

GO NZ: Hotels »



Indulge me

Border closures mean there are more rooms for Kiwis at the high-end inns, writes Ewan McDonald

Let me be surrounded by luxury — I can do without the necessities, declared Oscar Wilde. He was never one to pass up an opportunity for self-indulgence and Kiwis, too, can catch a lucky weekend — or longer — break in 2021.

There are quite a few more rooms at our high-end inns, lodges and boutique hotels at the moment and managements have, as they say, adjusted their expectations to match domestic rather than international credit cards.

For those times when you — or someone close to you — deserves a real treat, here's a guide to some of our cities' most luxurious accommodation and a host of establishments that have recently opened their doors.

AUCKLAND

Suppose they threw a party and no one came... well, they have, just not as many as the America's Cup organisers were expecting. Result: an easy win for Kiwis on, or close to, the Waitemata.

Park Hyatt, behind Team NZ's base, reflects our culture and history — the outside is intended to evoke a korowai and the inside is modern minimalist with a touch of the nauticals. Check out the spa and eateries — the main restaurant, Onemata, focuses on seasonal produce.

Hotel Britomart is an eco-friendly hotel with 99 rooms and five suites with outdoor terraces. Expect attention to fine details; hand-made brick exterior, timber-lined rooms, door handles crafted from Northland driftwood dipped in brass, a feature wall of Muriwai black sand and 5-green star ethics. **Hotel Fitzroy**, curated by Fable, is a historic Ponsonby villa, modernised with contemporary touches and art, with 10 beautifully outfitted suites.

West of the city, **Castaways Resort & Spa** at Karioitahi Beach offers glamping cabins, outdoor baths, a Balinese-inspired day spa and clifftop restaurant. North, **Te Arai Lodge** is an eco-friendly oasis surrounded by 8ha of ancient forest and native bush, presenting garden-to-table dining, hiking, massage and beauty therapy, yoga and exercise classes.

WAIKATO

Re-imagining an earlier hotel above the river in Hamilton's CBD, **Ramada Hamilton** has 35 suites and the refurbished and the renamed Sisterfields restaurant, cafe and bar.

BAY OF PLENTY

Our oldest tourist town celebrated its first five-



Tauranga's Trinity Wharf Hotel (top); Te Arai Lodge (above), luxury accommodation in north Auckland. Photos / Supplied. Trey Ratcliff

star international hotel when the **Pullman Rotorua** opened in January. A 130-room hotel with city and lake views, the top floor's 50sq m suites have 180-degree views, a living room and luxurious freestanding tub.

In Tauranga, **Trinity Wharf** is a 123-room waterfront hotel reminiscent of a cruise ship, complete with wraparound deck. For those who've been missing their Gold Coast break, the Mount's **Pacific Apartments** may come close to recreating that experience.

HAWKE'S BAY

We'll stick our neck out and say Hawke's Bay does luxury sleeping better than just about anywhere else in Aotearoa, with bonus wining and dining. **The Farm at Cape Kidnappers** has been named best resort in Australia and New Zealand for the past couple of years for its stunning setting and golf course and cuisine, elegance and attention to detail.

Mangapapa Hotel, the former Wattie homestead in Hastings, offers boutique accommodation with history and spa treats.

Black Barn and Craggy Range wineries' five-star "cottages" are the ultimate in boutique accommodation.



Naumi Studio Hotel, Wellington (top); 14th Lane, Blenheim; King and Queen Suites, New Plymouth (left). Photos / Supplied

TARANAKI

Rapidly becoming a favourite weekend getaway, New Plymouth has welcomed several luxe lodges and hotels lately. In private and tranquil surroundings, **Platinum Lodge's** on-site spa curates a range of tailored packages; **King and Queen** is a Moroccan-themed, city-centre boutique hotel; the town's oldest wooden building has been restored and filled with art and furnishings to become the **Nice Hotel** and award-winning restaurant. In Hawera, **Tairoa Lodge** has tastefully styled rooms and two cottages nestled among mature trees.



WELLINGTON

Tip o' the Panama to a friend who went to Wellington for a reunion and recommends the **Bolton**, rising 19 floors from the street of the same name near Parliament (not sure if that's a recommendation). With shops, cafes, restaurants and the waterfront an easy stroll, the hotel has 139 stylish

rooms and an in-house restaurant, Artisan.

In Cuba St, the landmark Salvation Army People's Palace hotel has been re-imagined as **Naumi Studio Hotel**, a 116-room property of "eclectic spaces inspired by seafaring and the literary world". Its Lola Rouge restaurant will serve Pan Asian-inspired cuisine.

TOP OF THE SOUTH

One of Blenheim's early nightclubs, long empty, has a new life as the **14th Lane Urban Hotel**, the latest venture of local hospo veterans Vicky and Craig Young and their business partner, Janet Enright. It's taken almost three years of "dreaming and planning" to turn the shell into an upmarket hotel with eight spacious bedrooms, each containing a self-contained kitchen or kitchenette. Along the coast in Nelson, **Wakefield Quay House** is an elegant B&B in a 1905 villa overlooking the waterfront, 2km from the city centre; **The Sails** luxury accommodation

is on the city fringe; and **The Crow's Nest** in Tahunanui, is a standalone, two-level house with a private sundeck and uninterrupted sea views.

CHRISTCHURCH

An eight-year run as New Zealand's Leading Boutique Hotel at the World Travel Awards says it all about **The George**. Next to Hagley Park and the Avon, the spacious, state-of-the-art Park Suites tick all the boxes; enjoy dinner at its 50 Bistro or stroll to the city's new dining precinct. New arrivals include 40-room **Muse Art Hotel**, with each of its five floors assigned to a local artist to decorate, and 88-room **Hotel Cosa**, constructed from modules built in Vietnam and fitted together on-site like Lego bricks. Shades of the post-earthquake use of containers in the city, perhaps.

QUEENSTOWN

Naumi extends its whimsical ways (see Wellington) with two sites in this part of the world. At **The Central** in the middle of town, "a creative, cool vibe meets a sense of childlike curiosity" as an earlier hotel is transformed with "a bold design inspired by magic, nature and vivid colour". **The Dairy** began life as Queenstown's original corner store in the 1920s in a prime position against the backdrop of The Remarkables and Lake Wakatipu. It's described as somewhere between a lodge and a hotel, European style of "lived-in yet rustic glamour". For those seeking upmarket but more traditional accommodation, consider the new downtown **Holiday Inn**; **Ramada Queenstown Central** — the company's flagship property in New Zealand with spectacular lake, mountain and Central Otago views; and **LQ Queenstown by Wyndham**, opened in December with hotel and apartment-style rooms.

DUNEDIN

You can't stay in a real castle in Aotearoa but here's the next-door thing. **Larnach Lodge** is a recreation of a colonial farm building in the grounds of Larnach Castle. Its 12 individually decorated rooms have dramatic Otago Harbour views — and you can dine in the castle. For a luxury eco-accommodation experience, **Hereweka Garden Retreat** — also on Otago Peninsula — has been designed to blend in with its 4ha garden, bush and water setting. In the city, **The Chamberlain Hotel** has thoughtfully crafted spacious apartment-style rooms inside a heritage-listed former warehouse, making the most of the original features; a Fable property, the **Wains Hotel Dunedin** is likewise housed in a renovated Victorian building with 50 light and airy rooms and suites. Opening soon is **Ebb-Dunedin**, a modern boutique hotel with 27 rooms, a two-bed penthouse suite and cafe/wine bar next to an art-filled atrium garden.

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14TH LANE
URBAN HOTEL

Wake up here, in Marlborough. Luxury accommodation in convenient, central Blenheim location. Perfect for work or play. Enjoy 20% off the individual room rack rate on one and two-night stays. Book direct online and use code **NZME20** at checkout. Valid for bookings 01 Feb – 30 Jun 2021.

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