

# Vine Romance







Amid the splendour of the Far North **DENNIS & ROSAMUND KNILL** visit a winery of grand proportions with luxurious accommodation to share a bounty of fine wine and gourmet delights.

**D**on't worry about packing an alarm clock. You only need to listen for the Kiwis that routinely punctuate the morning. And if you sleep through the dawn then there's the chorus of the native birds as they warm up for the day ahead.

While nature and eco themes imbue all of The Landing's features you will begin to feel a million miles from the nearest town. With only four luxury villas delicately located around the property the designer's instinct with an eye for character-rich heritage architecture lends itself to contemporary makeovers that have been built around mother-nature. The feel here is eco cool with enough mod cons to put it in the luxury class. Fringed by six beaches The Landing is a sanction of peace and tranquillity combined with privacy and discretion.



And in a land that is not short of competition in terms of sumptuous multi-million dollar winery developments this commodious 1000 acre span of elegance with breath-taking views over islands and the sea has an immediate impact the moment you drive through the security gates.

After entering the grandest of gates we are right in the middle of Northlands most coveted stretch of exclusive beachside real estate that has established itself as one of the world's most front ranking wineries. You can sense the imposing atmosphere from the very beginning. As the anticipation grows you pass vast fields of grapevines, manicured rolling hills as far as the eye can see, millions of native trees that are indigenous to the area with endless bushwalks of sheer beauty that will give you muscles that you never knew you had.

It's not often that we are speechless but as we drop our bags in the living room of The Boathouse we don't know whether to turn left or right or just stare straight ahead at the spectacular coastline.

There is something impossibly romantic about a place that changes with the wind or hour of the day. During a sudden storm one afternoon the sun fled, the trees shook before a gusting wind sent waves crashing over the

coastal wall and soon a torrent of rain enveloped the property. Then just as abruptly the storm ended the sun reappeared, the turquoise was restored to the sea and the terraced lawns were greener than ever. This is such a special place where you want for nothing except perhaps for a hand full of your closest friends to share the experience with.

The food is the responsibility of Head Chef Jackie Smith who pursues a predominantly modern yet classic French approach with menu combinations of tastes and textures supplemented with their own outstanding in-house garden and farm produce. From fresh fruit and vegetables to free-range eggs and locally caught fish and farmed meats the daily menu offers a taste of magic that lingers on. The freshness and balance of flavours is a document of her passions captured in highly worked plates united with a rare finesse that will keep your taste buds alive. Her smarts are well showcased with imaginative and enduring food over breakfast lunch and dinner. Alternatively for those that want self-catering you have the option of bringing in your own ingredients. Either way this is an engaging feature and part of the of the overall package.

And then there's the wine. As winemaking gets more and more sophisticated it has never been

more important for a new winery to be able to stand out from the crowd. Northland is one of our newest wine growing regions and has come a long way since wines were first nurtured back in the eighties. Forty years on and the industry today has grown from three wineries to over sixty producing some exceptional value for money award winning wines.

The diversity of Northlands unique climate and coastal soils allows for a wide range of grapes grown with chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, syrah, pinot gris, viognier, rose and chambourcin making a presence. Whilst New Zealand's wine trail has a wealth of wine riches there has been a dramatic expansion of vineyard holdings throughout Northland who are pushing the boundaries and stealing the march on their southern competitors.

Peter Cooper born and bred in Kaitia and a lover of wine is the latest entrant to join Northlands growing wine trail. Prior to choosing The Landing's site on the Purerua Peninsular Peter was a corporate lawyer in Auckland before moving to the USA as a property developer. His enthusiasm for fine wine resulted in the initial planting of pinot gris, chardonnay and syrah and with the assistance of Rod McIvor of Marsden Estate fame and Ben Byrne and Warren Gibson



winemakers extraordinaire the winery today is producing some of the country's finest wines.

But what makes The Landing's wines really different is Ben's combinations of grape varieties the most notable being Vino Rosso a common wine throughout Italy. Dominated with sangiovese and montepulciano grapes this adventurous wine is blended with cabinet franc and merlot that makes this a food friendly wine.

We meet up with Keith Barker at the cellar door to taste our way through barrels of chardonnay. The savoury style of Ben's wines are evident. The new oak is kept from a minimum to the underlying and for those that like their chardonnay they were fresh, vibrant and finely balanced showing great richness with instant appeal.

Making our way into the rammed earth tasting room we get to sample the syrah, pinot gris and rose and get into lively discussion about various wines styles. So many wines all with loads of character that all taste so different.

It's almost time to return to the real world but not before we



**Ben Byrne Winemaker.**

meet with Laura Moreno Guest Service Manager for a personal tour of the villas.

### **COOPER RESIDENCE**

Perched on the headlands with 360-degree views of the ocean and countryside this is the largest of the four residences with five bedrooms, intimate corners and spacious living, and entertainment areas, floor to ceiling windows complete with inside and el fresco dining enhanced with one of New Zealand's largest collection of Maori artefacts. Once inside we're immediately impressed

with the natural architectural elements with each room leading to another perhaps more rewarding than the last.

### **GABRIEL RESIDENCE**

Situated above the tranquil waters of the bay below the residence features four equal status king bedrooms all with spectacular views. Also included are four self-contained indoor living areas including a full size billiard table for the boys, a library and an enormous dining area ideally suited for entertaining or hosting corporate events.



**Cooper Residence.**





**The Boathouse.**

**VINEYARD VILLA**

Built quietly alongside the vineyards with a more rural feel the villa boasts magnificent vistas across the property and out to sea. With two equal status king bedrooms and a spacious master on-suite the living quarters are open yet intimate with spacious outdoor entertainment where guests can enjoy al fresco dining alongside the infinity swimming pool.

**THE BOATHOUSE**

Inspired by the original woolshed on the water's edge with two gorgeous bedrooms with one in the loft. The earthy scent of the macrocarpa pervades, vaulted ceilings, flagstone tiles and floor to ceiling sliding cedar doors that open from all sides to three separate outdoor living areas. The open fire place, pizza oven and large BBQ make this a fitting place to entertaining a crowd.

If this is all too much to absorb on offer are two wine tasting tours departing daily by a private boat

from Russell, Paihia and Waitangi.

**TASTE OF THE LANDING**

\$250pp

A two-and-a-half hour tour with a tour of the vineyard with wine tasting and a gourmet platter.

**CELLAR DOOR LUNCH** \$450pp

A four-and-a-half hour tour with

a tour of the vineyard with barrel tasting and a two course lunch served with two glasses of wine.

We say our goodbyes and board Iti Rangi for our 20 minute journey back to Waitangi. In true style The Landing influence reached its highest levels with great wine, great food and a sense of deep relaxation of doing nothing!



**Vineyard Residence.**

*Purerua Peninsula is the first chapter in New Zealand's history as a nation of Maori and European. In 1814 this is where Reverent Samuel Marsden and his missionaries arrived and settled under the protection of Chief Ruatara. It is also the place where the first grapes in New Zealand were planted.*





Gabriel Residence.

# Discover The Landing Wines

The Landing invites you to discover the beauty and spirit of one of New Zealand's most magical places through a sensory wine experience at its hilltop winery and vineyard, now open to the public for the first time.

Travel by our private boat to the calm waters of Wairoa Bay, where you will explore the vineyard and our state-of-the-art winery through a guided tasting. Enjoy a gourmet grazing platter or a beautiful two-course lunch prepared by our chef before returning to your departure point by boat.

For more information on our experiences, visit [thelandingwine.co.nz](http://thelandingwine.co.nz)



**THE LANDING**  
BAY OF ISLANDS NEW ZEALAND