style main lodge or a guest cottage

**Why** The glorious location – whether you are a fan of 19th-century grandeur, local fine wine or *The Lord of the Rings* (several of the film locations are nearby)

## SOUTH ISLAND

### NELSON REGION

► **Edenhouse.** Orinoko Valley, Motueka, Nelson (00 64 3 526 8174; www.edenhouse.co.nz). Doubles from about £320, including breakfast

**Type** Discreet guesthouse that sleeps up to six

**Why** Although the house was built in 2003, it has plenty of old-world charm.

**Plus** The Orinoko Valley is one of the sunniest spots in New Zealand

### OUTSIDE CHRISTCHURCH

► **Otahuna Lodge.** See main story

► **Grasmere Lodge.** Cass, Canterbury (00 64 3 318 8407; www.grasmere.co.nz). Suites from about £280 including breakfast, cocktails and dinner

**Type** High-country lodge ►





Otaihuna Lodge: a restored homestead with many fireplaces and just seven suites, including the Verandah Suite, this picture and left

Refo and Cannon have done with the place, which reopened in 2007, the least a gentleman can do is wear a jacket to dinner; and who would have thought there was somewhere in New Zealand suitable for a lady to wear Prada lace? The highest standards are maintained at Otahuna: even the cherished goats, Latte, Suede and Shoes, look groomed and the 'chooks' that lay the breakfast eggs live in a henhouse that wouldn't look out of place in *Martha Stewart* magazine (it was originally the stable for Sir Heaton's stallion).

New Zealand is well-known for its exceptional local produce and at Otahuna everything is either reared nearby or grown in the well-stocked orchards and restored 19th-century potager at the disposal of chef Jimmy McIntyre.

On our trip, dinner began with a leek-and-potato soup with local smoked salmon and a glass of Pegasus Bay Chardonnay from Waipara. The pan-roasted Canterbury beef fillet and braised short-rib ravioli came with vegetables fresh from the soil and a Muddy Water Slowhand Pinot Noir. There was just enough room for a parfait of apples from the orchard and a glass of sweet, sticky Pegasus Bay Aria Late Picked Riesling before heading into the drawing room for New Zealand cheeses and a glass of port (about the only thing served that doesn't come from around here).

Sir Heaton Rhodes had a lifetime to enjoy all this, and if you were to book what was once his suite of rooms, you would need at least three nights to appreciate all 1,100sq ft of bedroom, sitting room, vast bathroom and private balcony. But you'd be equally well accommodated in the suite of rooms that once housed his butler.

*Otahuna Lodge, 224 Rhodes Road, Tai Tapu, Christchurch (00 64 3 329 6333; www.otahuna.co.nz). Doubles from about £450, half board*

➤ **Why** Charm, history, warmth, great walks

➤ **Hapuku Lodge & Tree**

**Houses.** Kalkoura (00 64 3 319 6559; www.hapukulodge.com). Doubles from about £155, including breakfast

**Type** Eco-friendly accommodation which includes six guestrooms in the main lodge, a self-contained apartment and three tree houses

**Why** You can see the ocean from and might even spot a whale. **Plus** The owners plant an indigenous shrub for every guest-night spent here

**QUEENSTOWN & CENTRAL OTAGO**

➤ **Whare Kea Lodge & Chalet**

See main story  
**➤ Eichardt's Private Hotel**  
 Marine Parade, Queenstown (00 64 3 441 0450; www.eichardthotel.co.nz). Suites from about £440 including breakfast

**Type** Five super-smart hotel suites and four cottages

**Why** For the stunning lakefront location. Expect possum-fur rugs and complimentary port placed by your own roaring fire

➤ **Azur.** 23 Mackinnon Terrace, Queenstown (00 64 3 409 0588; www.azur.co.nz). Suites from about £585, including breakfast, afternoon tea and pre-dinner drinks

**Type** Deluxe B&B villas

**Why** If you like modern interiors and sweeping views, this is the place

➤ **Commonage Villas.** 15 Kerry Drive, Queenstown Hill, Queenstown (00 64 3 442 8000; www.commonagevillas.com). Villas from about £380, including limousine airport pick-up and concierge service

**Type** Luxury self-catering villas (with between one and three bedrooms)

**Why** This is a new venture from Victoria Shaw, the woman behind Eichardt's (which is recommendation enough for those in the know). **Plus** it's just minutes from Queenstown's buzzy entertainment scene. Chef service is available



➤ **Blanket Bay.** Glenorchy, Otago (00 64 3 441 0115; www.blanketbay.com). Doubles from £430, including breakfast, cocktails and dinner

**Type** Super Lodge on Lake Wakatipu, with lodge and chalet suites

**Why** The rugged mountain views from the hot tub are excellent, best enjoyed with a glass of Champagne

**WEST COAST**

➤ **Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki** (00 64 3 750 0881; www.wildernesslodge.co.nz). Doubles from about £235

**Type** Remote lodge owned by an ecologist couple

**Why** For the lake and river walks and canoeing, and for staying amid 2.7 million hectares of wilderness. Nature guides are available

**DUNEDIN & THE OTAGO PENINSULA**

➤ **Larnach Castle.** Otago Peninsula (00 64 3 476 1616; www.larnachcastle.co.nz). Doubles from about £100, including breakfast

**Type** New Zealand's only castle, with 12 themed

rooms in the main lodge  
**Why** Worth doing once. The decor is an acquired taste, but the castle itself, built by a larger-than-life banker in the 19th-century, is astonishing

➤ **Useful websites**

Small Luxury Hotels (www.slh.com); The Kiwi Collection (www.kiwicollection.com); New Zealand Lodge Association (www.lodgesofnz.co.nz); The Bed & Breakfast Book (www.bnb.co.nz); Bookabach (www.bookabach.co.nz). For general tourist information, visit: www.newzealand.com

**GETTING TO NEW ZEALAND**

**Air New Zealand** (0800 028 4149; www.airnewzealand.co.uk) has daily flights from Heathrow to Auckland, via Los Angeles or Hong Kong, as well as internal flights around the country. **Bridge & Wickers** (020 7483 6555; www.bridgeandwickers.co.uk) offers tailor-made trips to New Zealand, staying at many of the lodges featured.



PHOTOGRAPHS: KEBIAN SCOTT; MAP: NICK GOWEN