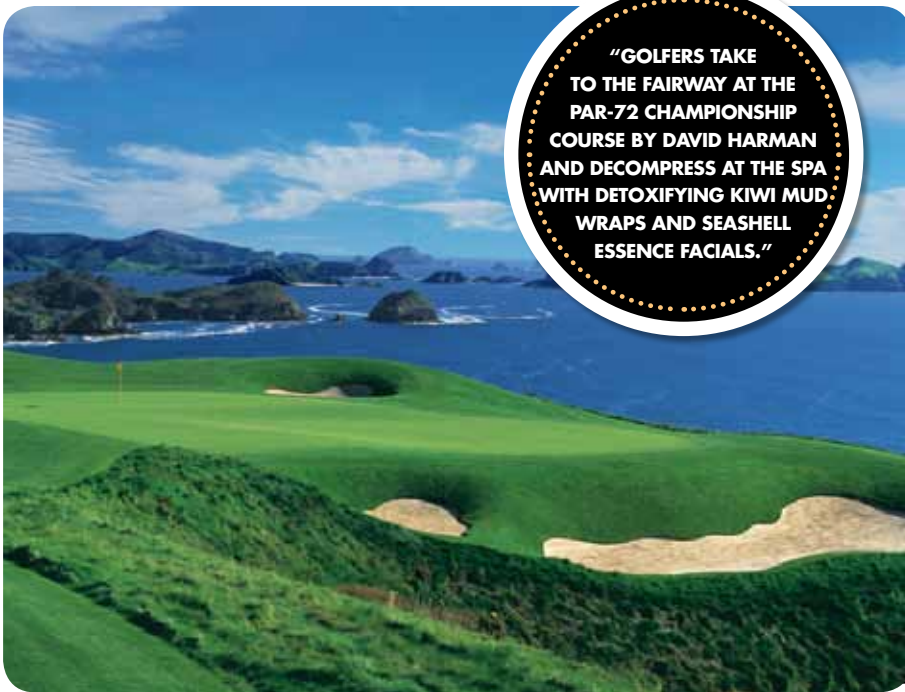


NATURAL BEAUTY

THREE OF NEW ZEALAND'S PREMIER DESTINATIONS CAPTURE THE SPIRIT OF THIS SMALL YET STAGGERINGLY STUNNING COUNTRY

[BY ALISON MALONE EATHORNE]

On September 9, the world's attention turns to a South Pacific nation as it hosts the Rugby World Cup 2011. For New Zealand, the birthplace of rugby and a country that lives and breathes its national sport, it's an opportunity to show the world why it's one of the most desirable places to live on the planet. Home to just shy of 4.5 million people, Aotearoa — “the land of the long white cloud” — is renowned for its awe-inspiring natural beauty and wildly diverse landscapes and climates. Spanning 1,600 kilometres in length from north to south, New Zealand is characterized by subtropical weather, white-sand beaches, geothermal activity, rolling hills, fertile land, deep fjords and snow-capped mountain ranges. Here, we take you to three of New Zealand's premier destinations — and three of its finest boutique lodges.



"GOLFERS TAKE TO THE FAIRWAY AT THE PAR-72 CHAMPIONSHIP COURSE BY DAVID HARMAN AND DECOMPRESS AT THE SPA WITH DETOXIFYING KIWI MUD WRAPS AND SEASHELL ESSENCE FACIALS."



BAY OF ISLANDS

Home to 150 lush islands and crystal-clear waters, the Bay of Islands is an aquatic paradise. Located in the Northland region, the area offers myriad outdoor pursuits and a rich history. Sailboats and luxury yachts take visitors to private beaches for swimming, snorkeling and sea kayaking, while fishing enthusiasts try their hand at catching yellow fin tuna, marlin or kahawai; scuba divers discover beautiful reefs, captivating marine life and sunken vessels prime for deep-sea exploration. Activities on land and in the air include quad biking in the dunes at Ninety Mile Beach, scenic helicopter flights, visits to Rainbow Falls, Doubtless Bay and the Puketi Kauri Forest, and traditional New Zealand pig hunts. Local history is shared at early Maori and European settlements, the Waitangi Treaty Ground and Russell, the country's first capital.



▲ PHOTO: RELAX IN SERENITY BY KAURI CLIFF'S INFINITY POOL.



▲ PHOTO: A SPECTACULAR MEAL AT THE LODGE AT KAURI CLIFFS OFFERED UP THIS SCRUPTIOSUS SCALLOP DISH.

STAY

Showcasing panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean, Cape Brett and the Cavalli Islands, the Lodge at Kauri Cliffs is set on 6,000 acres near Matauri Bay, just 30 kilometres north of the Bay of Islands. The luxury lodge is made up of 22 stunning guest suites, a 4,200-square-foot owner's cottage, tennis courts, a Jacuzzi, sauna, fitness centre, and infinity and lap pools. Executive chef Barry Frith serves a daily-changing menu using ingredients from the region's land and sea — including exquisite New Zealand lamb and beef — and prepares barbecues at Kauri Cliffs' private beaches. Golfers take to the fairway at the par-72 championship course by David Harman and decompress at the spa with detoxifying kiwi mud wraps and seashell essence facials.

HAWKE'S BAY

Graced by one of New Zealand's premier wine regions, Hawke's Bay is characterized by rolling fertile land, a Mediterranean climate and dramatic coastline. Located on the North Island, the area is home to the towns of Napier and Hastings — and more than 70 world-class wineries. Outdoor pursuits include fly fishing for trout, swimming at Ocean and Waimarama beaches, white-water rafting down the Mohaka River, trekking on horseback, touring a Marae (Maori meeting house) and picnicking along an oceanside walking trail. On discovery walks, wildlife enthusiasts visit the colony of 20,000 Gannet birds and learn about the Kiwi, New Zealand's rare and endangered bird. Gourmands visit artisan food producers, farmers' markets and orchards, while thrill seekers take to



▲ PHOTO: THE FIVE-STAR FARM AT CAPE KIDNAPPERS OFFERS SPECTACULAR VIEWS OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN



▲ PHOTO: MATAKAURI LODGE SITS ON THE EDGE OF LAKE WAKATIPU.

the skies for a hot-air balloon ride over the area's bucolic landscape.

STAY

Nestled on a rural 6,000-acre working sheep and cattle farm in the Hawke's Bay region, the five-star Farm at Cape Kidnappers offers spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean. The 24 suites and four-bedroom owner's cottage define modern farmhouse style thanks to rustic, natural materials and contemporary art and furnishings. Come mealtime, guests savour local wines — such as Kidnapper Cliffs — and the daily-changing menu by head chef Tim Pickering, who plucks from the lodge's vegetable garden. At the spa, guests gaze at snow-capped Mount Ruapehu while indulging in the healing jade and crystal facial or geothermal scrub and mud wrap. Designed by golf architect Tom Doak, Cape Kidnappers' par-71 golf course was ranked among the top 50 golf courses in the world by Golf magazine.

QUEENSTOWN

Queenstown, New Zealand's world-renowned four-season adventure town is surrounded by the South Island's majestic Southern Alps and sparkling Lake Wakatipu. At this adrenaline capital of the world, the young and young at heart stay active with everything from skiing and snowboarding at four world-class ski areas to white-water rafting and jet boating. But when it comes to thrills, Queenstown is perhaps best known for bungee jumping. Nevis, the highest in New Zealand, sees brave souls jump from 134 metres

above the Nevis River and freefall for 8.5 seconds. Meanwhile, oenophiles stay on solid ground at the more than 75 wineries in Queenstown and the Gibbston Valley.

STAY

Mere minutes from Queenstown, Matakauri Lodge sits on the edge of Lake Wakatipu with views of the Remarkable, Walter Peak and Cecil mountain ranges. Masterminded by interior designer Virginia Fisher, the luxury alpine lodge features 11 guest suites, a swimming pool, Jacuzzi, sauna, yoga studio and spa, where guests indulge in holistic kiwi facials and earth stone massages. In the dining room, executive chef Dale Gartland serves a daily-changing menu featuring seasonally driven, modern European cuisine. After a successful day of fly-fishing, Gartland will transform guests' fresh catches into first-class meals. 🍷



▲ PHOTO: THE LOUNGE AT MATAKAURI LODGE ENABLES GUESTS TO TAKE IN THE REMARKABLE VIEWS