

# New Zealand

FORGET EUROPE—CROSS THE OTHER HORIZON AND YOU'LL FIND SOME SPECTACULAR GOLF *By* MICHAEL MALLOY

## Kauri Cliffs

### *Kerikeri*

 7,119 yards, par 72; **Green fees:** \$260; 01164-94070060, [kauricliffs.com](http://kauricliffs.com)

Opened eight years ago on the northeastern coast of the North Island, Kauri Cliffs was the first salvo in Wall Street tycoon Julian Robertson's bid to make New Zealand a golf destination. He landed one hell of a blow. This David Harman design occupies a spectacular setting overlooking the Pacific and features numerous forced carries over breathtaking—and knee-knocking—gorges. The four-hole stretch from 14 through 17 clings precariously to the cliffs and, depending on the wind, can offer you some of the most memorable birdies (or unmentionables) of your life. But the real quality of Kauri Cliffs is evident in the inland holes. The 560-yard par-5 4th, named “Cambo” after local hero Michael Campbell, is a superb risk/reward challenge, with a ravine lurking on the right and bunkers short left. Nos. 10 and 11 are short par 4s with receptive landing areas, but both demand premium shots on the approaches. This is the kind of course that demands you play 36 a day—if you have balls remaining for the second round.

The oceanfront fifth hole at Kauri Cliffs.

PHOTOGRAPHY: KAURI CLIFFS (2)

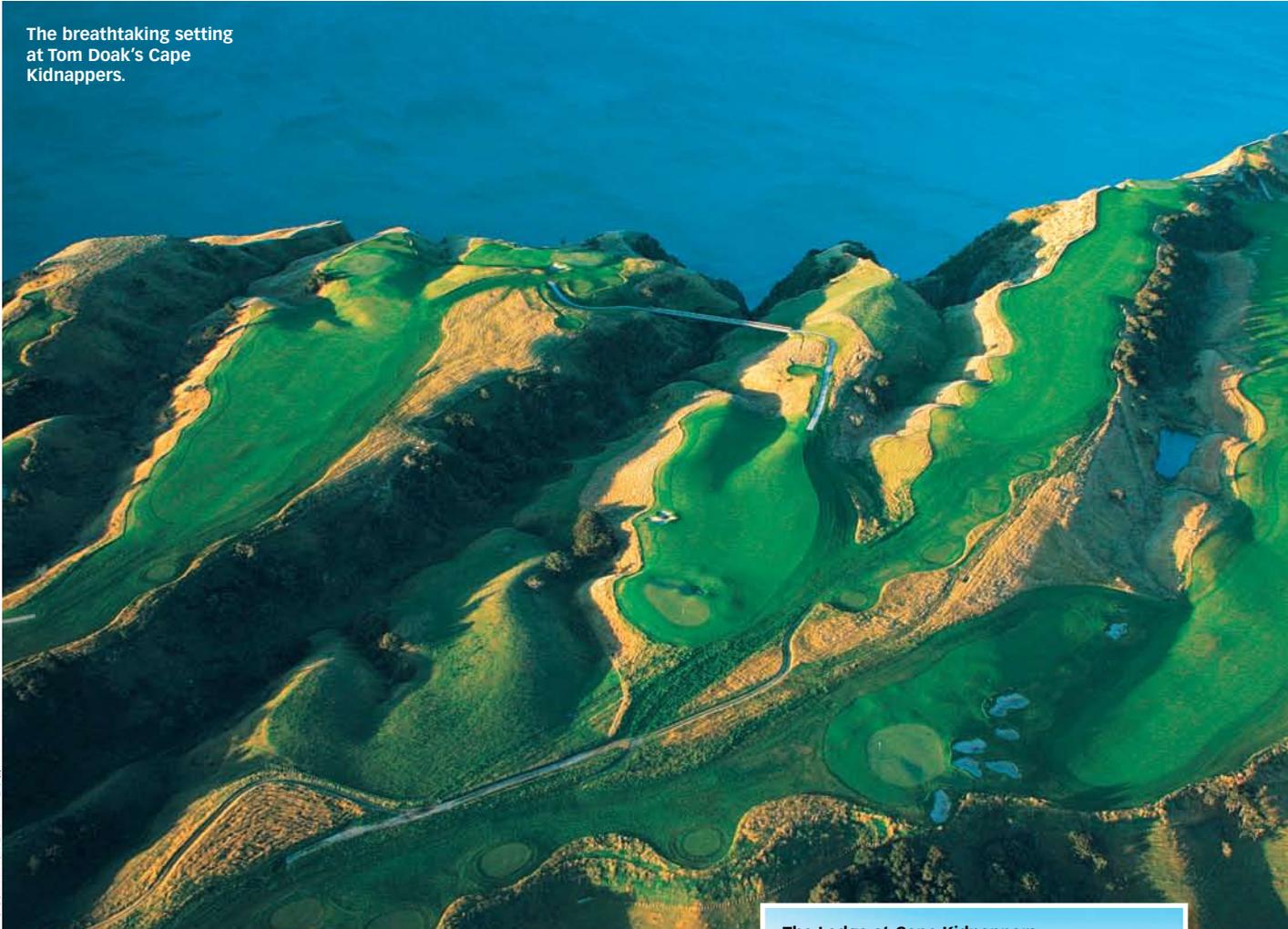
# A

AMERICAN GOLFERS who have chosen to cross the Pacific Ocean rather than the Atlantic for great golf have invariably sought out the fine Sandbelt courses of Australia. But thanks to two courses created by Wall Street legend Julian Robertson and a new course by Jack Nicklaus, New Zealand is more than just a country golfers fly over on the way to the first tee at Royal Melbourne. What it lacks in number of courses New Zealand makes up for in quality. For West Coast golfers who aren't eager to fly all the way to Scotland for bad weather and worse food, look west—Robertson's two tracks alone more than justify the trip.



It's hard to find a bad view at The Lodge at Kauri Cliffs.

The breathtaking setting at Tom Doak's Cape Kidnappers.



PHOTOGRAPHY: CAPE KIDNAPPERS (2)

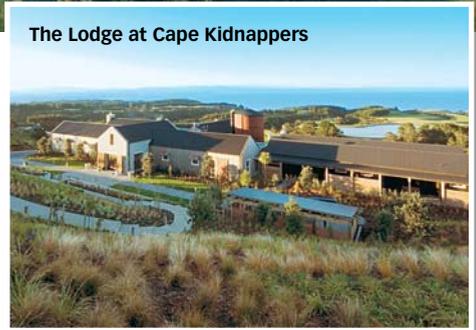
## Cape Kidnappers

### Hawke's Bay

 7,119 yards, par 71; **Green fees:** \$260; 01164-68731018, [capekidnappers.com](http://capekidnappers.com)

There are few more majestic sites for a golf course than the 5,000-acre sheep station on the southeastern tip of the North Island that was handed to designer Tom Doak by Robertson in 2003. Doak designed a masterpiece that is ranked No. 41 on *Golf Magazine's* Top 100 Courses in the World, its holes draped over seven fingers of land that slide down to the very edge of the 600-foot-high cliffs. Three holes in particular—Nos. 14, 15 and 16 (which feature names like “Widow’s Walk” and “Pirate’s Plank”)—are daunting promontories that seem balanced delicately above the sheer drop. If you’re afraid of heights, you might want to pack some pills for this round. Cape Kidnappers earns the highest accolade possible for a serious golfer to pay—it’s so good, and the setting so stunning, that you forget about your score.

The Lodge at Cape Kidnappers



“If you’re afraid of heights, you might want to pack some pills for this round”



## Wairakei Golf Course

### Taupo

 7,050 yards, par 72; **Green fees:** \$95-\$130;  
01164-73748152, [wairakeigolfcourse.co.nz](http://wairakeigolfcourse.co.nz)

Ask most golfers in New Zealand to name their favorite courses, and chances are most will include this beautiful layout set amid the breathtaking volcanic cones in the Lake Taupo region of the North Island. Designed by Michael Wolveridge, Commander John Harris, and former British Open champion Peter Thomson, this layout slices through a dense forest and was really the first New Zealand course to earn international acclaim. You'll most remember "The Rogue," the 600-yard 14th hole that demands three smart, safe shots to have any chance at reaching the green in regulation.



The new Nicklaus design at Kinloch.

PHOTOGRAPHY: NICKLAUS DESIGN

## Kinloch Golf Course

### Kinloch

 7,209 yards, par 72; **Green fee:** \$137;  
01164-73778484, [kinloch-golf.com](http://kinloch-golf.com)

It sounds as though it belongs in the Scottish Highlands, but Kinloch—Jack Nicklaus's first course in this country—is only a short drive from Wairakei. What he created is a challenging but fair romp, dotted with plenty of fescue and bunkers, and sporting a lot of elevation changes that test your imagination and patience. The Bear keeps the test going right to the last: the 18th hole opens with a blind tee shot and ends with a stern approach shot over a pond. 

## The South Island

New Zealand's South Island is beautiful, but it has suffered from a lack of big drawing cards for golfers. That is slowly beginning to change, however. In Queenstown, **Millbrook Resort** (\$45-\$110; 01164-34417000, [millbrook.co.nz](http://millbrook.co.nz)) is a pleasant course designed by local legend and PGA Tour star Bob Charles. A new course nearby is **Jacks Point** (\$50-\$76; 01164-34500248, [jackspoint.com](http://jackspoint.com)), where the tee shot at No. 15 demands you hit across a sheep pasture and back into the fairway. This could be the course that pulls golfers South.



### WHERE TO STAY

Robertson's properties are as good as his courses. Try **The Lodge at Kauri Cliffs** (rooms from \$640 per night, [kauricliffs.com](http://kauricliffs.com)) or **The Lodge at Cape Kidnappers** (rooms from \$590 per night, [capekidnappers.com](http://capekidnappers.com)). In the Lake Taupo region, visit **Huka Lodge** (01164-73785791, [hukalodge.co.nz](http://hukalodge.co.nz)), where rooms start at \$890 per person, per night.



### GETTING THERE

Air New Zealand offers 3 nonstop flights daily from Los Angeles and one from San Francisco. Call 800-262-1234 or visit [airnewzealand.com](http://airnewzealand.com) for more information. For a complete guide to New Zealand golf vacations, go to [bestofnewzealandgolf.com](http://bestofnewzealandgolf.com)

