

CENTURION

M A G A Z I N E

SPRING | SUMMER 2020

The Kiwi Connection

THE OWNERS OF NEW ZEALAND'S LUXURY LODGES CONTINUE TO UP THEIR GAME WITH NEW VILLA PROJECTS THAT CAPITALIZE ON TWO OF THE COUNTRY'S BEST ATTRIBUTES: STUNNING LANDSCAPES AND ACRES OF PRIVACY.

by Kendall Hill





Coming in for a landing at the Lodge at Kauri Cliffs.

T

The New Zealand statistic most often quoted refers to its sheep—there are roughly six of them to every human that calls this pair of southwestern Pacific islands home. But there’s another population worth noting: the number of inspired travelers and home buyers that have been lured to the country’s coastal playgrounds, mountain dreamscapes, and rolling hills in search of a far-flung refuge. To meet the demand, both homegrown and expat entrepreneurs are continuing to improve their offerings with ultraluxury villas and estates. CENTURION checked in to the newest among these passion projects.

64

THE LODGE AT KAURI CLIFFS

American billionaire Julian Robertson is a veritable rock star in New Zealand for his game-changing lodges (or super lodges, as they are known throughout the country), and this one, set on the North Island’s Matauri Bay, is his enduring pride. Opened nearly 20 years ago, Robertson’s first foray into hospitality is still a benchmark for luxury, its 24 cottages sitting primly in a manicured corner of a 6,000-acre cattle and sheep farm, along with a spa nestled in the native totara forest and a championship golf course.



Never one to rest on his laurels, Robertson—now 87 and owner of three super lodges across the North and South Islands—has added a trio of new residences to Kauri’s verdant campus. Designed by New Zealand native Virginia Fisher, who created the lodge’s original look in 2001, the lofty retreats channel Cape Cod with a palette of whites, creams, and stripy blues warmed by vintage timbers and a collection of local art and objets. There’s little reason to leave, between the chef’s kitchens (from which six-course degustation menus are just as likely to emerge as perfectly wood-fired pizzas) and the spacious living rooms (which open up onto ocean-facing verandas and 25-foot saltwater swimming pools). Still, it would be a shame to remain hidden away for long: No trip to the lodge would be complete without paying a visit to Todd Candy, the resident farm manager who, along with his 11 sheepdogs, introduces



Left: Fresh-caught hapuku fish with vegetables from the Lindis’s garden. Above: The Lindis’s undulating glass-and-timber façade.



guests to the thousands of furry residents who also call Kauri Cliffs home. *From \$11,000; robertsonlodges.com.*

THE LINDIS

Deep in the heart of the South Island, a scenic 2½-hour drive (or 30-minute helicopter ride) north of Queenstown, lies the Ahuriri Valley, part of one of the world's few dark-sky reserves and surrounded by towering mountaintops and burnished grasslands. Cradled in the glacial gorge under an undulating timber rooftop is this solar-powered, geothermally heated residence, built by the British entrepreneur Richard Magides. Inside, five suites are adorned with architectural furnishings and light fixtures—but it's outside where guests may prefer to stay, in the three mirrored “pod” accommodations, each with a king-sized bed, en suite bathroom, and private deck with a hot tub perfect for starlit soaking.

When not gazing skyward or glued to the views, guests at the Lindis can hike the surrounding 6,500-acre Ben Avon

sheep station, go gliding over the Southern Alps, ride on horseback through the Omarama Valley, or fish for rainbow trout in the Ahuriri River. There are also wine tours and helicopter rides to Franz Josef Glacier and Mount Cook, the country's highest peak. Back at the lodge, the dark, clear nights are enjoyed with New Zealand wine from the well-stocked cellar and local alpine salmon or venison along with a fresh harvest from the garden. *From \$1,285; thelindigroup.com.*

THE LANDING

It's a short but spectacular helicopter ride across Matauri Bay to the Purerua Peninsula, where this collection of four private villas spreads discreetly across a sprawling seafront in the Bay of Islands. The flagship is the five-bedroom Cooper Residence, named for its creator, New Zealand developer Peter Cooper. The billionaire spared



Above, from top: Falcon Brae Villa's media room, overlooking Kahurangi National Park; stand-up paddleboarding on Wairoa Bay.

Right: The Landing's four-bedroom Gabriel Residence, with views of Te Pahi Island.

no expense, even adding a wine cellar, a tasting room, and a rooftop observatory. The same attention to detail went into the other three residences. In the Vineyard Villa, Maori artifacts pay homage to the seminal role the region and its original inhabitants played in New Zealand's history—as an early 19th-century trading post for the British. The two-bedroom Boathouse is a waterfront estate with courtyards and terraces built for breezy evenings. And overlooking Wairoa Bay, the Gabriel Residence is situated for maximum views from its many decks.

There's a melding of landscapes across the 1,000 acres, with wild wetlands and native forests merging into well-tended lawns and rows of vines. But the result is hardly a clash of styles; rather, it's a harmonious meeting of them, where guests can just as easily track endangered kiwis or zip across the bay in the cruiser *Iti Rangī* as they can sip the latest Landing Chardonnay at the estate's new winery. *From \$2,660; thelandingnz.com.*

FALCON BRAE VILLA

John and Kate Kerr first came to the idyllic Motueka River to fish for wild brown trout. What they found was more than an angler's dream: Set amid the jagged mountains of Kahurangi National Park, dotted with sheep farms and timber forests, the area is a picturesque paradise in the South Island's sleepy Nelson Tasman region—so much so that the



Kerrs put down permanent roots, building the charming Stonefly Lodge for other adventurers to join in fishing outings, as well as communal dinners and convivial evenings warmed by a roaring fire.

For the outdoor enthusiast with a penchant for privacy, Stonefly has a new neighbor: Falcon Brae, a 7,750-square-foot villa located a stone's throw from the main lodge, also managed by

the Kerrs. There, families and groups of up to ten can find plenty to do with or without fishing, such as hiking the villa's 350 private acres, going for a dip in the river-view pool, and, at night, sitting down to four-course dinners cooked by a private chef. Adorned with *iwi* (Maori tribe) artworks and clad in oak, cedar, and richly hued Italian marble, the solar-paneled villa also has a private lounge, a panoramic deck, a games den and gym, and, just beyond, a helipad for more escapades farther afield. *From \$4,140; stoneflylodge.co.nz.* 