Road trips

PICTON TO KAIKŌURA • AUCKLAND TO CHRISTCHURCH • COASTAL TRAIN TO PICTON RUNWAY

RV NZTODAY Lifestyle

VOLUME 4
MAR-APR 2020

Heartland Journeys › Walk & Cycle Trails › Road trips › Reviews

Review

MORELO PALACE

Walk & Cycle

NEW PLYMOUTH COASTAL TRAIL

ST JAMES HANMER

WEST COAST WILDERNESS TRAIL

HAWKE'S BAY TRAIL

Lifestyle & Travel

TITIRANGI VILLAGE

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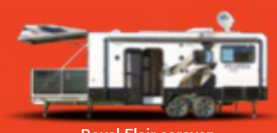
REVIEWS+
PROFILES

Dethleffs Distinction Trend

Morello Palace


Royal Flair caravan

Classic Caravans

Le Voyageur

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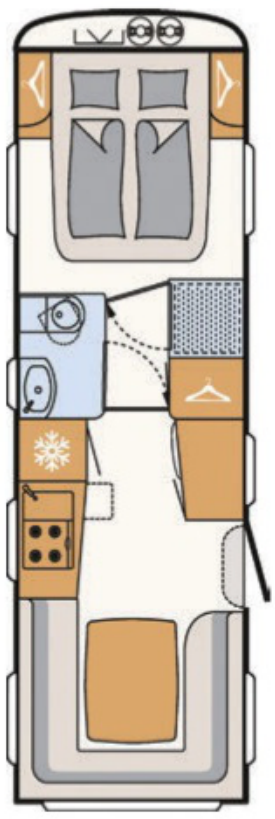

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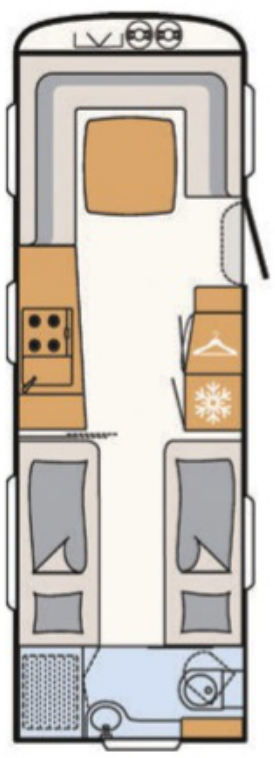

EXCLUSIV 650 RET

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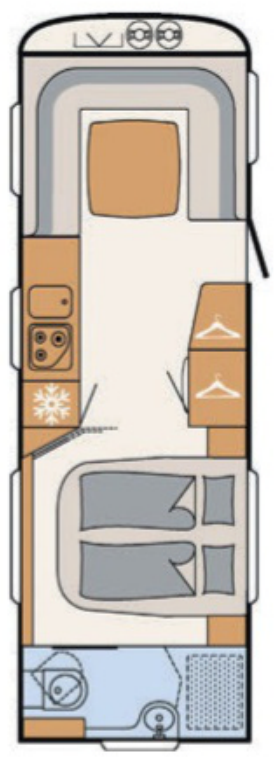

NOMAD 650 RQT

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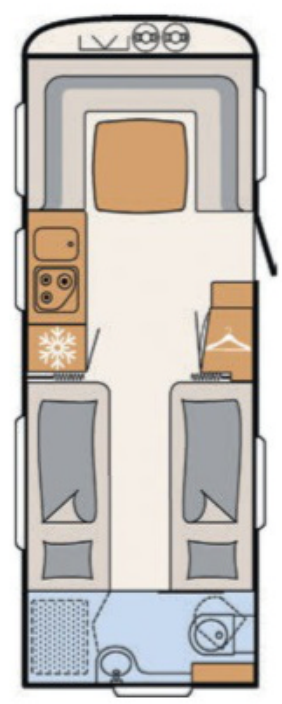

NOMAD 560 RET

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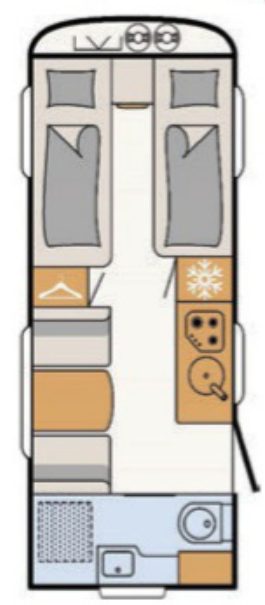
NEW LAYOUT See it at the Covi show!



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Long dry summer days

Long dry summer days and hot sticky nights have defined Auckland's weather these last few weeks. For the second February in a row the ground has been cracking beneath our feet with the lack of rain up here, while the South Island and especially the West Coast and Fiordland have been hit with deluges of the wet stuff. Hopefully some moves to the top of the North Island soon. We have driven around the country a bit recently, and the Waikato and Auckland areas are drier than I have seen before and Northland is even worse by all accounts.

Otira Gorge in Arthur's Pass, enjoying our roadie

The end of 2019 had its challenges, and this year has started off with a hiss and a roar – I actually can't believe it is March already. I'm so glad we did a spur-of-the-moment road trip to Christchurch recently in a Dethleff Distrinction Trend ex-McRent motorhome. We were so excited to really stay and travel in one of these quality German-built motorhomes. We see them often, review lots of them, occasionally get to hang out in them for a night maybe, but when you are reviewing new products, unfortunately you can't use anything as such, no firing up the ovens, using the toilets and having long leisurely showers before cosying up in bed for the night – for some reason when customers buy brand new that's what they expect, fair enough. We didn't have RnR, and Rosie was on rental over Christmas as so we were motorhomeless over the holiday period.

The Covi SuperShow is March 13–14–15, we will be there and look forward to catching up with those readers who can pop in and say hello. We can't have Caspar at this venue so let the kids know or they will be disappointed (big and little kids). We will be in Hall 4 – Stand 437.

If you are looking to visit a specific distributor please check the Exhibitor list on page 133, and check they are attending this year, and where to find them. Fingers crossed for nice weather that weekend, though we'd welcome rain before and after the event of course. There will be plenty to see I am sure.

Watching along with many others the COVID-19 virus taking its grip on the world, this is concerning on so many levels. Looks like motorhomes have their place for being tucked away from the world in, being used currently in Whangaparoa for isolation, and in the Christchurch and Kaikōura following the earthquakes over the last 10-years. Wonder where it will all end up, hopefully our government acts in our best interests, though what will they be, economic or health who knows. Quite shocking to see millions of people put into lockdown in China and other countries are now doing the same as well as some towns in Europe – hold on to your hats folks. Am I over-reacting to think about getting masks, hand sanitiser and lots of Janola in stock? Damn too late, masks are sold out everywhere already, even in Martinborough – a Wellington person came over and brought the entire store stock in January. So wash hands, clean, disinfect and stay at home if it hits our shores – what else can we do, oh yes stock up on toilet paper.

Take care friends, maybe see you at the show or on the road in the next few months.

Robyn Dallimore
Bruce Mountain (aka the Rock)
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Dear Laura,

Thank you very much for your donation of an annual sub for the *RV-NZTODAY Lifestyle* magazine for the Hororata Parish raffle. We have no trouble selling the tickets for this raffle with all the fantastic prizes which people are willing to donate.

We have drawn the raffle and notified the winner so, thank you for your contribution.

Kind regards

Karen Meares

ED: *We are happy to support local community fundraising if approached Karen. Thanks for your letter.*

Hi Laura

Thank you very much for your prizes of *RV-NZTODAY Lifestyle* subscriptions, for our recent NZMCA fifth-wheel rally.

We had 33 fifth-wheelers at our weekend in Hinuera for our Xmas/AGM rally after spending two weeks on the road travelling from Whakatāne via East Cape to Gisborne and made our way back to Hinuera via the Waioeka Gorge.

Once again, thank you very much from all our members.

Kind regards

Janet Kerley

ED: *Thanks Janet, we love to support fellow NZMCA members with rally prizes and offer our support when we can.*

Hello

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

We recently headed away with our '76 Classic Caravan on a Christmas trip from Christchurch to Takaka. Unfortunately we collapsed a wheel bearing very close to Murchison and luckily discovered it as I walked around the van after purchasing fuel in Murchison.

Pete the local mechanic was extremely helpful and gave us the diagnosis and advice around moving forward. We unhitched and ditched. The Classic will be put on a flat bed and returned to Christchurch another day.

Anyway, while we were dealing with the issues, I checked on our two-year-old boy Finn to discover him deep into last month's edition – photos attached. Was a great distraction as his parents were a little stressed with the realisation that our Christmas accommodation was going no further.

Oh well all part of the adventure.

Thanks for the great magazine, you have a new young fan.

Regards

Jack Jen Finn.

ED: *What a great photo. Thanks so much for sharing that with us.*

Ms Dallimore

Wairarapa–Remutaka Ride? Rimutaka as in rimu tree not Remuera. Have I misconstrued something? I was from Greytown in 1933 and travelled to Wellington by rail frequently via the Rimutaka incline until the tunnel was opened in 1955.

In fact I was going to take my friend over the summit but too late – tunnel instead.

I have most of the *NZTODAY* magazines since No 1. Better than any rubbishy *New Ideas*, etc. You do a wonderful job and I am fortunate enough to have been to many places throughout NZ. My friend became my husband who took me to many corners of New Zealand – at first on a Velocette motorcycle – children – sidecar – too many children (3) then a Bradford van, VW combi, a variety of vehicles provided many wonderful adventures. Sadly my beloved husband died nine years ago next month and now I do not travel. I did make a trip 'home' March 2018 to take artefacts to the Featherston Museum that were made by the Japanese interns and gifted to my mother.

KJ Beatson nee Flood

ED: *Back in March 2018 the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) regional transport systems manager Mark Owen announced the change to all signage relating to the area known as Rimutaka, to Remutaka. In 2015 the New Zealand Geographic Board (NZGB) gave notice the name change was happening following a treaty settlement. Technically the name Rimutaka has no meaning in te reo Māori, while Remutaka means 'sitting down to rest' or words to that effect. We noticed signage changing when we drove 'over the hill' multiple times in 2019 from Martinborough to Wellington. Rimutaka Prison won't change its name though – it will keep the 'i' spelling. There is a push from Wairarapa locals to have it named Remutaka Pass not Remutaka Hill, as it was originally a hand-built track through the mountain pass from one valley to the other.*

Dear Robyn,

I was very interested to come across your article at the library on 'Marine Pilots out of Tauranga', by Peter Williams in the June-July 2019 issue.

My great-great-grandfather, Captain Thomas Sparrow Carmichael, was the first pilot there in 1864–66.

For the first year he lived in a tent in Pilot's

HAVE YOU GOT A STORY YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH *RV-NZTODAY LIFESTYLE* READERS?

If you have – we would love to hear from you. We enjoy receiving stories and photographs from enthusiastic readers of RV-NZTODAY Lifestyle or aspiring writers and always welcome their submissions. Send me an email with your story and photographs to E: editor@rvmagazine.co.nz or post to Letter to Editor, PO Box 220, Martinborough 5711

Bay, until materials were provided so he could build a more permanent 'house'. Approaching shipping would heave to off the Mount and signal by firing a canon. Captain Carmichael would row out of the harbour to board the ship and bring them in under sail, towing his dinghy behind. When they left, the process was reversed. One time when it was deemed too rough at sea to disembark, he had an unexpected trip to Auckland resulting in a two-week absence. No doubt his wife and children, who lived in Parnell, were excited by the unexpected visit.

His job included placing buoys to mark the channel. His diaries record all shipping movements – especially interesting with troop movements during the war period – and twice-daily weather conditions as well as notable local events. For recreation there was fishing, picnicking visitors and an occasional social evening with the Browns at The Elms.

Just about the only similarity with now is the climbing a rope ladder to board the ship.

We so enjoyed the magazine and look forward to reading more issues.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Barkley

ED: *Thanks for your email Jenny. It is always fascinating how a simple story shared can connect with a reader this way, as this has with you. Thanks for sharing your connection.*

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Dear Allan

For many years I have enjoyed your *NZTODAY* columns and included highlights in our own travels.

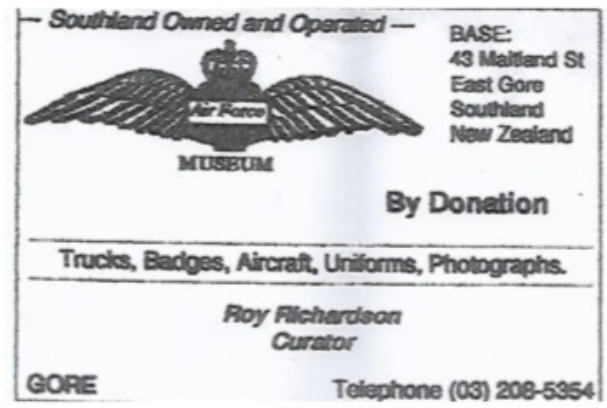
Sometime ago my late husband Michael and I found the museum which is on the enclosed flyer. Although I don't know if it is still operating, it always seemed like a place you would appreciate. Sheds and sheds of all types of aviation memorabilia including aircraft.

Hope you keep up writing of your visits to various places in New Zealand and I'll keep on supporting those businesses you mention in the magazine.

Kind Regards

Gail Dimmock

ED: *The Gore Airforce Museum is still operating 8am to 6pm, access is via donation and there are guided tours available.*



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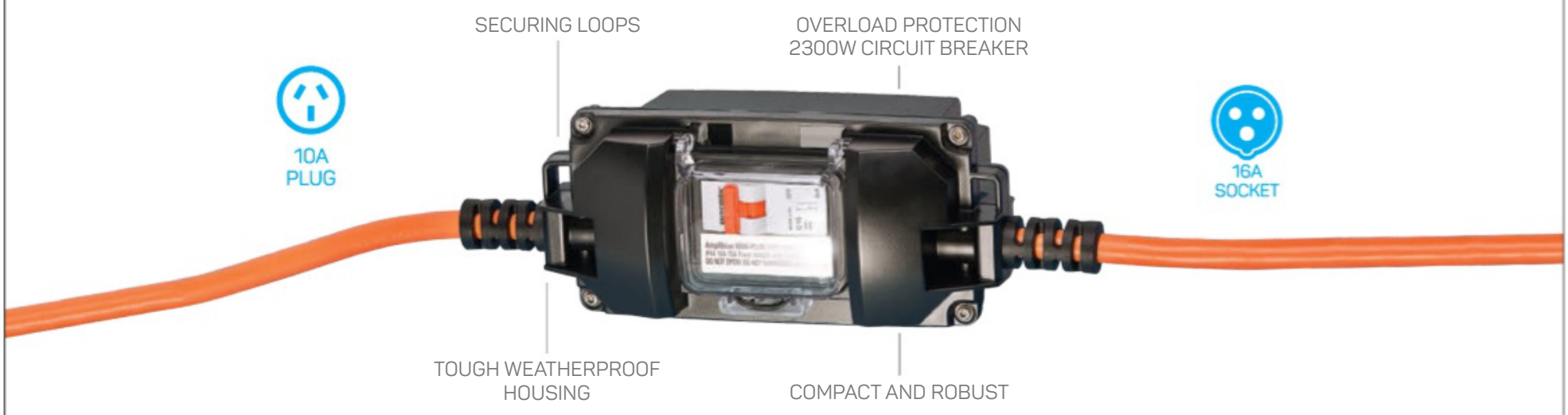

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ROAD, FERRY RAIL AND AIR TRIP

Story Robyn Dallimore **Photos** Bruce Mountain

In mid-January we had the opportunity to help out Rob Floris at UCC in Christchurch as he needed a Dethleffs Distinction Trend four-berth motorhome delivered from Zion Motorhomes in Pōkeno down to Christchurch. This was an ex-McRent vehicle that Rob sells as part of his Dethleffs range of new and slightly used motorhomes in Christchurch.

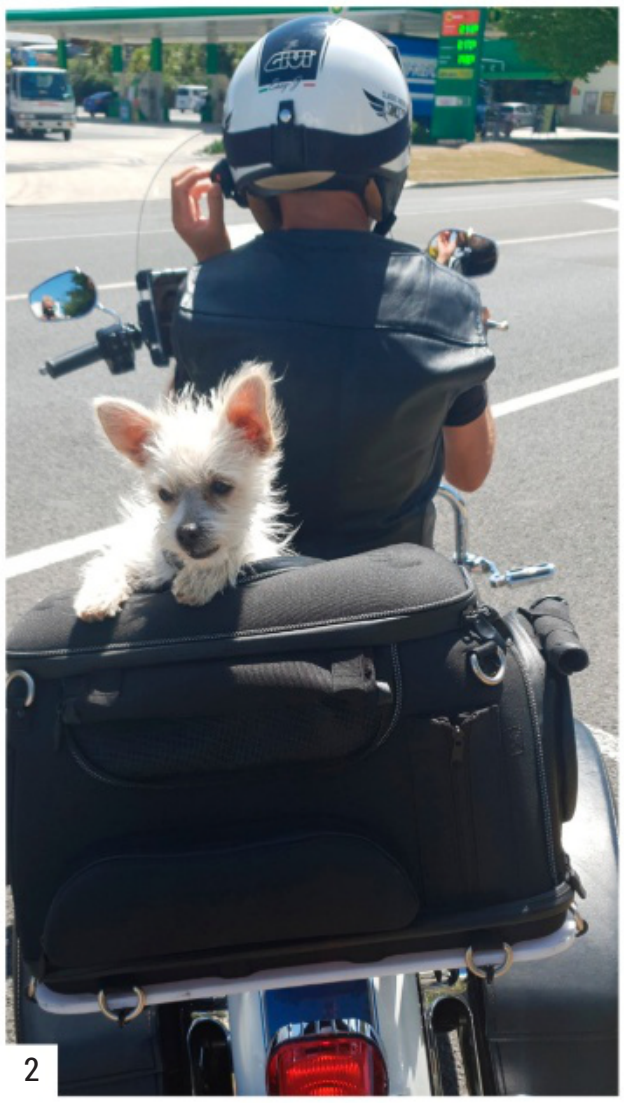
We picked up our vehicle from Pōkeno and took it home to pack with our belongings. We didn't take much as we were still juggling ideas as to how we would return home, so limited ourselves to one carry-on bag each. Sealable sandwich bags with coffee, tea, sugar, butter, salt & pepper went into a drawer, and crackers, tomatoes and drinks into the fridge – done.

1

Next decision whenever we drive south is which way to go. Our favourite route is via Taupō and across to Napier – it is so picturesque, and a much straighter drive from Napier south to Martinborough. A couple of steep mountainous sections slow down our RnR truck-based motorhome significantly, but we are not in RnR this time; we are in a zippy late-model motorhome with a sporty auto-transmission that can be used in a manual mode (for a 'real' driver) when tackling mountainous roads, and it has cruise control – one of our favourite technical extras on road trips – so Napier for the night it would be.

A mandatory stopover in Tīrau for a coffee –

Lake Rotoiti – a stop at this magnificent spot is a must as you drive through St Arnaud



2

3

4

there's a great café culture and lots of shopping in this little town nowadays, something for everyone I reckon, and the corrugated iron art pieces are iconic features of the town.

Road works and surface melting held us up in places for quite a few kilometres, but traffic on the Napier–Taupō highway was minimal so we soon made up time. We got to Napier about 6.30pm and stopped around the port area, found a great little restaurant online that offered vegan options – as well as real food for me – so a nice meal for our first night on 'holiday'. We had planned on heading to the foreshore to camp for the night but decided to keep going and aim to stay in Mangatainoka by the river for the night instead, a couple of hours closer to Martinborough, our destination for the next day.

We were driving merrily along outside of Woodville when the red and blue lights flashed at us and a police car turned around to pull us up. "Do you know what speed you should be doing in this vehicle driver?" "Yes officer, 100km per hour, we are under 3500kg weight rating," replied Bruce. "No, you should be doing 90km. Do you live in NZ?" "Yes, I do sir, and I am sure I was doing the right speed. I had the cruise control set at 98km as well." He went to the front of the vehicle and closely inspected the RUC and registration details … "Hmmm, you're right, my apologies. This vehicle looks a lot bigger when all its night lights are on, I stand corrected. Carry on." Whew – that would have been embarrassing telling Rob we got a speeding ticket before we even got to Wellington, but got to say it is great travelling at the normal speed of 100km instead of being limited to 90kmph. We arrived at Mangatainoka half an hour later and set up beside a few other motorhomers for the night.

We were up and on the road by 6.30am. Peppers Parehua resort in Martinborough was calling us for breakfast – not literally, but locals can go to the restaurant for a buffet continental breakfast or order hot breakfast off a menu for $20 per person, including hot drinks, juices, croissants, etc. We love to treat ourselves there when we go home. After that it was into the office to check in with Laura our Office and Subscription Manager, check over bits and bobs, and take her out for the Christmas lunch that we still owed her, at a lovely vineyard/restaurant called Poppies.

By the end of the day we were driving over to Wellington to stay the night, ready for an 8am Bluebridge ferry sailing – we didn't want to have to do the 5am start from Marty.

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1. Ready to head down country, two days to get to the ferry then over the Strait
2. Stopped in Tīrau, spotted this little fella with a harness on, hooked into this back bag, he loved the ride safe and secured lol
3. Classic Tīrau information centre, dog- and sheep-styled buildings to reflect the rural working area around them
4. There is only one thing on the menu here and it is a big sharing platter, so lots of veggies for the Rock lol – lovely spot
5. A lovely lunch with Laura and Brett from the DeLuxe RV Group and Allan Scott at Allan Scott Vineyard restaurant

6

The trip was all smooth sailing, and with a couple of phone calls we arranged to meet Laura and Brett from Blenheim's DeLuxe RV Group with the latest Le Voyageur 7.5 metre motorhome so we could have a quick look. We had organised to meet the owner of Allan Scott Estate vineyard – Allan Scott himself – for a catch-up so did that over lunch in the very nice restaurant on site, and while at the vineyard we took some lovely photos of the motorhome for the profile in these pages, then it was on the road again – objective for the night was to stay in Blackball, 32km from Greymouth on the West Coast.

Leaving the Marlborough area, I entered Blackball into the GPS and was amused to have it respond 'go straight 105km' – and the road *does* look very nearly straight. The drive up the Wairau Valley is stunning at any time of year, with kilometres of vineyards both sides of the road, backed by brown mountain ranges on one side and bush-clad mountains on the other, rivers and streams running clear – so pretty. The village of St Arnaud is on this route, and Lake Rotoiti Conservation area is right there as well, a picture-perfect stopover spot, kids and adults swimming and playing, swans on the water, but hardly anyone around really – perfect.

We arrived at the historic village of Blackball just on sunset, pulled up at the famous '*Formerly* The Blackball Hilton Hotel' and headed inside to source food. We were too late for the restaurant meals, so ordered vegetarian and beef pies plus a drink, and got chatting with the locals around us. Early morning saw us walking the streets and meeting the locals, and breakfasting at the café before heading to Greymouth via the Brunner memorial. I will cover Blackball in an expansive editorial next issue – there is so much in this little village to share with readers.

Meg from the previous night had organised for us to meet the new Grey District Mayor, Tania Gibson, at the mouth of the Grey river on the breakwater in Blaketown. What a picturesque spot to meet – a nice walk on the breakwater to the classic Lifeboat café that operates right at the end, seals sunning themselves on the rocks below, boats coming in and out over the bar, and views up the coast both ways – a great spot to meet Tania and sit for a couple of hours talking shop. Among the many topics, we talked about the mayoral race, and the change of guard from the well-known Tony Kokshoorn to a 41-year-old woman and mother who runs a well-known successful hair-dressing business in Greymouth. Tania was generous with her time at short notice and had a great sense of humour, sharing with us her first day at 'Mayor school' with all the

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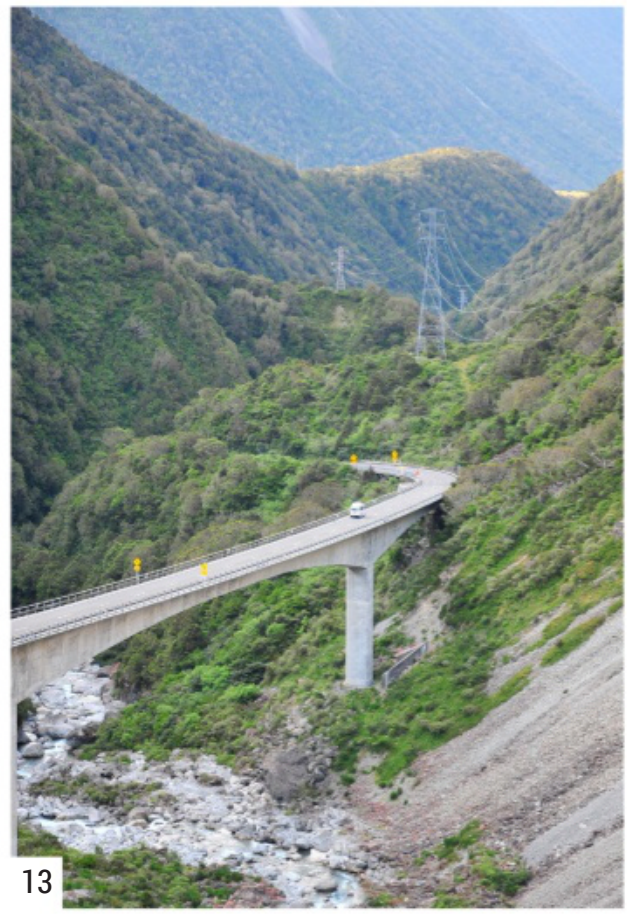
newbies from around the country – along with some old hands who got back in – to get training and orientation in the mayoral role. The words she heard the most around the meet and greet was "so where's the hairdresser?"

We headed down to the beach for a little rock hunting – maybe we would get lucky and spot a piece of pounamu, which apparently is common on this beach – then off to Monteith's Brewery for lunch before getting on the road. We wanted to stay somewhere in Arthur's Pass so needed to get sorted well before dark. No beers or ciders for us though – too many kilometres to travel – but the food was great as was the atmosphere in the bar/shop/restaurant open area.

The drive to Christchurch is actually a lot shorter than you might think, and can be achieved in less than 3.5 hours. It is only 243km across the mountains to the Canterbury Plains on the other side, but there is a lot to stop and see on the way. Our first diversion was seeing the Lake Brunner sign. "Have we been there?" we asked each other. "Can't remember," was the reply, so a U-turn and down the road we went, over a cool one-way bridge named the Sir Stanley Gooseman Bridge over the Taramakau River. It was coffee time so we pulled up for a break at a spot overlooking the water, the road bridge and the second rail bridge further up. We then continued on to pull in at Lake Poerua where we chatted with a young German couple travelling for three months with a young baby (the baby was maybe six months old) in a basic rental campervan. They're keen! On to Lake Brunner where we realised "Oh yeah we have been here," so a quick turnaround and back the way we came, back onto the main Ōtira road.

The next stop couldn't be driven past, and is another gem of a place I will write about separately next issue – the Ōtira Stagecoach Hotel. First built in 1865 to serve the pioneering community, it was rebuilt in 1902 from local native timbers and was the original hotel at the end of the railway line for some time. It was the last Cobb & Co Stagecoach post in New Zealand. I can't do justice in this edition to how interesting this place is, because there isn't room – hence a separate future editorial – but in the meantime if you are going over Arthur's



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Pass this is always must-stop-and-explore spot,.

After a couple of hours there we hit the road again, pausing next at the viewing site of the Ōtira gorge overpass, a common stopping spot for travellers, especially those who are hoping to meet one of the most intelligent parrots in the world in the carpark, the gorgeous coloured kea. We did have one drop in to visit us, but we wanted to find our camp spot for the night so didn't stick around long.

We drove on for about 40 minutes and spotted a sign, Mt White bridge, so turned off and headed down the road, coming to a one-way bridge across the Waimakariri river where we spotted other RVs parked up, so found our own spot and settled in. Some local accommodation workers were parked up and one of them headed back to the bridge to jump in. I looked in the water and thought 'are you sure that's deep enough', but these young'uns lived in the area and swam here often, so we sat back to watch and take photos as they jumped in. A couple of other guys arrived, unloaded kayaks from their roof tops, and after what seemed like a lengthy process they headed off down river – practising for the upcoming Coast-to-Coast challenge they told us. We had a walk up the river then sat back and relaxed before thinking about food. It would be a long

6. A perfect venue to photograph the French-built motorhome – Allan Scott Winery
7. We spotted a few of these Book Exchange concept areas around different villages as we travelled, this one at Lake Rotoiti
8. First stop in town for us was the hotel for dinner before the restaurant closed – bugger, too late, but the house-made vegetarian and steak pies from the bar menu were outstanding
9. Monteith's Brewery restaurant in Greymouth
10. Meeting Tania Gibson, the recently elected new mayor for the Grey district, was a treat, and coffee at The Lifeboat café a wonderful experience
11. We met with Lester and got a tour of the accommodation rooms upstairs. Holy moly there's some seriously good themed, quality accommodation going on up there, incredible antique furniture, fixtures and fittings
12. I went to the loo and became enchanted with the toilet itself – stunning Victorian painted toilets. Inside and outside are packed full of Lester's incredible collection of antiques and memorabilia
13. Ōtira gorge viaduct, an engineering masterpiece for its time
14. Parked up at Mt White in Arthur's Pass – now we are having fun

14

drive to get dinner, so a rummage through the fridge revealed one remaining tomato, a packet of crackers and a couple of bottles of Martinborough Sauv'. That'll be fine we decided; this location was worth more than a drive for just food. We woke in the morning to more kayakers and a helicopter with workers doing water testing up the river. Time to be up, up and away, the motorhome goes back today.

The rest of the drive was enjoyable – a visit with friends at Castlehill and breakfast at a hotel in Springfield. We checked out all the cafés there and it was surprisingly hard to get just simple eggs on toast. We called in to an NZMCA park to catch up with Heather and Bruce Stanger and dropped off magazines for the upcoming NZMCA AGM in Ōamaru early March, just in case we can't be there ourselves

15. Mt White in Arthur's Pass **16.** A cool one-way bridge named the Sir Stanley Gooseman Bridge over the Taramakau River
17. We made it to UCC in Christchurch, returning the vehicle no problem

15

16

– we want visitors to the event to have back issues of *RV* and *NZTODAY* magazines to read. What a great spot they were staying in, hardly anyone else on the site, river behind for exploring and only 40km from their home – easy to drop out of real life when you just have a day or two to spare.

Before we knew it we were pulling up at Foremans Road in Christchurch to meet Ross and the team to drop off the vehicle. It was over for us. Into a motel for the night and along to the Riverside market area for dinner – this part of Christchurch really is coming along wonderfully, using the Avon river as a central point – and an early night ready to leave in the morning.

After our mad dash to collect the motorhome and get sorted with just enough travel basics, we relaxed and loved the quick 1500km drive trip down the island, across the Strait, a West Coast buzz and an incredible Arthur's Pass experience. Read about our return journey elsewhere in these pages (we elected to go by train to Picton and fly home via Picton-Wellington-Auckland). It was a quick roadie from Monday to Saturday, but we got home feeling like we had been on holiday, caught up with friends, made new friends and enjoyed experiences we had not had before. That's living the RV Lifestyle folks. **RV**

17

THE MOTORHOME

We loved the vehicle. The drive itself was easy, and it was grunty enough over most terrain, especially with the manual transmission capability – let's face it, after the truck base of RnR motorhome, it was fabulous. We didn't cook meals apart from toast and coffee as required, but it had good kitchen space and a great sized fridge with freezer. This model has two single beds in the rear bedroom, accessed by two steps, or they can be joined up to become one big bed with a ladder. We used the singles in this instance – I get up in the night at times so stepping down two steps is easier for me than stepping down the ladder. The mattresses were comfortable for sure. The nights were warm on this trip so we kept the privacy door open to the front for better airflow and had the windows and vents open. The fly screens were invaluable.

These Distinction Trend models have a variety of floor plans. There's an island queen bed plan with different lengths and layout options, as well as single bed options. Being ex-McRent vehicles they have a few kilometres on the clock when sold, but rarely over 20,000km and some quite low at 8000km, and they come with the cab chassis and motorhome body warranties which are excellent. Our vehicle was a 2019 model.

We took a pile of magazines with us so the large boot area was great for storage. A standard feature is the Dethleffs drop-chassis extension which allows extra-large rear garages – up to 115 cm in height and 150kg load capacity. The garages have access doors on both sides and are fitted with fixing loops, heating and a 230V power outlet.

TECH SPEC'S

2019 Dethleff Distinction Trend 7057EB four-berth
Price: $128,990, odometer this vehicle 11,500km
Dimensions: length 7410mm, height 2900mm, width 2330mm. GVM 3500kg
Chassis: Fiat Ducato common-rail Turbo diesel 2.3L 97kW multijet Euro 6 engine, FWD with a broad-gauge low-frame chassis for safe driving. 950x1150mm garage area.
Two single beds 800x2100mm, or convert these to one really large bed at 2150x2100mm. 2000x1400mm electric drop-down bed in the front cab.
The vehicles include 100W of solar on top, external awning, bike rack, reversing camera, TV and auto-sat dish; fresh water 125L, grey 90L, and 20L hot water; 142L three-way-auto fridge/freezer. AirPlus ventilation system for heating is brilliant.

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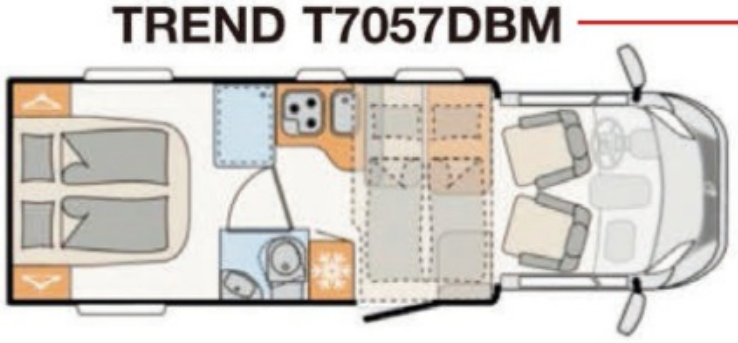

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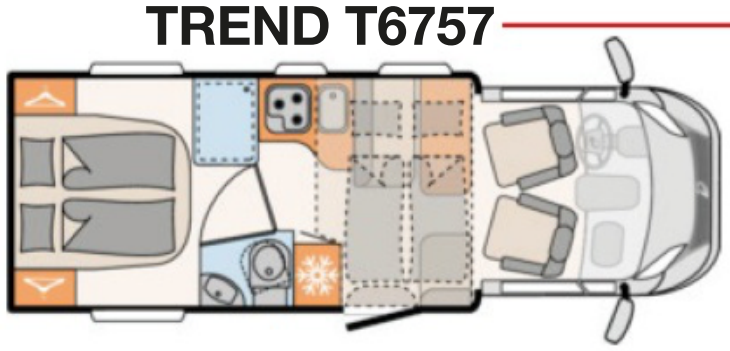

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Rosie Rental returns

Words + Photos Robyn Dallimore

1

In the Vol 2 issue of *RV-NZT Lifestyle* I talked about renting out the RnR motorhome through one of the third-party groups (ShareACamper, Mighway and Camplify). I received a lot of feedback from readers on this topic so decided to keep everyone abreast of how it has gone over the busiest rental time of year – Dec–Jan–February.

From the beginning of November to the end of March, Rosie has been out for 69 days out of 152 to February. The bookings have been from a mixture of European visitors. The first booking was a husband and wife in their 50s from the Netherlands; it ran from November 11 to December 6, they travelled over both islands and did 5600km. The bonnet catch needed a repair as it got damaged when they were opening it to check oil and fluids, but there were no other problems and the van returned with no other damage. This was through ShareACamper, and $2525 was paid into our account.

The next booking wasn't until December 23 (to January 5), so our family used Rosie for a few nights and we got her serviced. The brakes were okay but would need attention in 5000km or so along with a couple of tyres. It seemed like most of our renters were going to do 5000 to 6000km on a rental if they headed south, so as Christmas was coming up we decided to get the work done straightaway. It is better to be fully serviced and ready for anything, than be worrying about things like 'what if they get a tyre blow-out', or the brakes getting a hiding going up and down our mountain roads – we want Rosie to travel as well as possible, with the least amount of potential dramas.

We also did a bit of tweaking to the cupboard spaces, taking the microwave out and using that space to house the crockery, glasses and cooking bits and bobs. Thinking about it … if you want to use the microwave you need to be plugged into mains, but if you're plugged in at a campground or with friends there will be a kitchen with microwave, toaster and electric jug no doubt, so those appliances can be used there – out went the microwave.

It has worked out really well organisationally; Rosie is a compact unit after all so using the available cupboard and drawer space is important. I also got more storage containers, and I instruct renters how and why to use them in the fridge. It's a 12V compressor fridge, so it runs on battery power – or mains power if plugged in. It looks small under the bench but is surprisingly deep and does have a little freezer unit which works brilliantly. To enable a fridge to work at its best you need to be in and out quickly – you don't want to be opening it and spending time gazing in to see what's there, picking out this and that at leisure. Items that are separated out and stored in containers will stay cooler and help the cool air to circulate more efficiently. It also pays for everything to be food grouped so that you can find items more quickly. Things that are likely to be used together can be put in the one container, for example, dips, cheeses, salami and nibbles in one ice cream container – it doesn't have to have the lid. Carrots and lettuce can share space, and uncut tomatoes can share with fruit. Vegetables – buy only a couple of days at a time, fresh is best. Cut them up so they are half ready to use, stacked into containers ready to be made into salad, or cut up for cooking. I also picked up a foldable chilly bag unit and ice block sheets that fit in the freezer – ideal for drinks and picnics, but takes up no space at all.

I spent under $100 on a couple of flat sheets, and two good woven rugs that cover the rear seat squabs and can be taken outside for picnics or sitting in the chairs under a cool starry night. After a few rentals you begin to tighten down the vehicle and the process. I now have a full manual, with photographs of every monitor, toilet process, hoses, gas bottle, water filling,

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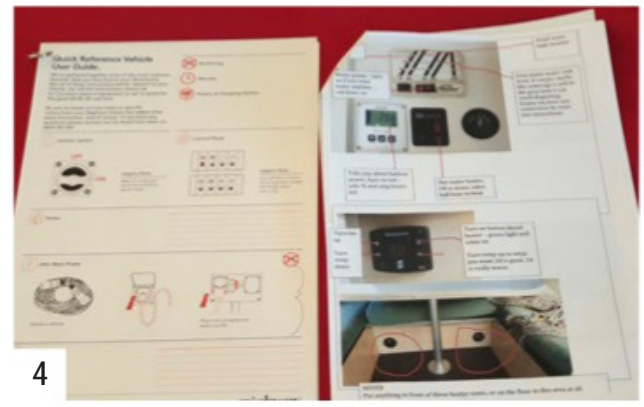
the lot. KISS – 'keep it simple stupid' is my motto; always assume people didn't hear half of what you said and make sure you have written instructions for everything. Mighway have a form on their site that you can download and customise to your vehicle – it is an excellent guide to start with.

The next rental was a young couple from overseas, but he was living here with friends. They headed off on December 23 and surprisingly stayed quite local. They only clocked up 1425km cruising the Coromandel and across to New Plymouth and back to Auckland, visiting and hanging out with friends. This was through Mighway. Rental was $2380, less service fee and GST, we got a return of $1759.13.

A quick turnaround cleaning and another quick check at our local garage – nothing needed but we like to check. The next rental was from January 14 till February 6, to a lovely couple under 45 years old from Lithuania. These two had such a great time. They loved New Zealand and embraced the joy of the freedom that Rosie offered them camping wise. They showed us a stunning range of photographs all around the country, eating meals or toasting to the view from inside the back of Rosie. She took them everywhere they wanted to go; hardly a town got a look in but every gravel road they saw was driven on by the looks of the dust in the cab when they got back – lol. We pick up our guests from the airport and will drop them back (a chargeable extra on the booking site usually, or negotiate a fee). This couple arrived back at 6pm, we took them into Auckland city for dinner at the Viaduct as they hadn't been into Auckland at all, and then dropped them off at the airport for a midnight flight back home. No damage, no dramas; the rental amount was $4320 + $60 cleaning fee, less service fee of $648 so we got $3732 in the bank. This was with ShareACamper.

The next rental is from February 24 to March 17. At the time of writing, we're not sure where they are coming from – the booking is through Mighway. A big clean and freshen up is underway. The tyres have had their pressures checked and four of them will be replaced after this next rental. We will then look at what maintenance we will do over winter when she probably won't go out at all. Think we might paint the interior cupboards – they are made of real wood so a reasonably easy job to do ourselves.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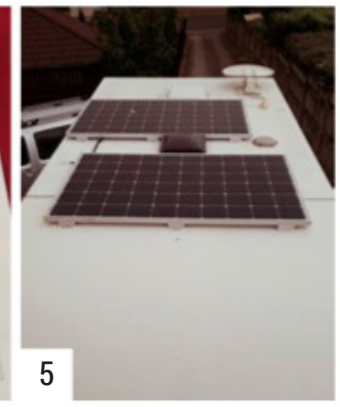
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Next issue I will do a spreadsheet of what we have spent and earned on Rosie and see how it all washes up.

So far she is a little ripper, starts up without a lick of smoke – and that is saying something for a 630,000km motor – and she runs like a dream. RV

1. These guys dropped Rosie back on 5 January
2. From the Netherlands, Hans and his wife toured both islands clocking up 5577km
3. Rosie, a 1998 Ford Transit motorhome with over 600,000km on the clock, she's a little beauty
4. The Mighway manual, a great tool to start with, and our Rosie manual with KISS instructions unique to her
5. We photograph Rosie's roof before she goes out and and when she comes back in – this is where real damage can occur that you are not aware of

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DOWN THE KAIKŌURA COAST!

Revisiting one of New Zealand's great drives

Story + **Photos** Allan Dick

1

1. Getting the Kaikōura road reopened was a huge job – but there's still a lot of work to do and stops are frequent. However, the essential character of the drive remains
2. Morning view across to Anakiwa from the DOC camp at Aussie Bay
3. Early morning visitor at Aussie Bay
4. How many survived? A family of Paradise ducks on the road into Picton

When I awoke to splendid sunshine after a sound night's sleep at the Aussie Bay DOC camp in the Marlborough Sounds, I was feeling pretty excited by the prospects of my first drive down the Kaikōura Coast since the earthquake.

My first experience of this revered stretch of our country was in late 1949 when the Dicks and Dickettes moved from Auckland to Dunedin, with Father Dick piloting a huge Wolseley limousine that had been imported for a proposed royal tour in the mid-thirties that never eventuated.

We'd crossed from Wellington (with the Wolseley as deck cargo) on the slow old, lop-sided *Tamahine*. After a couple of days in Picton with my uncle and aunt we headed down the coast with my father expressing some fear and trepidation at the journey ahead, and my mother pale and silent with worry; the road was little more than a track and had a fearsome reputation.

What I remember most about that trip is the constant changing of gears as father negotiated steep hills and tight bends on a narrow gravel road that seemed to be never ending.

I have a fleeting memory of Kaikōura as a little, scattered, gritty bleak settlement devoid of any pleasures.

The highlight of the journey was the tunnels …"Dad, toot the horn!" – TOOT, TOOT, TOOT!

In the late fifties, when I started wearing long trousers, was shaving, and owned my own car, my first two expeditions to the North Island from Brighton were via the ferries from Lyttelton – the famous overnight service, with a cup of tea at 5.00am brought into your cabin by a person in a stiff white uniform!

It wasn't until the very late sixties, several years after the introduction of the roll-on, roll-off good ship *Aramoana* on the Picton run, that I wondered about the benefits, if any, of driving up the Kaikōura Coast to Picton rather than catching the Lyttelton ferry.

In those days I was travelling between the islands seven or eight times a year, and after that first time, I made Picton my preference. I loved the drive. By then, the road was sealed and many of the twists and turns I remembered from that childhood experience had been eliminated. By today's standards, traffic then was light and the drive was romantic and beautiful.

I have lost count of the number of times I have driven up and down the Kaikōura Coast, but I got to know it very, very well. Not even the huge increase in traffic – particularly the number of truck-and-trailer units after the Lyttelton service ended – could spoil its magnificence.

My last trip was only a month or two before the earthquake, so there was a high level of eager anticipation to see what changes had taken place and whether or not the road I loved had been spoiled and changed beyond recognition.

But before that, we had some exploring to do.

It was a gorgeous spring morning as we departed Aussie Bay and headed around Queen Charlotte Drive to Picton. We had shared the DOC camp at Aussie Bay with just one other vehicle so I was surprised to find the DOC camp at Momorangi Bay, just a few kilometres further on, almost full. That's something that I have noticed in my years of travel and camping – many people actually like the companionship of others and parking close is a preference. Not for me however.

The drive around the bays was sublime, but as we came down the hill into Shakespeare Bay we came across a family (mum, dad and seven infants) out for a morning stroll – newly hatched paradise ducks being shepherded along by their parents.

They were going to get squished!

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5. Picton harbour with a ferry waiting **6.** The former Presbyterian manse in Picton where the writer spent a childhood holiday — it's now a guest house **7.** Spring flowers with the Picton Memorial arch as a backdrop **8.** Bristol Freighter on the ground at Ōmaka airfield. It's been there since it flew in in 1986 **9.** Magnificent display of crashed Hudson bomber at Ōmaka Aviation Centre **10.** A long goods train rumbles its way across the old Seddon, double-decker bridge. The lower car deck has been removed

The babies were impossibly cute but there was no way they could be shooed off the roadway and into the bush at the side. The Navigator spent 15 minutes chasing them every which way and that, while I warned oncoming traffic, but they were determined to carry on picking seeds out of the nooks and crannies in the tar seal.

Eventually we had to give up and drive off knowing that their chances of survival were slim. That cast us in a shadow of gloom the rest of the way into Picton.

That trip down from Auckland in 1949 wasn't my first experience of Picton; in early 1948 I spent six weeks staying there with my uncle and aunt. He was the Presbyterian minister and lived in the manse on Auckland Street (Picton), having moved there from Picton Street, Auckland!

I have fond memories of a summer spent there, going down to watch the *Tamahine* arrive each afternoon, fishing off the wharf, and rushing to a nearby railway crossing to count the carriages on each train.

The old manse is now a colourful guest house.

In Picton we had coffee, took a stroll, caught up with the Navigator's sister who had been seconded to the Picton DOC office, then bought pies and donuts from the Dutch Bakery (Bakereij) and ate them in the park down by the wharf.

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It was perfect.

But I had another couple of jobs to do before we headed down the Kaikōura coast.

On the way to Blenheim, I noted the progress on returning the Para Wetland to pristine condition – it will be superb once all the poisoned willows rot away.

We headed directly for the Aviation Heritage Museum (think Sir Peter Jackson) out at Ōmaka airfield to see the changes since I was last there. There was a very large dog show underway in the paddocks next to the airfield, but I had aircraft on my mind.

Museum manager Jane Orphan said the new displays were very popular, "particularly the Hudson". I can understand why: this is a diorama of a Hudson bomber crashed in the jungle of Borneo. Previously, most of the displays were of First World War aircraft, all in magnificent settings, but there are now 'Warbirds' from the Second World War as well.

This place is genius and you should have it on your bucket list.

I strolled across the road to the Classic Car museum which is more about British and Australian cars of the sixties and seventies than anything else. There's a lot of them!

On the way out of town we called briefly at the historic village at Brayshaw Park. It's free to enter and drive around, which is remarkable in an age of 'user pays'.

As you'd expect in Blenheim it was stunner of a day, and after refuelling we took a quick walk around the town. Blenheim is unusual in that the shopping centre is, to strangers, a confusing maze of short streets – it's as though the town was designed on a two-thirds scale. Almost like being in Lilliput.

Before heading south, we checked the weather forecast – fine for the rest of the day, but a southerly change blasting through overnight or next morning.

So, off we headed.

Just before Seddon, we stopped so I could look at the old double-decker bridge across the Awatere River, and I wondered why it was necessary to pull up the old car decking after the flash new two-lane bridge was opened.

This bridge was always a highlight. On the northern end wall there was a billboard of the PDL Mustang racing car and the tag line "Electric Blue and 185 miles per hour" – but it's all long gone!

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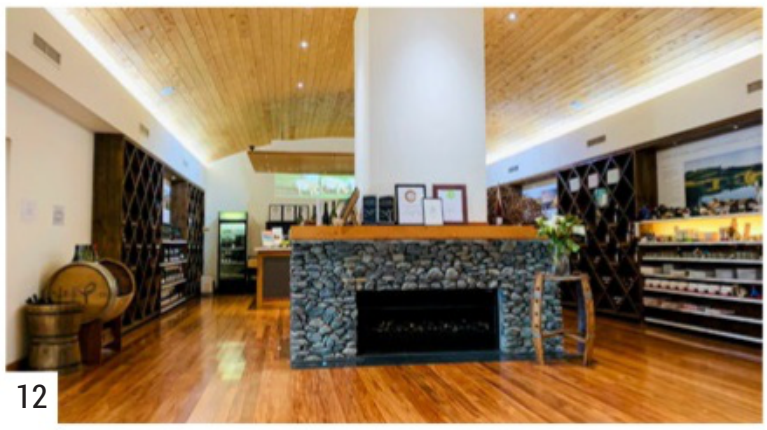

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While I was standing in thought, a train rattled overhead – a monster. There were three locomotives at the front hauling a train that seemed to go on and on and on. I marvelled at all of that steel and tonnage being controlled by one person! Back in the 'good' old days there would have been a small army of NZR staff.

Instead of driving through Seddon I turned off to show the Navigator the oceans of grapevines that stretch as far as the eye can see, all the way to the ocean. Mostly these are part of the Yealand's Winery, but not all – other vineyards are also established here.

Of course, there had to be a tasting – and a purchase.

Yealand's is huge – with a focus on self-sufficiency and the environment. On an earlier solo visit I had met founder Peter Yealand, a former contractor and fisherman, who told me he spent months on a bulldozer contouring all of the land for the grapes.

The young woman in the tasting room suggested we might like to follow the "White Gravel Trail", a 7.5-kilometre, 40-minute drive around the estate.

I glanced at the map not realising it was upside down and headed off in completely the wrong direction and ended up in a large paddock on the edge of a cliff overlooking the ocean, where peas for Talleys were being harvested. Retracing our route I discovered my mistake and followed the correct trail.

I'm glad we did.

This place is beautiful – and it's going to get better. The plantings of trees and shrubs have yet to fully mature and the grapevines were only beginning to bud. In a year or two, in mid-summer, this place is going to be incredible. What's not in grapes is neatly trimmed grass giving the whole place a park-like feel.

We stopped to see some kunekune pigs with babies and a collection of tame fowls. In fact, tame wild life is everywhere around the drive.

The trail takes you to the edge of the estate on the clifftops, where a large fenced and grassed area overlooks the Pacific with views to the North Island – and there are picnic- and stopping areas all the way. There's an open feeling here of big skies and big spaces that you don't always get from vineyards.

We had no fixed plans for camping that night. We thought we might get as far as the camping areas around Goose Bay or thereabouts, but that was south of Kaikōura and we wanted to spent some time in the town. We decided to box on and see what turned up.

We detoured through a side road called Redwood Pass before rejoining the main road at Dashwood. Then another short detour to look at the Lake Grassmere saltworks.

We stopped for a few moments at Kekerengu where SH1 really meets the coast. There's a stylish café here called 'The Store' – and there really was a general purpose store here for many, many years.

Thirty years or so ago, a friend of ours, Maria, who had an impact on my life, owned the place and decided to expand the business by providing afternoon teas for passing travellers. That side of the business grew and eventually took over, with the result that new owners demolished the old original store and built the stylish new premises.

Maria eventually moved to Auckland and

14

11. Cob cottage outside Blenheim has been a familiar roadside sight for many years
12. The tasting room at Yealand's winery
13. The long and winding road at Yealand's winery. Last years vines are bundled up and used for fencing
14. A mountain of salt at the Grassmere works

about 12 years ago she was diagnosed with terminal kidney failure. My tissue type was compatible and I donated one of my kidneys. At first things looked good, but then she developed serious complications and an adverse reaction to the anti-rejection drugs and slipped into a coma and died.

So we stood in the sun at Kekerengu and remembered Maria, and her telling us that when she started making afternoon teas the most popular item was bluff oysters served on a small square of buttered Molenberg bread.

Up to here, most of the quake damage had been repaired to a high standard with just some finishing-off work going on, but south of Kekerengu the impact of the earthquake began to be very apparent. There were new sections of road, almost a non-stop stream of Armco safety barrier, and in the hills on the inland side of the road you could see numerous slips – some small, some massive.

"I wonder if we will see those little islands of land where the cows were stranded?" pondered the Navigator. We didn't!

It was after 5.00pm so the majority of tools had been downed and machinery switched off, but we got a very clear idea of the amount of work that had been done. However, apart from the long stretches of Armco and an almost total lack of 'pull-over' areas and access to the coast, the character of the road was largely unchanged.

But that all changed the closer we got to Kaikōura.

As we neared Ōhau Point and the seal colony, the real scale of the quake and the damage to the coastline became more and more obvious: the raised stretches of seabed, the massive slips in the hills and the magnificent engineering work that has gone into the recovery.

15

The road has been realigned, curves around bays softened and widened, while concrete and stone buttressing all give the road a different look and feel.

The old swimming pool in the bush at Ōhau Point where baby seals played no longer exists, and the road now sweeps around what was previously a sharpish bend. Here there is a carpark with a long viewing area that's stylish and modern. We stopped and looked over at the hundreds – if not thousands – of seals on the rocks below.

We carried on – more concrete but it's styled to soften the visual impact, and the gabion walls

16

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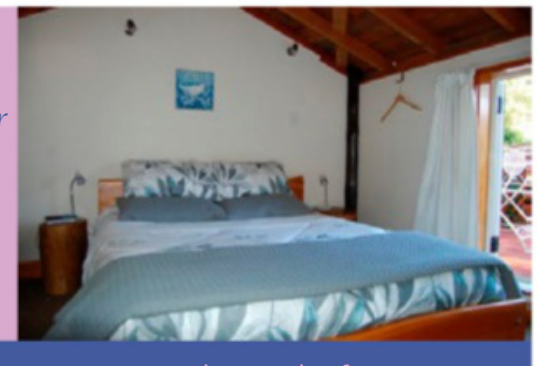
Stroll through the lavender gardens, browse in the shop and enjoy a cuppa. High tea by prior arrangement. Enjoy a break at Dylans Country Cottages, two rustic, self-contained, bed and breakfast cottages set in the lavender gardens.



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18

15-17. A sperm whale dives and waves goodbye. Taken on a previous trip. Wildlife on the Kaikoura Coast — a blue heron and a seal

18. Ōhau Point

19. There are still major ongoing works and there will be for some time to come

(stones in wire baskets) are almost 'natural' in their appearance. It is a miracle the road is open – but there are still major ongoing works and there will be for some time to come.

In total, we made six stops at traffic-light-controlled areas where the road was either down to one way, or work was ongoing.

The biggest change for me was at a place called Blue Duck Street and Iron Gate, a particularly narrow piece of coast where the road and railways got entwined with each other and crossed a couple of times. I was interested to see how they 'fixed' that.

It's now easier, wider and less complex than it was previously, and totally realigned.

The work that's already been done from Ōhau Point to where the road turns inland away from the coast at Hapuku is breathtaking. The use of concrete and those netted stone walls is impressive and in as good taste as it's possible. This is not the road of old, but neither is it some over-engineered, alien landscape.

Interesting to see gravel crushing plants set up in the riverbeds in a couple of places.

By now it was getting late, so we stopped for the night on the corner at Hapuku, joining 40 or 50 other campers in a line along the ocean front. Many of them were surfers.

19

We had a blessed night on the coast, set a fire on the stony beach using the piles of driftwood, made another pasta meal and toasted the great New Zealand outdoors.

I wasn't certain about the camping status of this area, but there have always been campervans here and toilets as well, so we took the chance. Now I learn the council is considering making this a no camping area, effective this summer.

Next morning, we were up and on the road early, wanting to beat the southerly change.

In Kaikōura we stopped at a café, but a group of four beat us to the door and were so long picking this and that, but not that, nor that, just a little of this – and then debating the price – so we walked out and found somewhere else.

I was surprised at the scale of damage Kaikōura itself suffered – several well-known buildings gone.

We drove to the end of the peninsula and back – found no seals – strolled, found a café where there weren't picky-choosy customers, and I thought about the changes I have seen in the town from that first visit in 1949.

On down the coast with a quick detour to South Bay and then through the tunnels, the famous tunnels, which apart from new concrete trim and lining are just as they always were.

Then on to visit an old family friend who lives near Goose Bay. He told of the difficulty in the first days after the earthquake and having to head south to Cheviot for groceries before the road to Kaikōura was reopened.

"Even though the road was open, negotiating the Hundalees was a nightmare," he said.

But he voiced something we had noticed the previous day.

"We were talking about it last night," he said. "They have spent millions and millions and made a fantastic job, but locals have noticed that there is nowhere to pull over in many places if you get a puncture, or a breakdown – it's all Armco."

While we were visiting him, the southerly arrived with strong winds and driving rain.

Leaving our friend we continued on, finding the road through the Hundalees was completely repaired and pretty much exactly as I remembered it prior to the damage.

20

From there on it was pretty much back to the way it has always been – typical North Canterbury farming country.

It had been a great drive – the scale of the repair work is breathtaking with more to be completed. It's already an 'easier' drive than it was before and it's going to be even 'easier' when completed.

Apart from the miracle in getting the road reopened to a useable standard in two years, I am so relieved that the charm, beauty and character of the drive remains much the same. RV

20. Concrete and stone buttressing all give the road a different look and feel

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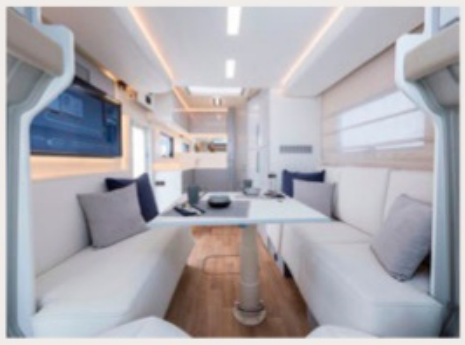

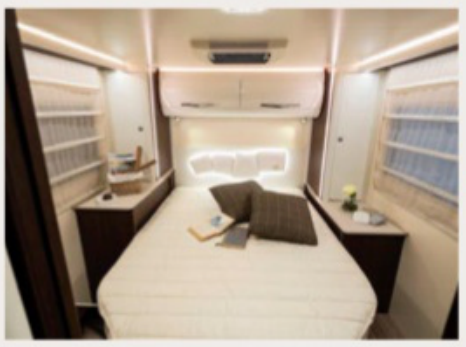

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Profile
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Story + Photos Gary Patterson

Reaching the pass and looking into the Waiau Valley

I had been looking forward to this trip for some time – a true 'out of the way' ride with stunning backcountry scenery – although I admit I had some apprehension. While the trail is near to Hanmer Springs, I would be cycling alone at altitude, away from roads, with no mobile coverage, rivers to ford and a storm due to hit the following day; it was not a ride to take lightly. You get my apprehension, right? So along with my GPS units to map the trail for the Great Rides App, I took my Personal Locator Beacon (PLB). The PLB I had yet to use. Well … I should say that I had not even taken it out of its packaging! I hoped I would not have to unpack this tiny yellow device, appropriately named 'Rescue Me', on this ride.

It's a cool morning, the weather is prefrontal. While really wishing to stay overnight on the trail, I elect to complete the trail in a day as the rest of the week's forecast is for heavy persistent rain. I am dropped at the start of the ride by Andrew of St James Journeys; his Land Rover Defender seems like the perfect vehicle in this tough environment. I wave goodbye to him, and in a few short moments I enter the wilderness pedalling along a 4WD track towards a pass on the St James Range. Beside me winds a clear babbling brook. My eyes follow its curves upstream towards its source near the skyline. Off to the side, behind a patch of beech forest, I spot a grand waterfall that cascades off a rocky terrace that is fed from the idyllic sounding tarn called the 'Princess Bath'. It seems odd to have such a regal name for a backcountry lake. I don't think there have been many princesses lazing about in those freezing waters.

The track finds its way around the edge of the hillside, each curve revealing a little more of the landscape. Adventure lies ahead as I ride deeper into the backcountry.

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Just as the trail starts to climb towards the summit of Maling Pass I see a weathered-looking fence with tightly woven netting. During our drive to the carpark, I remember Andrew mentioning a historic rabbit-proof fence. This must be it as there are no other structures around. Rabbits were introduced as a game animal into this locality in the 1860s and rampantly turned into a pest species. Cats, stoats and weasels were subsequently introduced to try to control the rabbits – all of which became pests themselves. Finally, this rabbit-proof fence was constructed in 1889 and spanned 125 kilometres from the main divide to the Pacific Ocean; this too failed. As I continue to rise above the failings of yesteryear on my way to the pass, the song *I Know An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly* is humming in my mind.

The last few hundred metres rounding the hill is like an orchestral crescendo with a rising pitch, accompanied with the cinematography of a scene straight out of the *Sound of Music* film. Here it's the Southern, not the Swiss, Alps coming alive. Slow is the reveal of the unfolding grandeur as I reach the summit … dramatic scenery lives here at Maling Pass. I stop. I am short of breath from the climb coupled with the cool mountain air at 1308 metres. The view west to the Spenser Mountains with their snowy basins must have been just as epic and the climb even more energy-sapping for early explorers Heaphy and Maling as they passed this way long ago. It's a top spot. This really has a wow-factor with alpine crags, green forested valleys and the blue waters of the Waiau River sparkling far below. I might have said it out loud to no one – *wow*! I might have said it backwards – *wow*! I don't linger long though as my body starts to chill and it is only the opening scene for the next stage of the trail ahead.

Freewheeling, I smoke down to the bottom of the valley where the trail becomes single track and warm air blows through meadows of daisies. They reach out, clipping my pedals as I glide past. This is where the trail starts to follow the river downstream, sourced from the hanging valleys that frame both sides of my shoulders. Soon I reach a trail junction; the sign says it's a short detour to Lake Guyon Hut, so I go. Over a low brow, I ride down to a narrow lake. It's in open country with a scattering of native forest along its shoreline. I ride beside the waters before reaching a cute backcountry hut. It's a classic 1960s-style Forest Service S81 four-bunk hut (as opposed to the six-bunk SF70) complete with a fireplace, mattresses and heaps of charm. Over a matter

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of 15 years, New Zealand government foresters built more than 600 of these little quarters for deer cullers. Most, like this one at Lake Guyon, still remain and are now managed by the Department of Conservation, dotted throughout New Zealand's remoter locations. They are a simple, non-flashy, home away from home. This is a unique hut network like no other, and one which is firmly entrenched in Kiwi culture. I take a look inside. Yes, it's standard layout all right, and it instantly brings back my own backcountry memories of such huts and adventures in other remote corners. I take a couple of photos and a waypoint to add it later as a 'stop' in the app.

Back on the main trail, I continue downstream to a place where the river squeezes through a tight gut in the bedrock. Here I cross a suspension bridge to the opposite bank and climb a small hill before whizzing back to the valley floor. The trail here is fast, and a driving wind blows me south to Pool Hut where I stop for a snack. 'Pool' may imply that is it is next to a river pool; however, this hut is high up on a grassy river terrace and far from the Waiau River. The hut is known locally as 'Poolies Hut' after its original owner Brian Pool, who along with several other locals, transported the hut to the site using an old St James Station army quad truck. Today this four-bunk hut, along with the cycle trail, is managed by the Department of Conservation.

Down off the river terrace I ride and over the McArthur Bridge where the Waiau River is now deep and swift. The trail continues downstream and as I climb up onto a river terrace I get a glimpse of the rapids below and then bid farewell to its flow as I turn eastward.

6

1. Heading off into the wilderness, leaving civilisation behind
2. The waterfall that is fed by the Princess Bath with Mt Princess (2126m) behind
3. Freewheeling off the pass down to the river
4. The river and beech forest and the hanging valley are just magnificent
5. Lake Guyon with the hut halfway along the lake
6. The river gorge fortunately has a swinging suspension bridge

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After later crossing another suspension bridge, this time over the Edwards River, I reach the cute and cosy historic Scotties Hut. Formerly a musterers' hut, I soon discover it has been modernised with internal plywood wall linings, giving it a fresh look and welcoming appeal. I meet a couple of other visitors who are spending the night here; older Kiwi folk who are undertaking the alternative clockwise loop of the St James. They have a bit of gear too, with a rod and rifle; it soon becomes apparent from our conversation they are keen to make the most of the rivers and natural bounty of the area. Their bicycles are parked up outside and their rugged personalities fit into this place as if they themselves have been shaped by the surrounding landscape. Being two-thirds of the way in, if it wasn't for the poor weather forecast, I would stay as the hut seems complete with a river to wash in and good company. Instead, I shelter briefly in the hut from the gusty winds while having a late lunch before I say my goodbyes and head off.

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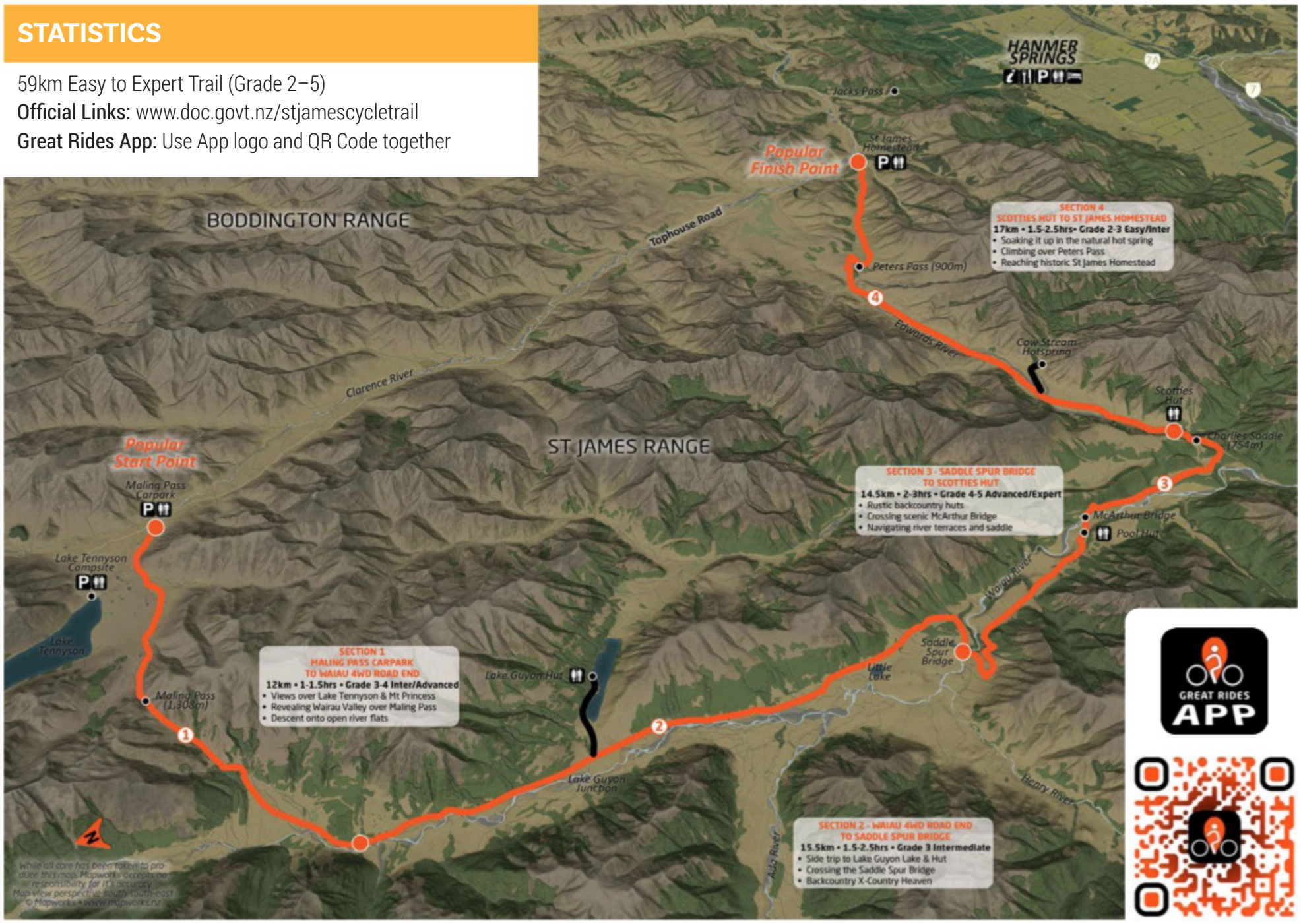

Cycling again, the wind is now my friend and the jacket is my kite. After a river ford I take out my map and I see that a kilometre up a side stream there's a little red cross where 'x' marks the spot. I decide to explore the creek for geothermal water paying close attention for any sign of a path where others may have dropped down the steep bank. Soon the river terrace closes in and I see a small rock pool beside the creek. I test the water – it is hot and appealing. I strip off and enter the shallow pool which is sufficient to fully immerse and leave as little skin as possible for the hovering sandflies. At peace in the high country, I soak and enjoy the pulsing plumes of heat at my side that come from a submerged rocky ledge. This is a treat and true backcountry escape. My skin starts to wrinkle and my muscles relax.

Back on my bike, wrinkly and rested, I start the last section of trail. It is a gentle climb up the Edwards with the next river crossing shallow as I near the head of its catchment. Once I reach the low Peters Pass the track surface improves, becoming smooth and well formed. The easy trail takes me quickly down to the historic St James Homestead where I finish my ride and complete the partial loop. As I reach the carpark I pass some rustic buildings and the remains of the homestead. The St James Station dates back to 1862 and was one of the largest sheep and cattle stations in the country. Today farming here has come to an end. Just over a decade ago the 78,000 hectare station was purchased by the government and secured in public hands for perpetuity.

I secure my bike on the rack in the carpark and enjoy a break to consider the trip. The ride is a long one if done in a day. If weather permitted I would have liked to have taken things slower, to savour the surroundings, and overnighted in old Scotties Hut. I found the trail surface variable as were the huts. I particularly liked the Forest Service hut at Lake Guyon for its lakeside setting, but old Scotties is equally fantastic if you like rivers. My day on the St James was a unique riding experience. It's old-school single-track, and like the backcountry huts I passed and the blokes I met, it's a bit rough and rugged but also genuine and true. There's no fanciness on the St James but it will deliver a real backcountry ride if you so fancy. RV

12

7. The river cutting through the Waiau Valley
8. The McArthur Bridge crossing
9. The Edwards River Bridge with Scotties Hut in the background
10. Scotties Hut – a home away from home
11. Cow Stream hot spring, perfect soak near the end of the ride
12. The last part of the trail is easy and enjoyable

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CARRYING ON A TRADITION

From his idyllically located workshop near Takaka, trug maker Tony Hitchcock keeps an artisan craft alive using two-hundred-year-old wood-working techniques.

Story Alistair Hughes **Photos** Lana Taylor and Alistair Hughes

1

Trug maker Tony Hitchcock is a survivor of a critically endangered species. According to the Heritage Crafts Association (of which The Prince of Wales is president), the Golden Bay artisan woodworker practises an ancient craft in danger of dying out in England, its country of origin.

Trugs are traditional shallow baskets made from shaped slats of wood, used for carrying garden tools and produce, and perfected in Sussex two centuries ago. Tony still uses original techniques to keep the craft alive from his workshop just outside Takaka.

"After I made the first one I was quite excited," recalls Tony. "It just feels so natural, working with untreated alternative timbers. In winter you harvest your rims and handles and it's such an enjoyable process. Taking a little handsaw, pottering along the river bank, and bringing timber home to render and steam. And with coppicing, it grows back."

Tony is describing only the first steps in a precision process which results in a truly beautiful, and practical object. The frame is generally made of hazel or willow, with the slats forming the basket shaped from aspen poplar.

2

The design also incorporates locally sourced copper boat-builder's nails, while finishing strips (also copper) are salvaged from retired hot-water cylinders.

On seeing the final product, there's an irresistible tactile quality to the combination of planed timbers and carefully assembled curves.

"You can show people a photograph of a trug," smiles Tony, "but when you actually hold one out to them, everyone wants to touch it!"

Tony has been in this unique line of work for two years now, after inheriting the business from his mentor and neighbour, Brett Hutchinson. Their association stretches back a long way, to when Tony mowed his lawn as a teenager. Always interested in carpentry, Tony and a young friend even constructed a bush hut on Brett's property – which is still standing and is a popular neighbourhood destination today. After leaving school and working with the forest industry, Tony popped in on Brett one day for a cup of tea, little realising it would change the direction of his life.

"Brett announced that he'd just made his last trug," recalls Tony, "and seemed quite happy to retire and focus on other things. My ears pricked up and I told him that in all these years I'd never actually watched him make a trug, or learnt how. And he said that if I was interested in taking over the business then he'd teach me."

Tony describes the process of learning as casual, but intense at the same time.

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"He was very gentle, but his attention to detail and commitment to quality meant that he would always tell me if something wasn't good enough." This extended to Brett retrieving an early trug that Tony had sold. "He told me I needed to go back over it, and he was dead right, you know. So I think I really learnt a huge amount from that."

Tony particularly took to this venerable craft because his long-held desire to work in artisan wood crafts had always been frustrated by dyslexia.

"I told Brett that it had made any sort of woodworking in the past a battle, and he took out a tape measure and told me to drive a four-inch nail through the middle and forget it. Because trug making is all to do with feel, and done by eye. There are a few basic measurements, but it's about knowing what is going to look good and also holds together well."

Tony gained his skills over a season with Brett, but actually running a business would involve more than just that. And this is where Maddy – the cousin of his childhood hut-building friend, and now Tony's partner – brings another set of skills.

"I do the accounts and other things," explains Maddy. "The website is still a work in progress, and I update social media." She jokes that Tony seems to have his own 'magnetic field' that somehow slows computers down whenever he goes near them, so their separate roles are ideally matched.

"In a partnership it's important to realise where our individual talents lie. And it's given us a confidence that I don't think we would have come across individually," says Tony.

He describes the process of creating a trug as "a full and focused day."

"Add getting the base and boards ready, it's three days, really. And then if you go right back to coppicing the timber, then probably a week in total."

Tony claims making your first trug can make you "wish you were an octopus."

"You're trying to hold a drill and a hammer and a nail at the same time, and obviously if you press too hard you'll break the wood. If you're too gentle, or too slow, it will start to dry out. But once you get a rhythm to it, it's quite beautiful."

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As well as the trug, Tony also makes an elegant flower basket constructed of a single shaped piece of timber, and then the much more complex 'Devon maund'. Larger and deeper than a trug, the maund was originally used to gather and store produce like potatoes and onions.

Orders are dispatched in plain cardboard boxes, as the classic trug and maund designs

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are surprisingly robust. Dispensing with unnecessary polystyrene packaging fits with Tony and Maddy's desire to run a sustainable business, and any waste left from the manufacturing process becomes either kindling or mulch.

"It's really important to us because we do want to be part of something that is more gentle on the world and the environment," says Tony.

Visitors are welcome at his recently built workshop on a rural property next to the Anatoki River, with stunning views of the ranges beyond. Tony is excited about landscaping plans to help 'settle it in'.

"I've always been really passionate about anything to do with trees, whether it's woodworking or planting. It's a great blessing to have had all of this passed on to us, really." RV

CONTACT

The Trug Maker
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Takaka 7183
021 239 6591
trugmaker.co.nz

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1. Tony shapes the wood with traditional tools, passed down to him by his mentor (Photo: Lana Taylor) **2.** Tony's workshop can be found in the Anatoki Valley just outside of Takaka (Photo: Alistair Hughes) **3.** Tony has shaped this willow trug frame, now ready for drying (Photo: Lana Taylor) **4.** Tony sets a finished trug on its feet, also made of aspen poplar (Photo: Lana Taylor) **5.** Seated at his special shaving horse, Tony begins assembling another trug (Photo: Lana Taylor) **6.** Tony finishes off a trug in his workshop. One of his Devon Maunds is in the foreground (Photo: Lana Taylor) **7.** Tony holds a just-completed Devon Maund, a deeper basket originally used for gathering and storing produce (Photo: Lana Taylor) **8.** The maund, trug and flower basket, handcrafted by trug maker Tony Hitchcock (Photo: Supplied) **9.** Tony Hitchcock and Maddy Pemberton with their dog Anatoki, outside the trug-making workshop (Photo: Alistair Hughes) **10.** Visitors to the workshop are treated to spectacular views up the Anatoki Valley (Photo: Alistair Hughes)

Profile

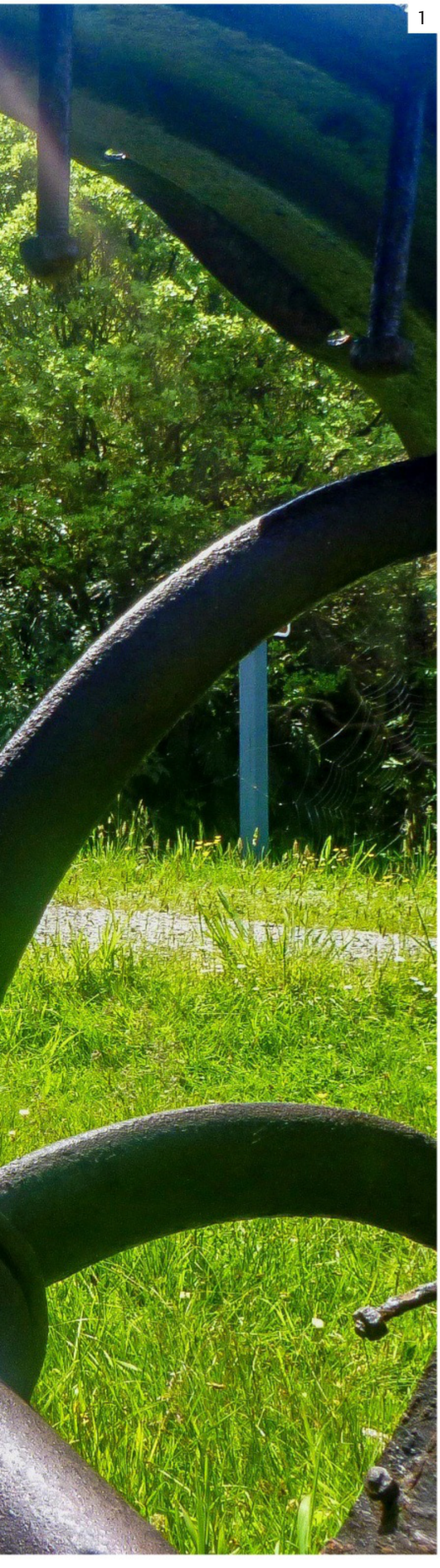
A GREAT RIDE

Cartographer and trail designer Gary Patterson has mapped his way around the globe from subantarctic islands to back-country bike trails on every continent. He returned home for an epic adventure, riding all 22 NZ Cycle Trails Great Rides to make a mobile app. *The Great Rides App* is the only mobile app for the trails, and can be freely downloaded from the app stores. Follow his travels to inspire, plan and to help you on your own journey.

Fossicking in the Wilderness

Section four of the West Coast Wilderness trail is a ride celebrating both cultural and natural heritage

Story Gary Patterson **Photos** Gary Patterson or as credited



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I became officially designated a fool in a town called Ross. You see a few days earlier I had travelled up the coast with a riding mate on our way to the official opening of the Paparoa Track. Given the long journey from the Deep South, we decided to break up the road trip and spend a day on the southern section of the West Coast Wilderness Trail. As planned, we arrived in Hokitika just in time for the free daily tour at the Mountain Jade store on the main street. Our tour leader, Brianna, gathered our small group and led us into a side room where she provided an informative talk about our country's jade. She certainly is a rich mine of information, easily sharing her knowledge on all things jade. I glean from her, via backlit samples from around the world, the distinctiveness of our nephrite jade, its traditional uses and how it originates deep in the Alps before erosion over geological time washes it out to the West Coast beaches.

Next, we are taken to the cutting room where huge circular saws cut the rock into workable slabs. Skilled craftspeople extract the best value from the raw stones by slicing them in different orientations. This water-lubricated process still produces a fine white powder which settles in every nook and cranny of the room. Punters like us stay clean in a glassed-off area that affords perfect viewing of the goings-on. The freshly cut stone slabs are then transported into the manufacturing room where artists transform raw pieces of the green rock into valuable and delicate artworks. We watch through a glass partition as a woman sitting quietly on a stool skilfully shapes and smooths the small stones. It is a fascinating process watching a jewel becoming jewellery.

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1. The former Mananui sawmill is full of rusty relics
2. Watching the artists at work is a treat. Shaping the greenstone is a fine art (Mountain Jade)

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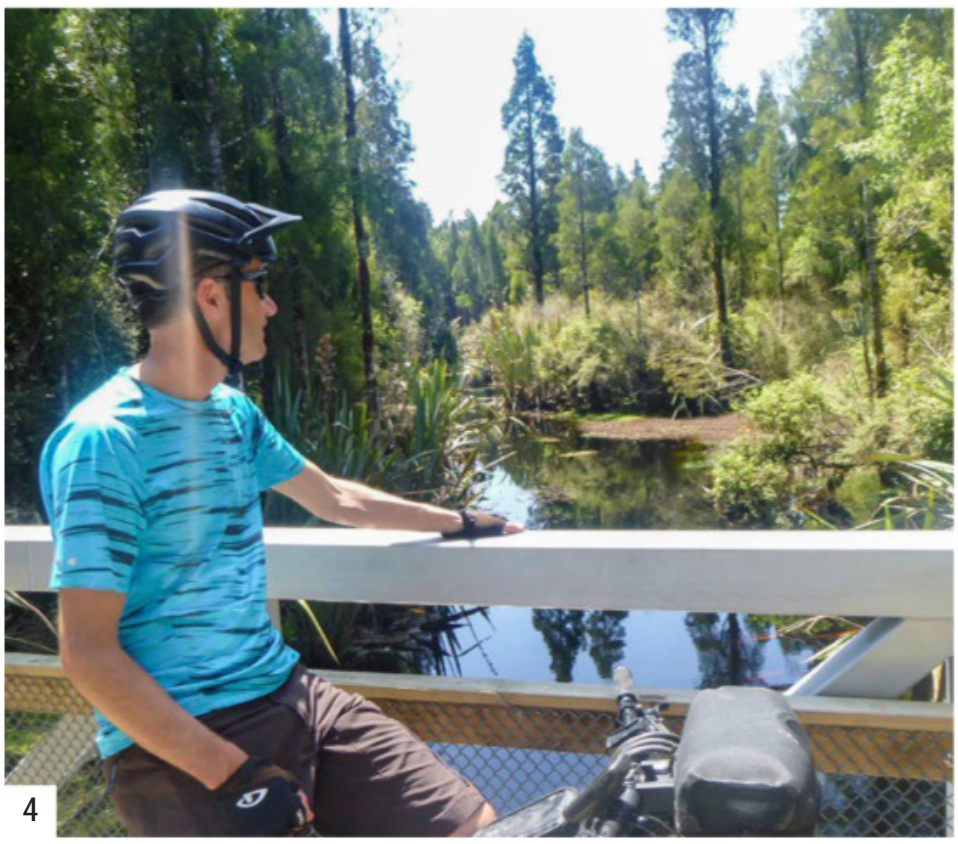
After leaving the jade factory we grab a bite to eat nearby and feel restored. Restoration of another kind takes place just south along the track at the restored Mahinapua Bridge where the trail crosses the highway, and we ride smoothly along the timber planks of the former railway truss bridge. It has been meticulously upgraded since the last train rolled by some 40 years ago. Now it keeps riders safe from the road traffic and stands ready to protect future generations of cyclists. We stop for a moment in the middle of the bridge and look down into the dark waters of the lake-fed creek. Flax bushes line its banks and submerged water plants wave with the current's oscillations, mesmerisingly drawing one into deep contemplation. We just sit and stare. Before roads and rail arrived in the area, this waterway together with the lake and coastal lagoons were used as a transport route by settlers to link the towns of Hokitika and Ross. Then early in the 20th century, the Ross branch railway line was built for freight and passenger transport before it eventually closed at the turn of the century. It is fantastic that this Great Ride can run beside the former travel routes of the waterways using part of the former railway infrastructure to once again transport people to Ross.

We roll off the bridge and enter the lowland forest taking us from bright sunlight to dappled green and golden light patterns as we ride into the wilderness. The trail here is sublime. The surface is wide and flat and the gravel path winds its way around kāmahi trees. The dark waters we cross are tannin rich, and I'm not fooled as to what creatures may live in the dark water. My imagination is on fire and I don't want to jump in. Soon we encounter another bridge over the creek and on the opposite bank is Greenie's Grotto. 'Grotta' is an Italian word for cave and while this one is mostly boarded off, you can still peek inside this dark tunnel. I never knew Greenie, but I picture a short, stocky gold miner who a century back built the low tunnel into the hillside in the hopes of finding his fortune. I wonder if he did? Or



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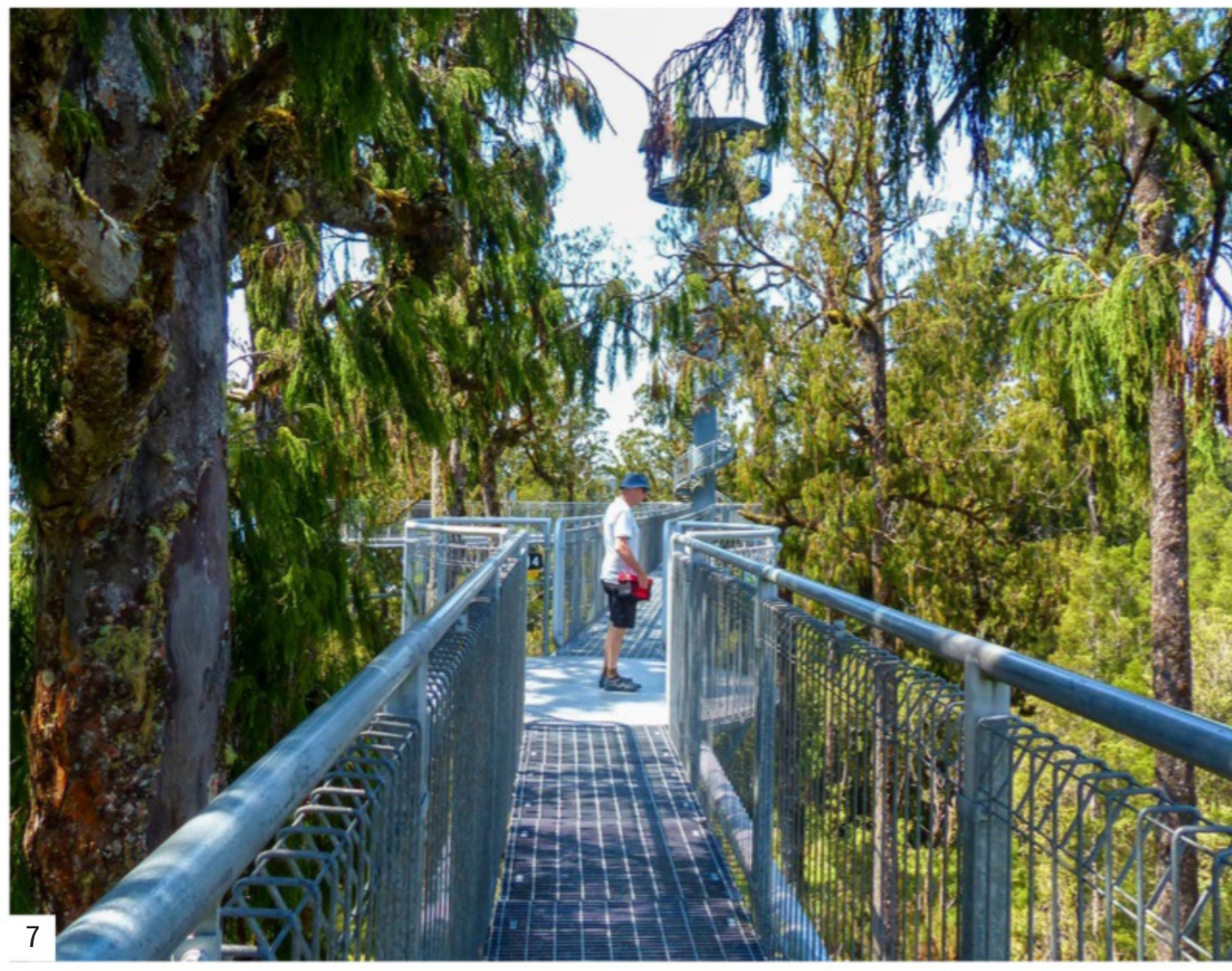
perhaps living in this beautiful forest was all the reward he needed? I decide it was probably a pretty ghastly life for Greenie back then. We're in the sun on a good track on modern bikes and are well-fed, in his day in this wet part of New Zealand life probably wasn't as carefree and sunny.

Back on the trail we head up and over the bank that supports the grotto and descend to the former site of the Mananui sawmill. Little remains of the mill, just the rusting relics of drive wheels, boilers and the mill foundation that once housed the industrious operations here, over a hundred years ago. A small town once supported the timber mill but it is long gone and is, ironically, now overtaken by regenerating forest. The trees won! The logs of huge trees that were felled in the area were transported to the mill by the timber tramline along which we are about to cycle. Leaving the mill site we clatter along a 300-metre long boardwalk perched improbably over a wetland before reaching the straights of the timber tramline. I enjoy the scattered relics, the rail cuttings and ease of riding along this forested stretch. It's hard to imagine steam locomotives passing through here with freshly felled rimu and kahikatea logs in tow. Soon we reach the end of the tramline at the junction with a former highway that now takes us to another top spot.

Just down the old highway a smidge, we park our bikes beside the trail at the West Coast Treetop Walk and take a short stroll. It's a welcome change to walk rather than ride. We climb a small terrace which leads us towards a ledge. Walking to the end of this bank we are stunned by a wondrous elevated steel walkway structure – it is impressive in scale and appears to magically levitate near the canopy of the trees we are peering over from the bank we are on. A few more steps and we are up high in the canopy with the birds, drifting safely along the platform 20 metres up! Both of us are in awe of how this half-kilometre walkway transforms our experience of the podocarp forest.

3. The former Mahinapua railway truss bridge is a delight to ride
4. Hanging out beside the picture-perfect ponds
5. I don't know Greenie but I picture a short stocky gold miner
6. There is a heap of history along the timber tramline
7. Up with the birds and the timber giants



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In front of us are giant rimu with their drooping branchlets, normally well out of reach but now within our gentle grasp. We climb a viewing tower and go even higher; its spiral staircase around a central column takes us to 40 metres above the forest floor. We're flying now. We are well above the canopy and look right over it to Lake Mahinapua, the forest of the timber tramline, and beyond to the Tasman Sea where we started earlier in the day. Spiralling downward we return to the lower steel structure to experience the cantilevered part of the walkway – just like a diving springboard, it protrudes well beyond its last support. The gentle flex and spring we feel and its extension away from the support masts make it seem like you could almost dive into the lake from this viewpoint. Returning to the base building and resisting the enormous temptation of the fabulous array of food on offer, we hop on our bikes and feel blessed that the historic timber mill did not gobble up all these standing giants.

The trail from here leads south past Ruatapu and onto the former Ross branch railway line. The line runs parallel with the coastline and the ride is straightforward as well as straight as an arrow. We cruise along the trail with the Alps over our left shoulder and the sea on our right. After another lovely long truss bridge, the trail shoots through to Ross.

Ross was home to one of the richest goldfields and largest ever gold nugget finds ('Honourable Roddy' at 3.09kg) in the country. The place is rich in history too. At the southern trailhead is the Ross museum. Kim from the museum shows us the displays containing all sorts of historical photos, artefacts and models. I am drawn to the miniature models and dioramas. The scale and all the intricate details that replicate the workings of the goldfield from a time long past is impressive. Putting my head over the miniature buildings I instantly feel like part of yesterday's gold rush, like a foreman overseeing the mining operation and moving

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9. The museum models are well done and very realistic
10. Panning my way to riches
11. Hard to see my flecks of foolishness

STATISTICS

33km, Easy/Intermediate (Grade 2–3)
Official Links: westcoastwildernesstrail.co.nz
Great Rides App: Use App logo and QR Code together

ore carts on rails. We turn to leave and gaze at the replica nugget of Roddy in the room – this gets us excited to discover our own goldfield.

We are in luck; the museum hires out gold pans, and our excitement intensifies. Kim gives us a rundown on how to pan in the outside troughs. She offers us two choices; to pan in the confines of the trough or pan for our own riches in a nearby creek. With no discussion between us, as soon as the pans are in our hands we head to the hills to see if we can find Roddy's mates. 'Thar's gold in them thar hills, boy!' we (half) joke. Struck by gold fever we walk away from the museum. I glance at my prospector buddy – he's humming that classic, *Fever*. The decision of where to look for our nuggets is determined quickly as the heavens open up and we look for a sheltered spot. The creek turns out to be overgrown by scrub and bush and provides an umbrella of sorts under which we start our fossicking. We ditch our shoes and drop into the creek. Initially we just search any old spot in the waters but soon refine our process by searching out calm eddies where our elusive flakes may have settled. How much time went by as we hunched over our pans in the pouring rain, I have no idea. Time is irrelevant when finding your fortune. Each golden fleck I discover spurs me on to search for more.

Soon my little vial of water has golden flakes scattering the bottom. But the fever lasts only so long in this rain. Cold and soaked through we return to the museum to hand back the gold pans and show Kim our finds. I hand over my loot but Kim is not convinced. She passes it to a more experienced colleague who took, shook, looked and returned it with a big smile while gently giving us the bad news that it's fool's gold – this was graciously accepted by my companion but I was less convinced. Had we really been fooled by Ross's golden metallic lookalike? Weary and wet we leave the museum far richer in experiences than when we arrived. As for what happened to my vial of treasure or trash – I'm no fool and have kept my riches to display proudly on my desk. The flecks sparkle in the sun and its golden contents dance for me as I punch hard on the keyboard writing this story. These are the memories and moments that bring wealth to my life and I don't feel the least bit foolish admitting it. RV

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E Bikes & E Scooters... WITH ATTITUDE!

A very warm hello to you and my thanks for taking the time to read my story. My name is Mike Davies and I am the owner/ director of WickedWheels. E bikes and E scooters - with attitude!

A couple of years back in a fit of pique over traffic congestion and changes within the multi-national I then worked for - I decided it was time I indulged my passion for all things on wheels and go nuts – resign and start my own business! Whilst going nuts isn't exactly new for me this was still a pretty drastic change as 60 loomed (now past – sigh....). ...
I'm stating the obvious when I say the world is in love with electric this and electric that and at the forefront of this love-affair are electric vehicles. A thunderous 'clang' and a horrendous 'clunk' later – and the epiphany morphed into the advent of 'WickedWheels'.

Much research. Much digging. Lots of time. Heaps of samples. All have contributed to allowing me to work in conjunction with just two top- notch suppliers out of China (try 18 years making electric bikes as 'experience' – let alone a manufacturing base of 60,000,000 units p.a) and I have what I consider to be offerings of significant quality with back-up of substance.
My fold-up bikes are quite superb. There will be folks reading this wondering the point. Try being able to stash your lovely E bike INSIDE your caravan or motorhome. " No Mr Weasily – there will be nothing on the external bike rack for you to nick!!" What's not to love about that?

I also do a rather fetching urban step-through for the ladies. And a seriously rugged mountain bike – yep- that too folds-up.
And then we have the E scooters. I have handed them the moniker 'Fat-Rat'. It's what I cruise around on. A picture tells a thousand words – I seriously reckon they are dribble material – both sides of the mouth if you are level-headed.
What makes me presume to think I can provide you with quantum product let alone service levels? Working from home and getting into something my 20 years in the car industry prepped me for. Job titles are marvellous things but having been Operations Manager/ Logistic Manager/ Purchasing and Warehousing Manager / Senior Engineer Quality Assurance (Nissan NZ) / Service Center and Distribution Manager (Nissan NZ) – all serve me in good stead. Combining knowledge with passion. It's a rather cool combo even if I do say so myself! Oh.....on TM my feedback is 500+ Positive. 0 Neutral. 0 Negative.
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Profile

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Navigating Out East

The Hawke's Bay Trails, a trail network of waterways, wetlands and cultural wonders.

Story Gary Patterson **Photos** Gary Patterson or as credited

Māori travelled in waka and navigated by the stars to reach the east coast. Later, Europeans steered tall ships and navigated with sextants, crossing the globe and making discoveries along this coast. Today, I begin to chart the Hawke's Bay Trails by bicycle and my navigation tools of choice are three GPS units. While transport and navigation methods have changed through the centuries, one thing remains constant: the need to find one's way in life. I consider my life to be strongly influenced by geography; witness my chosen work path as a cartographer. So it is that I find myself in Napier ready to plot a course along this extensive network of cycle trails, to make maps for the Great Rides App and to help other lifestylers find their way.

My first discovery takes place upon opening the car door. Parked at East Pier I'm immediately taken aback by the heat. It is a welcome warmth after the cool autumn rides I'm used to in the deep south I call home. The climate here seems so idyllic, and the relaxed charm of harbourside al fresco dining puts me in a holiday mood straight away. Although this is no recreational trip, I decide on a slower pace to survey this trail. Onto my bike I go. My first trail companions are not fellow riders but burly men crossing the path carrying seafood crates off their docked fishing boats. I smile. I like how the Great Rides has you crossing paths with people from all walks of life.

The path winds its way along the harbour edge where assorted pleasure craft are moored, and I enjoy the nautical start to the pathway. I say 'path' because this part of the trail has a wide concrete surface, so smooth after my other recent gravel rides. I feel like I am floating along like the boats bobbing beside me on the water. So far the other cyclists I pass are on upright comfort bikes, and my mountain bike beast feels a little out of place – it is still a little soiled from my last off-road adventure – like a pig-dog among pampered poodles. I pass under several Norfolk pines that provide shade on the Westshore strip and help guide me parallel with the coastline ride.

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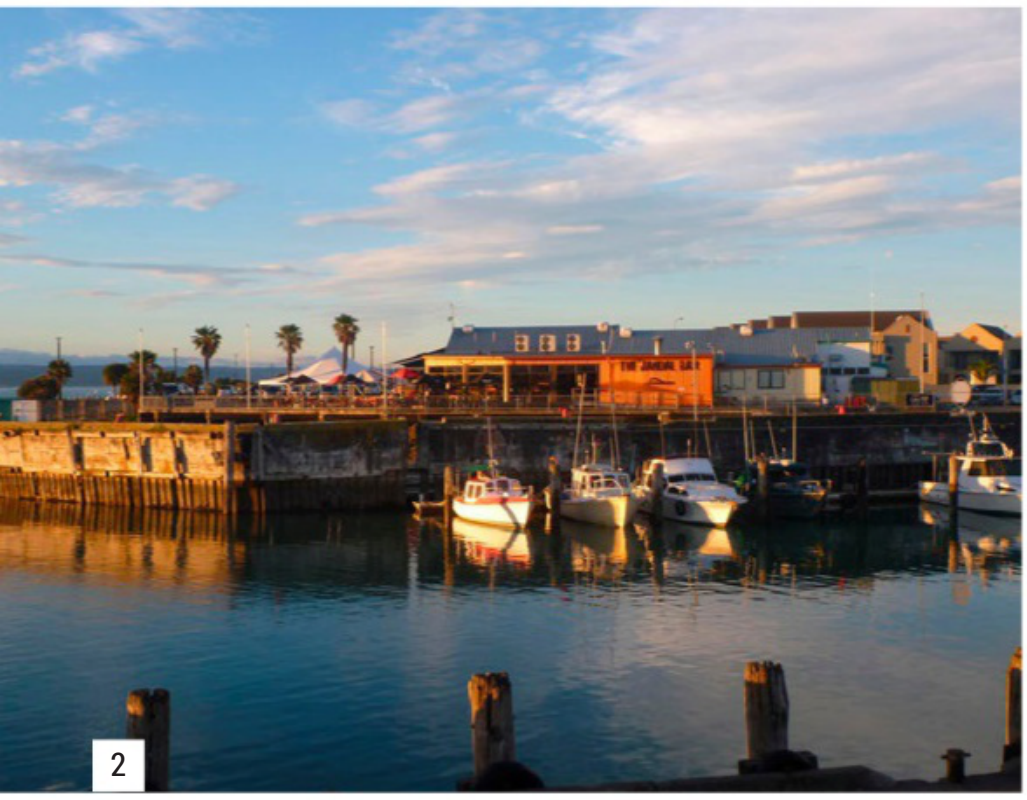

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The path passes picnicking families and others soaking up the sun on the grass; the only noises are the gentle waves sloshing up the beach, some gulls cawing overhead, and the hum of my knobbies on the pavement.

Soon I reach Bayview and head inland, up to the carpark and the base of Rorookuri Hill. This prominent mound sits alone like a sandcastle on the beach with the tide out, which is not far from the truth. As I ride around this ancient pā site with its midden caches of shells, the geological origins of the hill are slowly revealed. Rorookuri was once an island surrounded by a vast lagoon, but during the Napier earthquake of 1931 the land rose and drained most of the lagoon and the island became part of the mainland. The trail, which takes me on a little loop around the former island, is now sitting on the old shoreline.

Leaving Rorookuri Hill behind, the so-named 'Water Ride' starts to literally become watery. The high king tide has formed puddles that spill across the path from the neighbouring wetland. While dodging these water hazards, I spy a tall structure off to my right that I assume is a watchtower for the airport. As I get closer though, I can see it's a beacon tower for watercraft not aircraft, and I soon spot another beacon located out to the east. In the days before modern navigational aids existed, ships used prominent landmarks to guide them into the safety of the harbour, and from the trail I can still see a few tall Blue Gums (known as the Admiralty Trees) on the skyline ridge, which were planted in 1878 as a navigational aid. In 1907 these natural navigational aids were superseded by the two beacons that now stand tall beside the trail. The beacons were the first of their kind made of reinforced concrete and used incandescent oil burners that were serviced by lighthouse keepers. It is hard to imagine that where I am now resting my bike next to one of the towers was once, a few generations ago, under a metre of water!

Onwards I ride, past the airport and under a tall silver birdlife art piece before reaching the Ahuriri Lagoon and a viewing platform for real wildlife observation. Here in the hide, I peek through round portholes that look much like the windows on the side of a ship, and I quietly watch the waterfowl going about their day. I'm loving this Water Ride and continue on my way to suburban Taradale.

From Taradale, I reach the Puketapu Loop, a simple circuit of the Puketapu River. The ride starts near the Otatara Pā which I take a quick look at before starting the trail. The defensive pā is impressive as its elaborate terraces work their way up the hillside. It's thought to be one of the most outstanding pā in the country and I can see why. There are fortifications, pits and gardens. The site was strategically placed to overlook the area, close to the river for navigation and the lagoon for food and flax collection. After the short walk, I'm once more on my bike and I make my way upstream. The trail here has lovely twists and turns, and at the top end a tavern for a drink before returning via the opposite bank. At times the track passes orchard workers who are harvesting apples – and giving me friendly waves as they work their rows. Later in the day as I ride on a

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1. The celestial star compass sits right on the foreshore
2. The trail wraps around the harbourside – a perfect place to both dine or play
3. The Westshore strip of Norfolk pines and leisurely riders
4. The beacons dwarf you as you ride past
5. The wildlife hides are portals to views of wetland waterfowl

nearby trail, one of the orchard managers calls me over and offers me a sample from one of their trees. They are harvesting a small apple destined for the Asian market. They are sweet and crisp. It is incredible how crops are now grown specifically for a single overseas market and bred for their taste preference. After this refreshing bite, I head to the processing shed where whirring machines transport apples on conveyors, and dexterous staff busily sort and pack these sweet tasty fruits.

The following day I return to the trail and decide to give the Wineries Ride a go. This is a large loop of the Gimblett Gravels and I start at Roy's Hill Restoration Area beside the vineyards. Soon I'm riding past rows of bountiful grapevines, all just an arm's length from the track. Like the previous day's trails, this one too is flat, and the limestone surface makes for easy riding. With over 20 vineyards on or close to the trail, this is a ride for those who like pedal-turning and tasting. Picking which places to stop, I think, might be the hardest part of the ride. The Gimblett Gravels Winegrowing District is an area on the former Ngaruroro River riverbed. The presence of the gravels has lowered the water table resulting in a heat sump and micro-climate from the cool sea breezes. I am told that this gives the grapes the ability to thrive and develop their unique flavour.

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I can attest to the localised heat. As the day warms up on the gravels my pedalling slows down – I need to get back to the ocean to get some cool air. Fortunately the Clive to Clifton trail along the Kidnapper Coast should be a refreshing finale.

Just before I reach Clive (a town, not a guy on a bench!) I stop in at the Waitangi Regional Park. Here on the foreshore is another culturally significant site. This is the landing place of the Takitimu waka that brought the first Māori inhabitants to the area 600–700 years ago. The site is celebrated with a large celestial star compass of 32 carved pou which are set in a circle. It is designed to educate visitors on traditional navigational techniques used by Māori when they travelled by waka from the Pacific Islands to Aotearoa. I am fascinated by the large celestial star compass. As a cartographer, I have never walked inside a compass. It's surreal to look past the pou cardinal points from the perspective of a compass needle. The site also has cross-cultural significance; the first mission station was located here, and a ship offshore from the park was where local Māori chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi.

My internal compass now points south-south-west to Clive, a small town where the trail wraps around the edges before passing a coastal wetland. Here I find some walnut trees that have just dropped their shells; I scavenge around and find my handlebar bag has room for a few handfuls to enjoy later. After crossing the Tukituki River bridge the trail runs through a beautiful wetland area before reaching the coastal settlement of Haumoana. This is a sweet place to have an ice cream, sit on the beach, and enjoy the striking white cliffs of Cape Kidnappers. While I am here, I also visit the British Car Museum – while not much of a car buff myself, it was hard to bypass a sign claiming to have 'the world's largest collection of British motorcars'. Collector Ian Hope (who has sadly passed away recently) welcomed me through the door to view his incredible man-cave containing all things English motoring. My particular favourite was Dennis the fire engine as well as the vast number of Morris Minors. It takes some time to walk and view the 500 stacked vintage and classic British cars … a real lifetime's passion for collecting that I hope will continue to live on.

Powering on beyond Haumoana I head along the coast with the Cape now close. The smell of the sea and the occasional sand drifts on the trail give it a real coastal flavour. A cluster of holiday homes mark the entrance to Te Awanga and just beyond is the trail's

6

7

8

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9

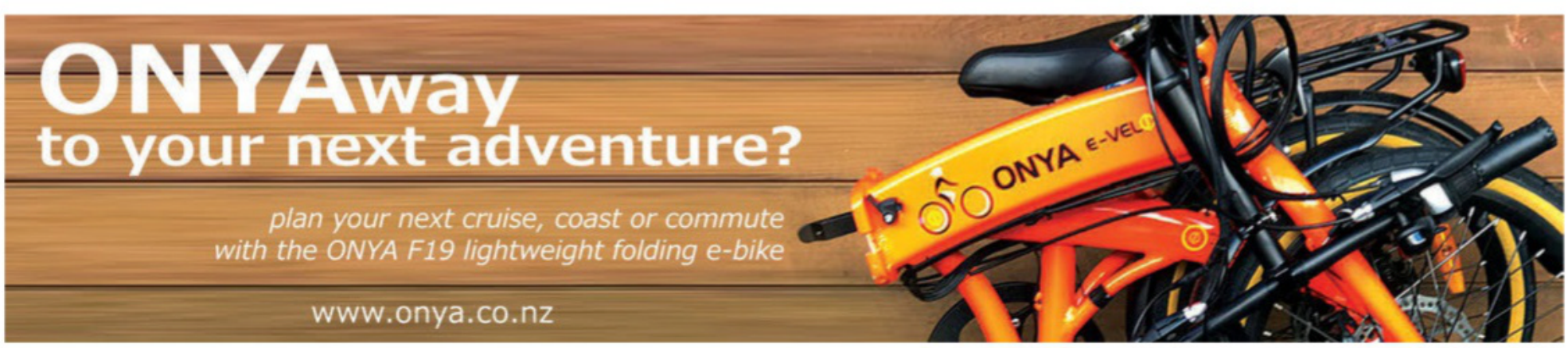
10

end. I stand and watch both a local and global battle being raged; the telltale signs of the damage from the fight are evident. The Pacific Ocean is on the eastern front while the shoreline retreats inland. The coastal erosion from sea-level rise has resulted in this stretch of coastline losing 0.3–0.7 metres per year. Reinforcements arrive in Clifton in the way of rock armouring to try and save the road, while some buildings up the coast have had to be relocated. A recent council report suggests a 'planned retreat' and they are unlikely to fund any future barriers from this continued onslaught. How this plays out is anyone's guess (although it ain't easy to hold back the ocean) – like most wars, there are few winners in this environmental campaign.

Driving back to Napier I pass some of the places I visited on my bike. I am surprised and delighted by how many trailside cafés and open cellar doors have bike racks to welcome weary riders. I feel enriched by the cultural and historical navigational sites the trail took me past. I am impressed by the quality flat trail that occasionally sent me high onto stopbanks that overlook rivers, orchards and ocean. My experience of the Hawke's Bay Trails has been an enticing offering of gentle rides that combine culture, cuisine and cycling. With additional funding already granted to expand the trail network, I will surely conduct a future expedition to chart the routes out east. **RV**

11

6. Picking produce right below the trail
7. The Wineries Ride makes a glorious loop around the vineyards
8. The celestial star compass sits right beside the trail and ocean
9. Mini marae features beside the trail
10. The Morris Minors collection is quite a sight
11. Rock armouring in Clifton – it's hard to hold back the ocean



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KAYAK MOUTOHORĀ/WHALE ISLAND

Wherever you are in the coastal eastern Bay of Plenty, you're never far from a view of Moutohorā/Whale Island, an important wildlife reserve that sits 9km offshore from Whakatāne. The distinctive hump always looks postcard-pretty from the mainland, but it's even better up close, thriving with bird and marine life. White Island Tours offer boat trips to Moutohorā. You land on the island then take a guided walk to hear its story and see rare birds like tīeke (saddlebacks). KG Kayaks also offer trips to Moutohorā; you sail out on a catamaran then get to paddle beside the island on stable sit-on kayaks, spotting marine life such as seals, and landing on a hot-water beach.

EXPERIENCES + ACTIVITIES

www.kgkayaks.co.nz

EXPLORING THE EASTERN BAY OF PLENTY

With the tragic events at Whakaari/White Island in mind, it feels timely to remind readers that Whakatāne and Ōpōtiki welcome visitors to their vibrant region to enjoy its natural beauty; trails abound for walking, running and cycling and there are numerous waterways to be explored by kayak or boat. With recent events in mind, it feels timely to remind readers of the numerous activities available to be enjoyed in the region. With lots of accommodation options – a room with a view in a luxury hotel, comfy motel near the beach, an Airbnb experience, or for the really lucky an RV, motorhome or caravan – you can really stay and explore it all. Jim Robinson has lived in the eastern Bay of Plenty for over 15 years and has run, biked, walked and paddled the region extensively. Sometimes, the best things to do are not the best-known things. That's why, when you're looking for things to do, local knowledge always provides an edge, here are his top tips for the region.

Story Jim Robinson **Photos** Neil Hutton or as credited

RIDE THE DUNES TRAIL SECTION OF MOTU TRAILS

CYCLE OR WALK

The Motu Trails (motutrails.co.nz) is an attraction that has become a highlight for visitors to the eastern Bay of Plenty/Tairāwhiti regions. There are a range of levels to choose from, with Ōpōtiki's Dunes Trail at the easy end. Even so, the popular 9km coastal trail rises and falls almost all the way, so by the time you've biked out and back, or even just halfway, you've earned that coffee or ice cream. What I enjoy most about the Dunes Trail is the resurgence of nature. Since the trail went in, upwards of 15,000 plants have been planted by the community, with species carefully selected to match what would originally have been there. The main starting point is Memorial Park in Ōpōtiki and you can ride, walk or run. Hire bikes are available from Motu Trails Limited (motucycletrails.com) and Motu Trails Hire & Shuttle (0800motutrails.nz). A recommended option is Mighty Motu Bike Tours (mightymotu.co.nz), offering a three-hour guided ride.

Neil Hutton

WALK ONLY

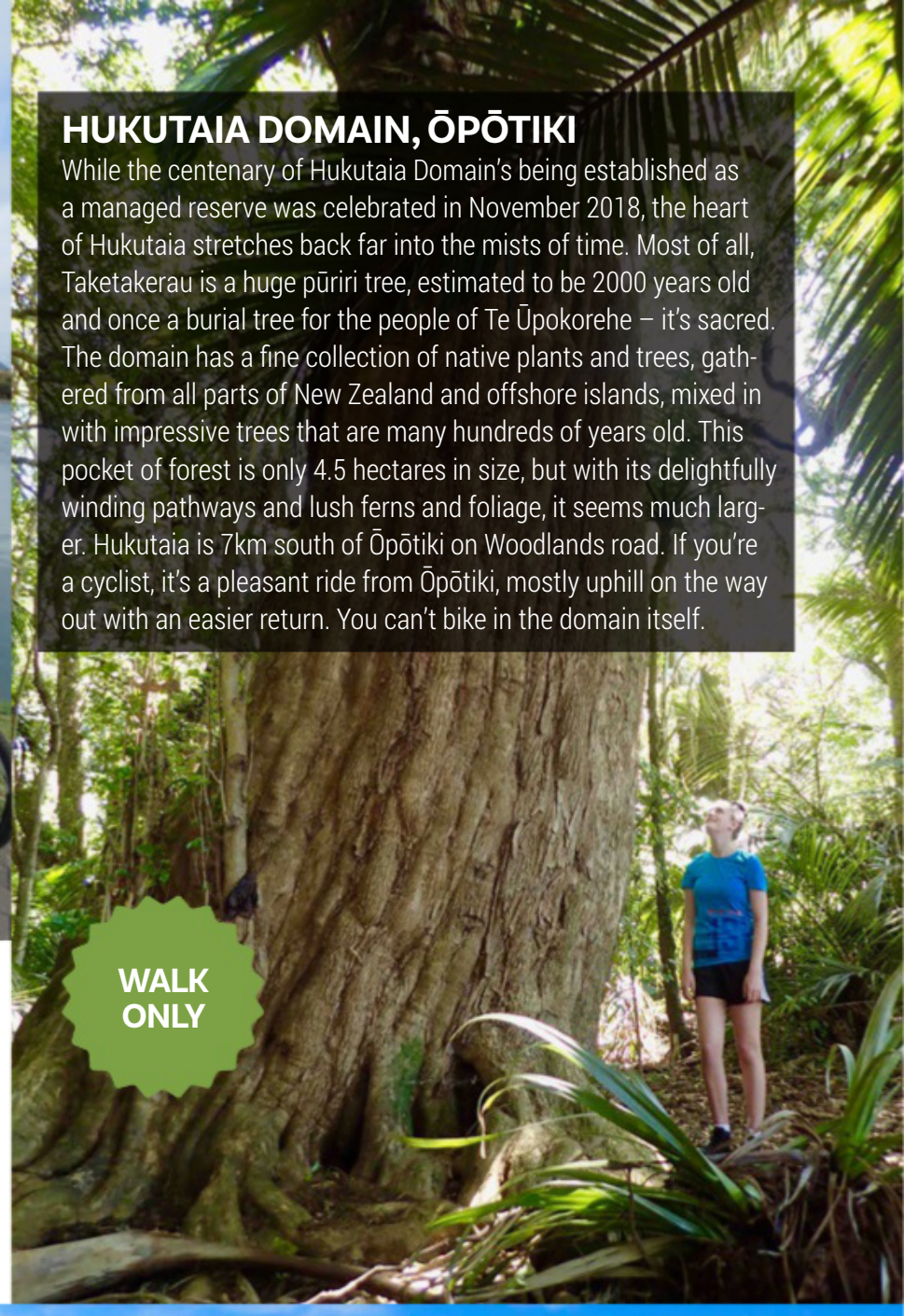
NGĀ TAPUWAE O TOI TRACK, INCLUDING KA-PU-TE-RANGI PĀ SITE

Ngā Tapuwae o Toi – the footprints of Toi – must rate as one of the most spectacular coastal hiking tracks in New Zealand. The 17km trail loops around the hills and along beaches between Whakatāne and Ōhope, taking you into the heart of wild kiwi country. If you're a keen hiker or trail runner, 17km may not sound massive, but be sure, 'Toi's Track' is worth travelling to. The full loop takes most walkers five to seven hours; you can easily add a second or third day with other trails described here. Conversely, if 17km sounds too much of a good thing, the loop is easily split into shorter chunks. Ōhope's West End over to Otarawairere Bay (coastal magic), Whakatāne town centre to Kapu-Te-Rangi pā site (a solid forested climb rewarded with magnificent views at the top) and Ōhope's Fairbrother loop (huge pōhutukawa forest) are three personal 'quick hits'.

CYCLE OR WALK

WHAKATĀNE RIVERSIDE TRAIL

Whakatāne offers several easy walks/rides, close to town. In its 4km distance, Warren Cole Walk & Cycle Way packs in the Whakatāne River mouth, the landing place of the mighty Mataatua canoe, bustling wharves and yacht marina, river saltmarsh (spot a white heron, if you're lucky), play areas, rose gardens, and multiple sculptures including Wairaka. The trail also passes by Whakatāne i-SITE and Whakatāne Holiday Park; it's close to the town centre and a wide range of cafés and shops. It is paved all the way, so user-friendly for all ages. Whakatāne Heads is a good start point, with toilets and parking.



HUKUTAIA DOMAIN, ŌPŌTIKI

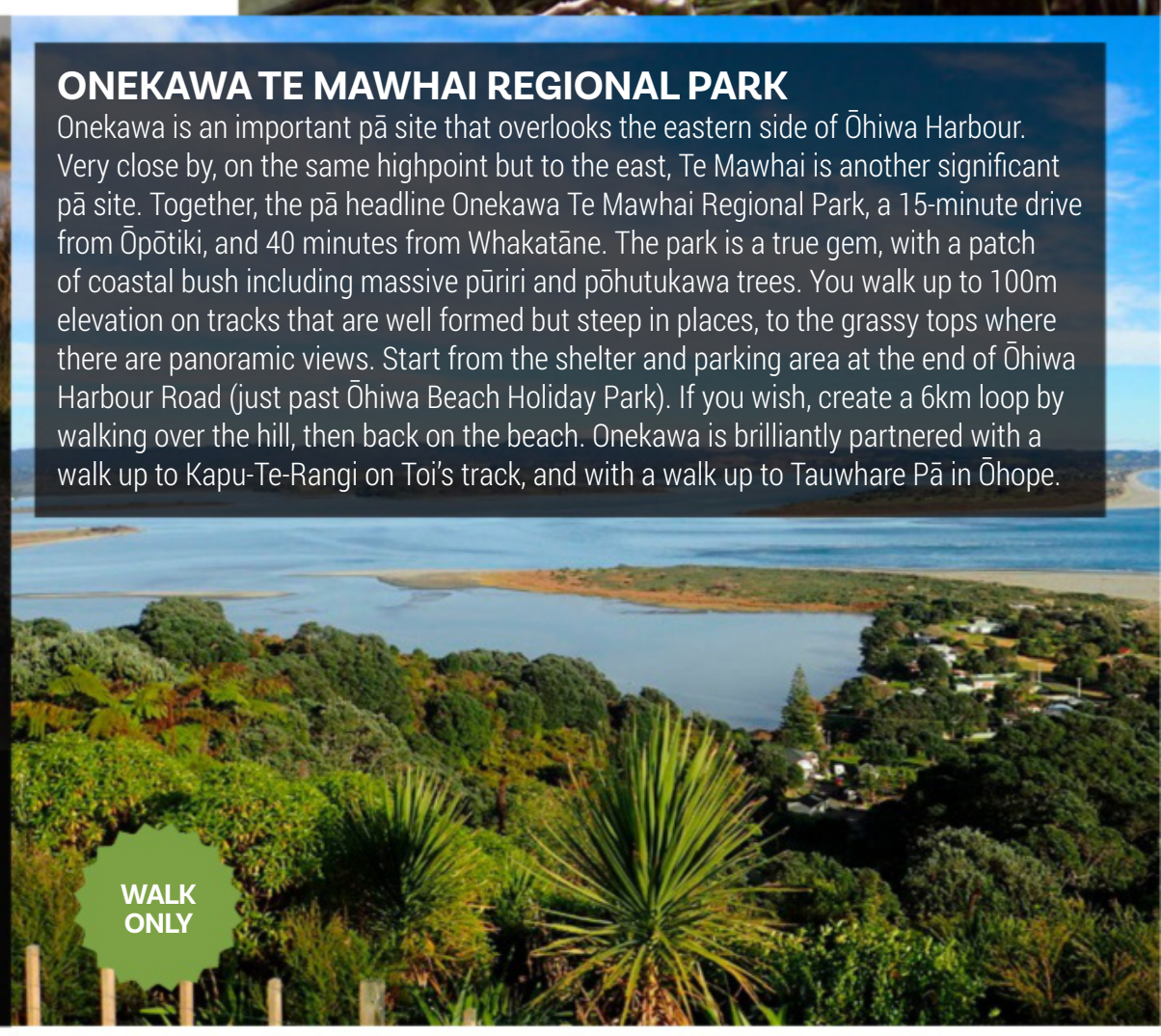
While the centenary of Hukutaia Domain's being established as a managed reserve was celebrated in November 2018, the heart of Hukutaia stretches back far into the mists of time. Most of all, Taketakerau is a huge pūriri tree, estimated to be 2000 years old and once a burial tree for the people of Te Ūpokorehe – it's sacred. The domain has a fine collection of native plants and trees, gathered from all parts of New Zealand and offshore islands, mixed in with impressive trees that are many hundreds of years old. This pocket of forest is only 4.5 hectares in size, but with its delightfully winding pathways and lush ferns and foliage, it seems much larger. Hukutaia is 7km south of Ōpōtiki on Woodlands road. If you're a cyclist, it's a pleasant ride from Ōpōtiki, mostly uphill on the way out with an easier return. You can't bike in the domain itself.

WALK ONLY

CYCLE OR WALK

ŌHOPE'S HARBOURSIDE TRAIL

Ōhope Harbourside Trail is an easy 3km walk or bike ride. It stretches from Ōhope wharf along the north-western shore of Ōhiwa and is partly gravelled and partly grass. This pretty trail meanders by harbour wetlands and has views over the water (or mudflats at low tide) to the hills behind. If you're riding or running, the trail is well linked with Ōhope's Harbour Road and Ocean Road, to create a loop of about 10km. The wharf is the ideal start point, with toilets, parking and activities. If you have a dog, it must be kept on a leash.



ONEKAWA TE MAWHAI REGIONAL PARK

Onekawa is an important pā site that overlooks the eastern side of Ōhiwa Harbour. Very close by, on the same highpoint but to the east, Te Mawhai is another significant pā site. Together, the pā headline Onekawa Te Mawhai Regional Park, a 15-minute drive from Ōpōtiki, and 40 minutes from Whakatāne. The park is a true gem, with a patch of coastal bush including massive pūriri and pōhutukawa trees. You walk up to 100m elevation on tracks that are well formed but steep in places, to the grassy tops where there are panoramic views. Start from the shelter and parking area at the end of Ōhiwa Harbour Road (just past Ōhiwa Beach Holiday Park). If you wish, create a 6km loop by walking over the hill, then back on the beach. Onekawa is brilliantly partnered with a walk up to Kapu-Te-Rangi on Toi's track, and with a walk up to Tauwhare Pā in Ōhope.

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HIKE THE MIGHTY PAKIHI

The Pakihi Track is the advanced-grade riding section of the Motu Trails Cycleway. It's rated advanced because of steep drop-offs to the side of the track, and because there's often rock debris on the track. In fact, the trail formation is good, mostly about 1.3m wide, with no steep hills. That makes the Pakihi well suited to a walk or run, if you're not a serious biker. Actually, as someone who rides, runs and walks the track, I can confirm, when walking, you see a lot of stuff completely missed on a bike. The Pakihi is stupendously pretty, with 8km riverside, many bridges, big nīkau ferns and good bird life. For riding it's one-way (downhill) from the Motu Road, but on foot you can start from the end of the Pakihi road, 23km south of Ōpōtiki. Walk up and back as far as you wish. Note, the Pakihi road access has 9km of narrow gravel; it's not suitable for a motorhome. Groups can get a shuttle to the top of the Pakihi and walk down, an all-day 20km walk.

JET BOAT THE MOTU RIVER

Back in the 1990s, jet boating on the Motu River was one of Eastland's original adventure attractions. Three years ago, Motu River Jet was launched (moturiverjet.com) and has proved equally popular. Motu River Jet has experienced, safety-focused guides. You zoom upriver, with the option to stop at a tunnel that was dug decades ago as part of explorations into the Motu's hydroelectric power potential. As well as the buzz of speed, what makes this a standout experience is the remote wilderness you're quickly into. Guided trips depart from SH35 Motu bridge daily through summer, and bookings are essential. Motu River Jet also does drop-offs for rafting and hunting trips.

Motu River Jet

Mataatua marae

EXPERIENCE MATAATUA MARAE

In the 1870s, as a symbol of unity and renewed strength, the people of Ngāti Awa built a magnificent carved meeting house, Mataatua, said to be a gift to Queen Victoria. Soon after, the Mataatua wharenui was dismantled and sent overseas. Painfully, more than 40 years would pass before it was returned to New Zealand, and over a century before it finally came home to Whakatāne. Over five years from 1996, Mataatua was meticulously reconstructed with carvings restored to former glory. In 2011, the wharenui reopened. Today, Mataatua stands again as the unifying soul of Ngāti Awa. Mataatua (mataatua.com) offers a range of visitor experiences, including a one-hour express tour, learning a haka and how to make a poi. You're welcomed onto the marae and into the sacred house by traditional pōwhiri. Inside, you get up close with the stunning carved representations of the great chiefs of Ngāti Awa and then see a super light/audio show that brings the stories to life, and don't miss the famous kūmara brownie. This place is truly special; step out with a richer understanding of Whakatāne and the eastern bay.

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EXPERIENCE THE KIWI CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

Thanks to the Whakatāne Kiwi Trust, over 300 wild kiwi now reside in the native bush between Whakatāne township and Ōhope. From April to June you can take a guided night walk to hear the call of wild kiwi and discover other creatures that come out in the bush at night. In Whakatāne town centre you can follow the Kiwi Wandering Trail and find the 10 bronze kiwi replicas of tracked kiwi that reside in the nearby scenic reserves. whakatanekiwi.org.nz

SEARCH THE SOUTHERN STARS AT WHAKATĀNE OBSERVATORY

The eastern bay's dark skies, due to minimal light pollution, make a big difference to what you can see at night. Whakatāne Astronomical Society's observatory/planetarium rewards you with a great view of the southern stars, moon and solar system. Subject to weather, the observatory is open Tuesday and Friday nights from 7.30pm.

EXPERIENCES + ACTIVITIES

RELAX ON ŌHOPE BEACH

Ōhope Beach is uncontestably one of New Zealand's favourite beaches, but that not simply because of the spectacular 11km sweep of firm sand with patrolled swimming area: the beach slopes off gently, the views of Moutohorā (Whale) Island are ever-present, there's a great little shopping village, playgrounds, and the Bay of Plenty sunshine hours add warmth to any kind of relaxation (walking, swimming, surfing at West End, SUP, fishing, and more). Completing Ōhope Beach's winning appeal, artwork includes carved logs by Harlem Shine, randomly shifted, buried and revealed by sea and sand.

EXPERIENCES + ACTIVITIES

DISCOVER WHIRINAKI TE PUA-A-TĀNE CONSERVATION PARK

South of Whakatāne in the 56,000ha Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne Conservation Park you can discover brilliant hiking, running and mountain biking, with a total of 155km of tracks (doc.govt.nz and search 'whirinaki'). Whirinaki Forest Mountain Bike Track is a 16km easy/intermediate loop, weaving through one of the most spectacular forests in the world, while Moerangi Track is an epic 35km adventure. Whirinaki Waterfall loop is a half-day walk, and there are options as short as the 2km H-tree walking track. One of New Zealand's most ancient forests with 1000-year old podocarps, Whirinaki is also home to the rare blue duck, the Whio. Guided experiences are available, giving you an understanding of the ecological and cultural significance of this incredible area, and as well as great walks in the forest there are glamping experiences on offer.

Strike Photography

EXPERIENCES + ACTIVITIES

GO BIRD WATCHING AROUND ŌHIWA

Ōhiwa Harbour is a bird haven of international significance. Ōhope spit, Ōhiwa spit, Nukuhou saltmarsh and Kutarere wharf are key spots, but you can spot and photograph all around the harbour. There are large populations of variable and pied oystercatchers. Shags, pied stilts and white-faced herons are easily seen. Kōtare – grumpy-sounding but pretty New Zealand kingfishers – perch on power lines all over the place. The harbour margins are home to less common North Island fernbirds and banded rails, and godwits in summer. If you're eagle-eyed, sharp-eared, patient and lucky, there are bitterns, banded- and northern dotterels – all very rare. Around Ōhiwa, there are many active care groups putting in major effort to restore environments and remove predators. Please always remember, many birds are species at risk. Respect them, stay well away from nesting areas, and don't take dogs into their terrain.

KAYAK ŌHIWA HARBOUR OR OTARAWAIRERE BAY

KG Kayaks has been operating since the early 2000s and has a reputation for delivering experiences that capture the special nature of the area. Options include paddling on Ōhiwa Harbour, and paddling from Ōhope's West End around Otarawairere Bay and beyond. Both are stunning guided trips. On the harbour you can get close to massive waterside pōhutukawa trees, shore/sea birds are everywhere, and there are several islands. Around Otarawairere, you discover spectacular rock formations and hidden coves, with shags, gulls, terns, and sometimes the odd diving gannet. Owner Kenny has over 15 years of guiding experience and is safety focused. He shares the stories and what's special about the area. Kayaks are stable sit-ons.

EXPERIENCES + ACTIVITIES

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A Coastal Embrace

Wander down a seamless walkway along the coastal shoreline from Port Taranaki out to the spiritual Te Rewa Rewa bridge crossing the Waiwhakaiho River and beyond.

Story + Photos Jane Dove Juneau

1

The crackling sounds of breaking waves pierce the crisp winter morning air as I amble down to the start of the New Plymouth Coastal Walkway near the Lee Breakwater. The clear blue sea stretches out to the horizon where it meets the soft powder-blue sky. The Power Station chimney towers over a container ship berthed at Port Taranaki, and fishing boats are moored by the breakwater. The coastal walkway meanders around the bay past Len Lye's Wind Wand in the central city out to the white wave-shaped Te Rewa Rewa bridge near the Waiwhakaiho River mouth 7km away and on through Hickford Park to Bell Block Beach.

In the early morning the walkway is quiet near the port. A tag team of three cyclists glide by me – perfect timing to fill the frame of my photograph. By 10am the local inhabitants are waking up to a stunning blue day, if not a little chilly – a perfect morning to pop on their walking shoes and embrace the sea air on the coastal walkway.

A tall spindly red pointer topped by a perspex ball stretches up into the dark blue sky as I near the downtown area. Kinetic artist Len Lye tested his first wind wands in New York during the early sixties, 40 years before this 48-metre high example was installed on the

2

New Plymouth foreshore. On windy days it bends so far in the wind I wonder if it may snap. The Len Lye Centre at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery has more of the New Zealand-born artist's mesmerising sculptures.

A cluster of people are gathered around Howard Tuffery's bright stainless steel sculpture *Light on Land*, while nearby two women on a solid wooden bench overlooking the ocean are engaged intensely in conversation. Two young men with designer dogs on leads walk by, chatting about the previous night's activities. People of all shapes and sizes are out walking, family groups, children on bikes, babies in strollers or on the back of bikes. It's a busy scene as the day warms. A loud clack, clack, clack sounds behind me as skateboarders run over planks on the sidewalk and onto the paved walkway. This walkway has changed the way people embrace the coastal environment.

When I first moved to New Plymouth in the mid-seventies, it surprised me that the town was built right by the ocean yet all the buildings were facing inland. The railway station and yards covered the area by the foreshore near where the Wind Wand now stands, and there was no easy access to the foreshore in the central city until railway yards were relocated out to Smart Road. The whole of the foreshore area was redesigned, the road realigned, Centre City was built, and over time, buildings were moved to create a space for Puke Ariki museum and landing. Next in 1997 came the plans for a grand coastal walkway from Port Taranaki to the Waiwhakaiho River.

3

1. The Coastal Walkway has won numerous awards including an International LivCom award for Liveable Communities
2. All ages enjoy a morning on the walkway
3. Near Port Taranaki two dogs enjoy a morning walk

A great deal of thought, engineering and design went into creating the walkway. The design had to respond to the wild west coast – dangerous at times, yet peaceful on calm days.

"We wanted to be able to walk out and be proud (of the west coast) and be windblown if we needed to be, and enjoy the quiet sunset when those days arrived, but (whatever the weather) we wanted to get out there and be in it," said David Irwin of Isthmus, who collaborated on the design with landscape architect Richard Bain of Bluemarble. "It started as a coastal walkway and ended up being a piece of infrastructure that changes the way a city sees itself. It's given the city an identity. It has empowered people to show off their city. I don't think we ever perceived it would unleash such pride," said Irwin speaking to Landscape Architect Aotearoa.

The walkway is rugged and strong with large piles of round rocks leading up from the ocean to the smooth concrete path, interspaced with wide planked wooden piers and solid bench seats, that provide uninterrupted views of the coast. The promenade was designed without an edge to avoid interrupting the connection with the sea. Between the Wind Wand and East End Beach a curved wall stabilises the

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bank above the walkway, an area that can be pounded by waves during stormy weather.

As the walkway rounds the corner to East End and Fitzroy Beaches the activity changes. Cars with surfboards fill the carparks with surfers clambering into wetsuits before paddling out into the hollow glassy waves. I watch as the surfers dance with nature, sliding effortlessly around the waveface until they are engulfed by the breaking wave. At Fitzroy Surf Club a crowd has gathered to watch the surfers negotiate the tricky hollow waves. One wrong move and the surfer is swallowed by the tube.

The smell of coffee fills the air and I realise it is lunch time. The Kiosk at Fitzroy Beach operates out of the Surf Club from 8am to 3pm each day. After studying the menu I choose a pulled lamb quesadilla with corn salsa, an excellent choice as it turns out. Seated in the sun at a bench table I watch the tube-riding action and chat with a family over lunch.

6

4. The walkway finshes/ starts near Port Taranaki
5. Lunch activity at The Kiosk at Fitzroy Beach
6. A surfer enjoys the glassy conditions at Fitzroy

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As the tide is going out I decide to walk this section along the beach rather than the walkway, finding the beach sand is soft in contrast to the concrete surface of the walkway. At the groyne by the Waiwhakaiho River mouth, there is a short clamber over rocks to rejoin the walkway. The water rushes out from the Waiwhakaiho River under the Te Rewa Rewa bridge to reach the surging ocean.

Crossing the Te Rewa Rewa bridge is a three-dimensional experience. It is like walking through a large curving sculpture – like a wave made from the ribs of a whale. The towering sculpture changes as you pass through the curved shape to the other side of the river. From the far side, on a clear day Taranaki Maunga lines up perfectly in the centre of the curved bridge. This is no accident; at the request of the Ngāti Tawhirikura hapū, the bridge design was turned around so it opens towards the sacred mountain. Bridge designer Peter Mulqueen was conscious that the bridge should 'touch lightly' on the Rewa Rewa side of the river, to honour the deceased in the Rewa Rewa burial ground on the north river bank.

This is where my journey finishes today, at this spiritual site by the Te Wera Wera bridge. I turn and retrace my steps along the walkway as the afternoon sun creeps across the sky. It is a credit to good architectural design, embracing our wild coastline to create a walkway that people walk, ride, or skate with a smile on their faces, appreciating nature and the simple pleasures in life. RV

7. Te Rewa Rewa bridge opens towards the sacred Taranaki Maunga

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BEYOND THE BRIGHT LIGHTS

Titirangi – a bush-clad Auckland suburb just a stone's throw from downtown Auckland

Story Sheryl Bainbridge **Photos** Neill Bainbridge

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Although media reports led us to believe that Titirangi was overrun by marauding gangs of rats, some as big as small cats, others the size of cocker spaniels and probably by now as large as your average German Shepherd, we didn't see a single rat at all. Well that's not quite true. At Titirangi's monthly Sunday market, Colin Heath from NZ Coin Works was doing a lively trade in small brass ornamental rats, selling to those who like myself were entertained by the prospect of a new Titirangi icon. That's not to say that there's not a ratty issue, and if so, judging by local warning signs it has obviously concerned the local authority enough to take steps to rid itself of the predicament. Titirangi's renowned for its chicken population, but we didn't see any of those either, although we could hear roosters crowing in the bush. People enjoy the chickens and like to feed them, which together with a mild autumn has largely contributed to the rat problem.

What we did see was a pleasing number of native birds including kererū (native pigeon) and pīwakawaka (fantail) as well as several tūī darting among the trees like fat black arrows. That wasn't too surprising, as in many parts of Titirangi an astounding range of mature native trees grow right up to the footpaths, and if it weren't for the number of houses among them, and the sight and sound of traffic, you'd swear you were in the country instead of only 13km south-west of downtown Auckland. The suburb's near the southern end of the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park, and the road ends about 15km away at Huia, near the entrance to the extensive Manukau Harbour. Huia is not far from the small settlement of Cornwallis, where a small graveyard in the bush marks the last resting place of John Kilgour and three unknown sailors who lost their lives when the naval corvette HMS *Orpheus* was wrecked in the harbour in 1863 while delivering supplies and troops for the Land Wars. The incident was New Zealand's worst maritime disaster, and many of the 189 sailors who drowned were very young, aged between 12 and 18 years old at the time.

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1. Roundabout sculptures based on fungus
2. The view from the roof of Lopdell House looking towards Auckland Airport in the distance
3. Graves of sailors drowned during the wreck of the ***Orpheus*** in 1863

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Back at the market, which began in 1991 as a means of supporting the Titirangi Rudolph Steiner school, well over 50 stalls were selling all manner of arts, crafts and specialty foods. Colin Heath has been there from the outset, making New Zealand coin jewellery and selling a variety of small brass animal figurines including rats, crocodiles, chickens and many others. The market's very popular with the locals who turned up in droves, leading or being led by a vast number of dogs of all shapes and sizes.

New Zealand's most important modern artist Colin McCahon lived at Titirangi in the 1950s and worked at the Auckland City Art Galleries, initially as a cleaner but ending up as the Deputy Director, painting all the while. McCahon House, his home on the steep, winding Otitori Bay Road leading to French Bay, is now owned by a trust and is open to the public at specified times. We were shown around the house by volunteer Georgina Carlton and were amazed at the miniscule living spaces including the teeny tiny separate shower that would have been quite innovative at that time, and the sheer quantity of artwork that McCahon produced in such a small area. Inside, there's a replica of the mural that he painted on the wall of the dining area and another painting in the kitchen. Visitors can listen to stories on headphones, and view images of the remarkable number of paintings. The house is well worth a visit for those interested in art and heritage and ways to maximise small spaces. Here, and at most other places we visited near the bush, we saw and used shoe-washing facilities, there to help contain the spread of Kauri dieback

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August 2019 saw the centenary of McCahon's birth, and, sponsored by Resene, several commemorative events were held to celebrate

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4. Titirangi monthly market
5. The Pied Piper of Titirangi – Colin Heath with an assortment of brass rat figurines
6. Volunteer Georgina Carlton beside a replica of McCahon's painting in the dining area
7. The graceful art deco Lopdell House staircase
8. Pioneer environmentalist Henry Atkinson
9. McCahon House, now a museum

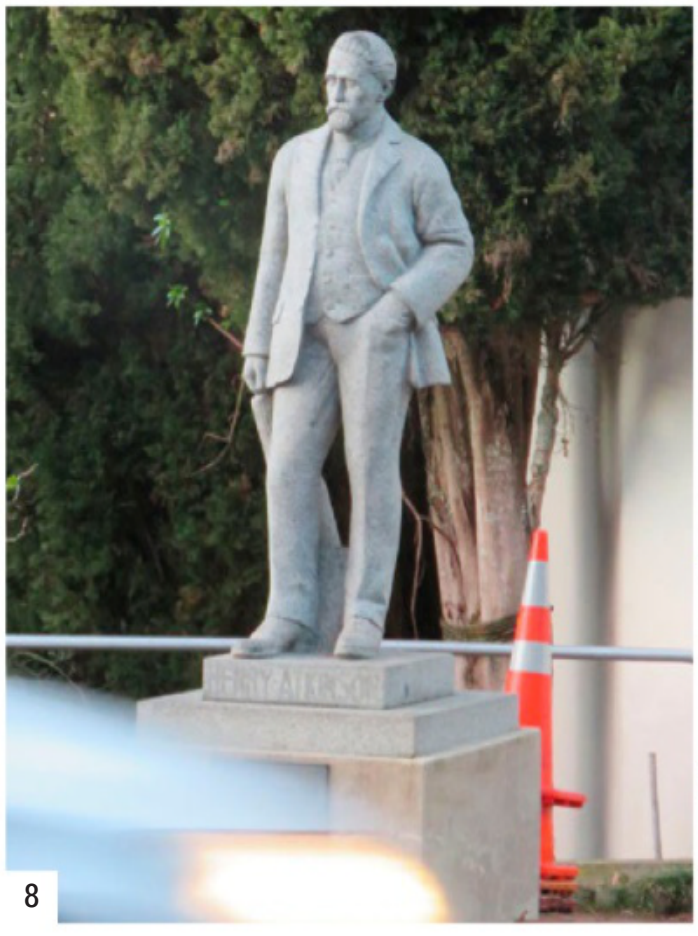
Colin McCahon's legacy and 100 years of modern art in New Zealand.

Perhaps encouraged by the fact that Titirangi was home to Colin McCahon, several artists and bohemian life-stylers chose it as a place to live in the 1960s and '70s, and many still reside here today. Potter Peter Lange was one such artist, and is famous for, among other things, his brick sculptures. I spoke to him a couple of years ago when our small Far North town of Kaeo was capitalising on its infamy for flooding by installing dinghies around the town, including a welcome sign atop a tall pole. I'd thought that one of Peter's brick dinghy sculptures might be an appropriate addition, given that his father Doctor Lange practised at the local hospital for some time. However, it was not to be, as Peter had stopped making brick sculptures some time previously. So it was quite a thrill, after climbing three storeys up the graceful staircase of art centre Lopdell House to find a Peter Lange brick sculpture reclining on the open roof. I say 'reclining' because the piece is a brick lilo and in 2006 it won the premier award in the Portage Ceramic awards, organised annually by the Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery in the adjoining building.

Several of Peter's large works are installed around Auckland and elsewhere. Some years ago, Peter, who is the brother of the late prime minister David Lange, gifted a large pottery collection to the Auckland Society of Potters, and it's now stored and being archived at Barry Brickell's legacy, the Driving Creek Railway in Coromandel, so will be available for the public to see at some stage.

The roof of Lopdell House, as well as providing expansive views across the harbour to the Auckland Airport, is a good place to look down on the roundabout that has been named one of the best in the world by the UK Roundabout Appreciation Society, an organisation that, unlikely as it seems, has a large following throughout the world. The sculptures in the centre of the roundabout were designed by Lisa Higgins in 1993. Inspired by fungus, their original pink colour caused some controversy, but they've now been repainted in a greenish-blue, said to be more in keeping with the evergreen of the Waitākere Ranges, and are now generally loved by the community. Outside Lopdell House there's a statue of Henry Atkinson, pioneer of environmental protection who, prior to his death in 1921, donated areas of land to the Auckland City Council. His statue was originally sited on nearby Mt Atkinson but was moved to the Lopdell House site due to people repeatedly stealing his nose!

At the time of writing there's a new construction development underway that will change the face of the village itself, and that's progress. But it's a given that Titirangi's underlying community, environmental and art-related values will remain integral to the neighbourhood in this lovely leafy suburb. RV



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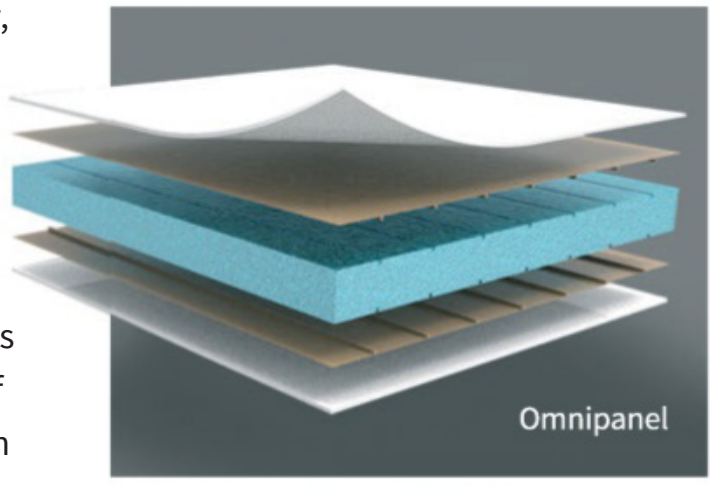

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FIFTY YEARS OF FINE CHINA

The whitest clay in the world is mined near Northland's Matauri Bay

Story Sheryl Bainbridge **Photos** N&S Bainbridge or as credited

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When former US president Barack Obama visited Northland's luxury Kauri Cliffs golf course in 2018, it's not known if he had a snack while on the premises. Chances are that if he did, the tableware he used would likely have contained a product mined on the property just down the road. That's because the fine white halloysite clay used in the production of high-end tableware today is found right there at Matauri Bay in the Far North.

Kauri Cliffs and Imerys, locally known as the clay-works property were both once part of the same estate. Past owners included my husband's great-great-grandmother Eleanor Stephenson who bought the place called Waiaua but also known as Tepene Tablelands (Tepene being Māori for Stephenson) in 1854. It went out of family ownership for a while, but in 1898 it was bought by Eleanor's son-in-law William Leslie as his wife Cecelia loved the place so much. Generations of Leslie kids who grew up knowing exactly where to go to dig up fine white clay (a more accessible product than Plasticine) little guessed that they were modelling and moulding the whitest clay in the world. In time the clay became available in commercial quantities, and in 1949 mining rights were negotiated between the parent company of Crown Lynn Properties and Uncle Henry Leslie.

It was not until 1969 though that the New Zealand China Clays factory was formally opened by then Finance Minister Robert Muldoon. By that time the property and the clay extraction business had been owned by the Williams family for some years, and the detailed history of events leading to the setting up of the business is well documented in Lorelei Hayes' excellent book Waiaua to Kauri Cliffs.

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1. A locally made pot from the process by-product
2. Looking down into the pit ...
3. ... and looking up!

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Now owned by French-based company Imerys, the business has contributed to the local economy and employed a mainly local staff for half a century. Imerys, whose main business is extracting industrial minerals, operates 250 facilities in more than 50 countries, with a workforce of some 17,000. It mines, processes, and working with customers adds value to products, producing raw material for a diverse market base on every continent. Products include paint, plastic, rubber, pharmaceuticals, polymers and ceramics.

Imerys bought the company from New Zealand China Clays/Ceramco in 2000. At this time the nearby Mahimahi quarry had been opened in a joint venture with a local Māori Trust. Clay from both sites is blended at the Imerys plant, and from an initial 50% halloysite and 50% silica mix it is refined to the stage where only 10% silica remains. In simple terms, the clay's extraordinary whiteness or purity, the thing that makes it very important, is due to the abundant rain and warmth of tropical weathering, whereby the oxides have literally been washed out of the clay[1]. Some of the sandy by-product is sold to landscapers for construction applications such as a base for tanks and horse arenas. One local block-layer

told me that it's very heavy and not that easy to work, but its whiteness means that people like to use it.

Director Mathew Arthur, who has been with Imerys for 32 years explains that the local company was initially set up to service the New Zealand domestic paper market. This proved unsuccessful and attention turned to the Asian tableware market then extended to bone china and porcelain markets in Europe and other parts of the world. "The whiteness of the clay and its translucency when fired makes it desirable for very high-end products – think Lladro, Royal Doulton, etc.," says Mathew, "but times have changed since the 1970s and '80s when a good china dinner set or tea set was on every bride's wedding gift list. Attitudes now are much more casual, and we've been looking at new markets and applications. The use of our products in technical ceramics was proven some 30 years ago and we supply customers producing molecular sieves for absorbing gases and liquids in, for example, air conditioners before emission to the atmosphere. But still, the body or glaze of high-quality Asian tableware still contains a percentage of New Zealand clay which has the right blend and whiteness required. It's been the backbone of the company for 45–50 years, and it's the whiteness that makes it a viable product." Due to the distance from markets the time-consuming and costly logistics of transport are a perennial problem, but the business remains profitable and sustainable. "We've got a good team of people with a wealth of technological knowledge in quarrying, processing, engineering and finance. Our staff could walk into a job at any plant around the world," concludes Mathew.

Environmental protection is essential, and the company has installed an automatic river-management system and dust-management processes. A restoration plan is being developed, and the plant's proximity to Kauri Cliffs seems

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to demonstrate that, with the right protocols in place, luxury leisure and industry can cohabit comfortably within a community. At the Mahimahi site, luxuriant stands of mānuka provide a bonus in that the local beekeeper donates honey from the hives for distribution locally. Interestingly, although the plant and mines are very close to the Matauri Bay Road, apart from signage, travellers are generally unaware of their existence.

Imerys also has sponsorship programmes in local schools, and its engineering expertise was put to good use when the nearby Rainbow Warrior memorial was constructed. Long-term employee Ken Luke said the basalt plinth that the propeller is affixed to was found underwater at Kauri Cliffs' private Pink Beach and hauled up the hill to its present site. "Then the engineers helped with the erection of the memorial as a whole," he added.

So half a century from the business start-up, it was time to celebrate this milestone! There was an open day in November 2019 so that the community, employees and ex-staff could tour the site and celebrate their connection. Imerys VIPs arrived from France and Asia/Pacific, and following the formalities the Wainui Marae put on a sumptuous lunch that included all sorts of local kaimoana (seafood) and mouth-watering desserts. After this we toured the site.

Manager Lawrie Franks began working at the mine 33 years ago and is the second-longest serving employee. Acting as tour guide for our group, he led us to a viewing platform overlooking the pit, which he said had once been a hill. "There's nothing sinister about the product," Lawrie pointed out. "It's clay, a purely natural product, that is separated from the silica sand that is part of its natural state, and in two drying processes it's separated, milled and ground into small particles, then dried into granules/powder or cakes of clay in a rotary kiln before being bottled or bagged." We had a bird's-eye view of the mine from a viewing platform at the top, then travelled down to an area near the bottom of the pit where, looking upwards, we could see the extent of the extraction.

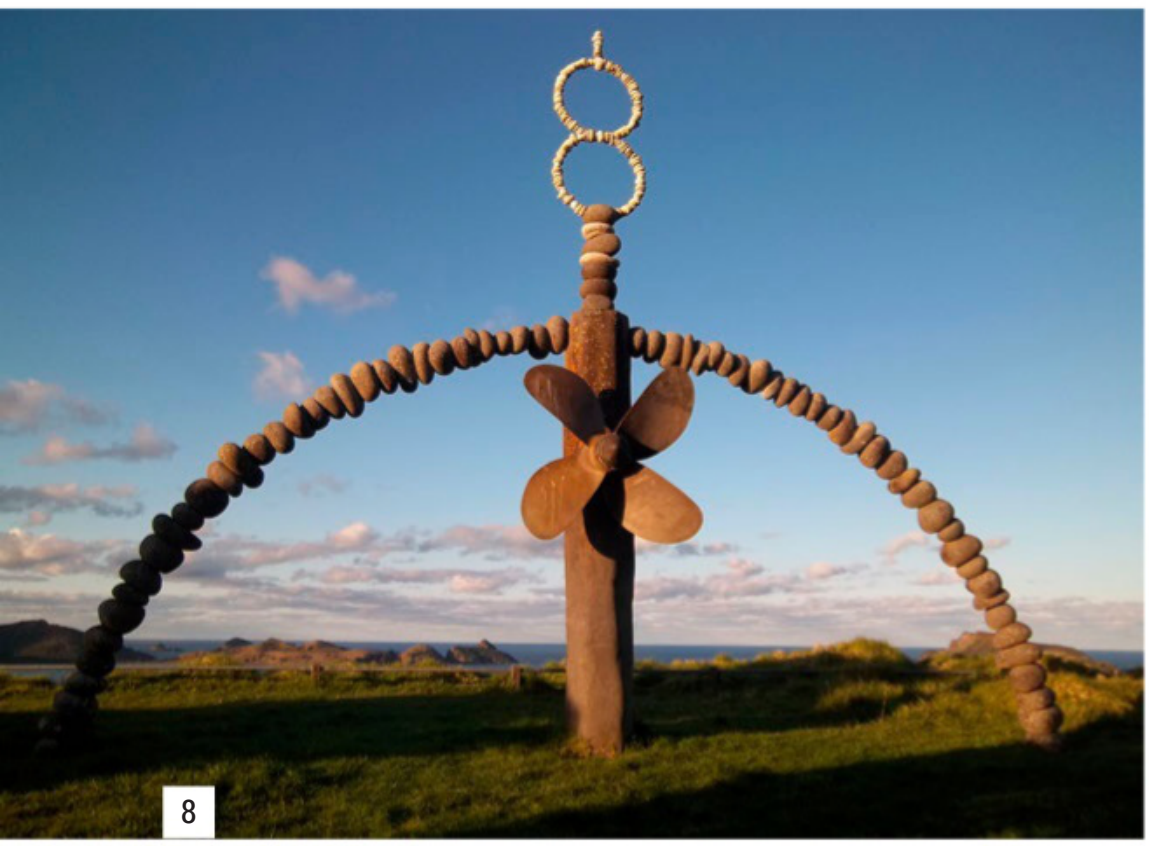
When the workings close at some point in the future, the company's target is to partner with a biodiversity group to manage restoration, but for now, the millions of dollars already invested is set to continue. "We're managing the business to be here for the long term," concludes Mathew. RV

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Waiaua to Kauri Cliffs: the story of a Northland Sheep Station 1833–2003 – Lorelei Hayes

1 *Origin of the Matauri Bay halloysite deposit, Northland, New Zealand – RL Brathwaite et al, GNS Science*

4. Clay waiting to be blended
5. Bales of product waiting to leave the factory
6. VIP guests from Asia and France attend the plant's 50- year celebrations
7. Mānuka flowers are the source of delicious local honey
8. Imerys engineers helped construct the Rainbow Warrior memorial at Matauri Bay
9. Acting tour guide Lawrie Franks points out features in the mine



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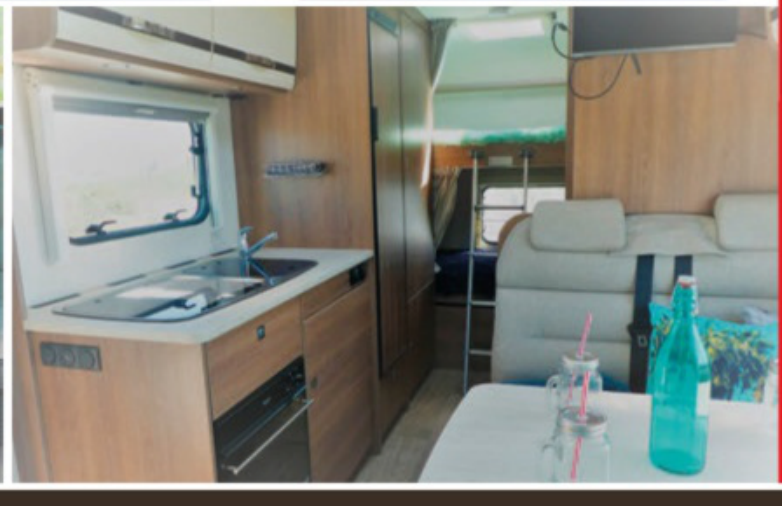

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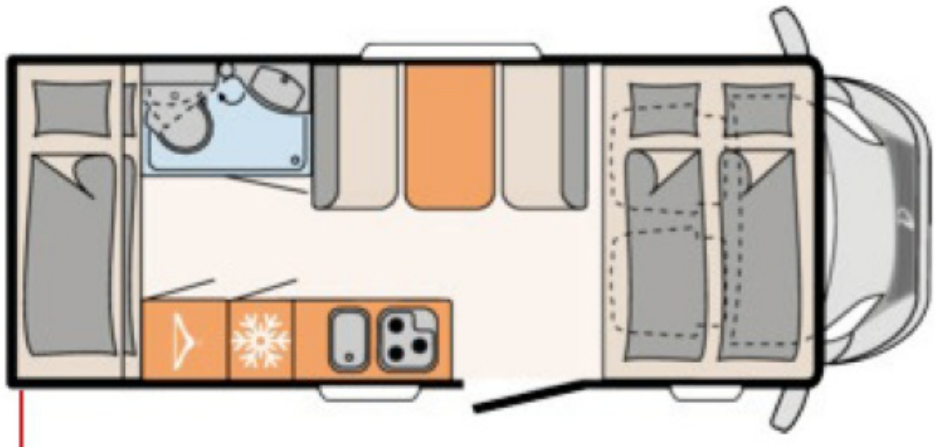

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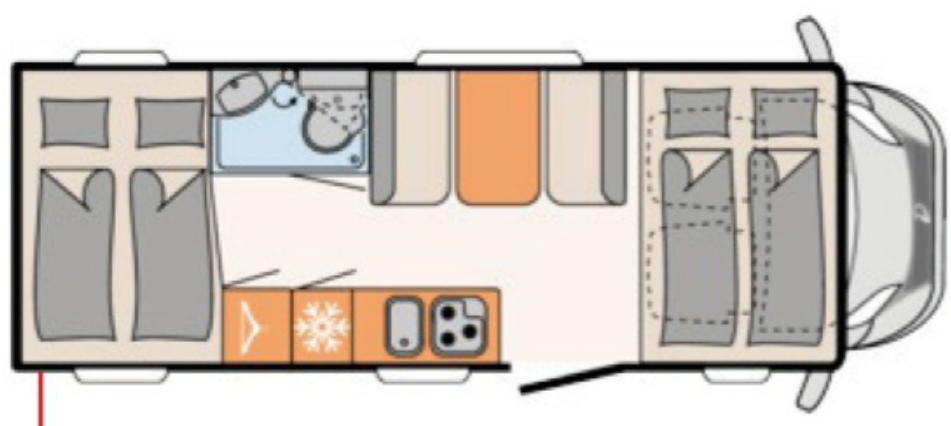

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RV, RAIL AND RUNWAYS

A road trip goes from road to rail travel and ends flying Sounds Air to Wellington.

Words Robyn Dallimore Photographs Bruce Mountain

2

When we organised our recent trip to Christchurch, our plan was to drive to Wellington via Napier and Martinborough, ferry to Picton, then drive to Blackball, visit Greymouth, and then head to Christchurch via Arthur's Pass to deliver the Dethleffs Distinction Trend motorhome to UCC.

For the return journey we had the option of either picking up a relocation vehicle to drive north, jumping on a plane directly for home, or booking ourselves on the Coastal Pacific for the rail journey to Picton and then either flying or taking the Northern Explorer from Wellington to Auckland. A couple of times before, we had tried to fit in the Coastal Pacific train trip after the service resumed on December 1, 2018 – following the Kaikōura earthquake on November 14, 2016 that shut the service down – but to no avail, so that was an interesting option.

Then the thought occurred … why not fly from Picton with Sounds Air? I had done this many years ago (in quite turbulent conditions as it happened). So our thinking was … let's get off the train, hop on the 3.10pm flight from Sounds Air to Wellington and connect with a flight to Auckland – home by 7pm if we were smart about it. A few phone calls to check out the flights and it was all organised.

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1. The dining carriage has seating for those that want to sit there
2. Excited to be getting on the Coastal Pacific train
3. Meal with a view

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Sounds Air made it even easier as they pick up passengers from their Picton office. I was so surprised at the costs: we flew at short notice so $120 each, but if you book ahead that goes down to $59 per person (dependent upon the day of the flight). That's similar to or cheaper than a ferry ticket on either carrier, so price-wise this is absolutely an option. Costs for the train range from $89 to $159 depending on time of year and booking.

So, we stayed the night in a motel in Christchurch, ready to get to the train station to board the Coastal Pacific at 6.30am on Saturday morning. And at 6.15am we were out waiting for our Uber – only our second time of using the service that we'd signed up for the night before to get into the city for dinner. We could have walked the distance (just over a kilometre) but who are we kidding – that wasn't happening! We just wanted to get there relaxed, warm and ready to board the train and get some coffee and breakfast into us. We loaded our luggage into the baggage car and found our specified seats. We had a table, which was great for us as we always have our computers out doing this and that, and the train wasn't packed full so there was plenty of space for the two of us.

The train has a dining car that offers pre-prepared food, real coffee, drinks, etc. – not what you might dream of after seeing movies with awesome meals in fancy railway dining cars, but the food available is Wishbone, a well-known food and café brand that we use regularly at Wellington and Auckland airports and hospitals. When faced with a Wishbone food cabinet I take forever to choose what I want, depending on what meal it is – the Caesar salad or hot roast chicken with mash is a regular for me, the scalloped potatoes and the odd sandwich as well. I don't run to the sugary baked goods very often, but the caramel chocolate slice can be cut up into tiny squares and eaten slowly over the day along with a couple of coffees – no problem. Fair to say I enjoy the food experience for what it is, nicely presented healthy optioned tasty food options. The staff are always so accommodating and helpful to everyone as well. We have found this across the board, as we have now completed all three main rail journeys over the years.

The Coastal Pacific journey is so visually interesting, changing from city environs to Canterbury Plains farmland vistas, then climbing through the mountains and traversing the Okaharia Viaduct along the way. The first glimpses of water on the Kaikōura coastline brings a wave of anticipation for the rugged coastal vista we will be travelling alongside for the next couple of hours, while close-up views of some of the rail tunnels and bridges that have been repaired help us appreciate the tremendous effort that has gone into the reconstruction – a real treat being able to observe the roadway

4. The road workers living camp on the outskirts of Kaikōura
5. Dave and Lynn wave out from their viewing spot at Surf Watch accommodation
6. Getting off and staying in Kaikōura day or few days is an option
7. Outside carriage
8. The Rock watching our plane land
9. A safety talk before we head off, then it is up up and away with Sounds Air

7

and works still underway in a very relaxed, comfortable mode of transport. No driving for da Brucie here – we could both enjoy the trip together. The train stops at Kaikōura, and you can leave it and stay a few days in the area to take in a whale-watching trip, or even swim with the dolphins. We didn't get off, and the best stretch of the trip was still ahead of us. Our friends Dave and Lynn run Surf Watch accommodation, 16km north of Kaikōura on the cliff top; they came out to their viewing point and waved to us on the train as we went by. The Rock spent a lot of the trip in the open-air viewing carriage taking photos and talking with other travellers, pointing out things they might not be aware of to look out for. Those with a sharp eye will see plenty of seals in the water and on the rocks along the Kaikōura coasta, and the lucky ones may catch a glimpse of dolphins or possibly even spot a whale spout blow.

There is a lot to see along this section, with the new cycleway constructed alongside the rebuilt roadway, the seabed uplift, and as you get near the Clarence River area you can clearly see the large swathes of mountainside that dropped away in the November 2016 earthquake event. Nice to be on the seaward side of the train as we went past The Store at Kekerengu, and I noticed that the foreshore development nearby has been completed and is now officially a camp area. I looked up their website and found that a beachfront campsite for tents and RVs costs $12 per person; they have ablution blocks being built and there's more development to come. The Rock and I have stopped over in this area for the night many times. Passing trains are noisy in the middle of the night, but the views and beach walks are incredible.

The large panoramic side and roof windows are fantastic for seeing the dramatic mountain and coastal views; they are un-tinted and non-reflective. To complement the views you can use the supplied headsets that run a GPS-triggered journey commentary(in five languages) at your seat, plus information displays and overhead HD video. The Coastal Pacific carriages have advanced air-bag suspension for quieter and smoother travel. Toilets are at the end of each carriage, so no worries there either.

Leaving the coast, the views change again heading inland through the dry hills to Lake Grassmere, a shallow lagoon on the coast between Ward and Seddon. The 'lake' is a series of controlled ponds that have sea water initially pumped into one of the ponds, then over the next few months the water is pumped from pond to pond to evaporate until it eventually reaches the correct salinity to form salt crystals. During this process an algal bloom develops and creates a pink tinge.

The hills in the area are succumbing to domination by acres of straight-lined vineyards, a lovely green against the dry grass surroundings. From there through to Blenheim, the train passes some large wineries with hundreds of thousands of litres of wine stored in large tanks, soon to be ready for bottling. The train stops for those who want to get off in Blenheim and to pick up passengers for the ride to the Interislander ferry connection.

The train arrived in Picton early, so we got off and headed around the marina for a walk and a coffee. Then we met the shuttle at the Sounds Air office and it was a quick drive to the airport halfway between Picton and Blenheim. Our baggage was soon loaded in and eight of us climbed into the plane. I chose to sit in the back seat by myself; I can get a bit claustrophobic at times and there were a couple of spare seats so I got lots of space. It also gave me great opportunities for photographs, of which I took hundreds. It was such an incredible view looking down over the Marlborough Sounds, seeing parts of Picton I didn't know existed, and brilliant views of the coast. As we headed over Cook Strait the south Wairarapa coastline became visible and all too soon I was craning my neck to see and photograph Eastbourne coastline and the lighthouses I knew were out there. After landing we got ourselves sorted for the next flight up to Auckland.

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It proved to be a great idea time-wise, for us in our situation. To leave Christchurch that morning and spend the main part of the day enjoying one of the most scenic and incredible train trips in the world with the Brucie, to wander around the lovely village of Picton enjoying the marina and waterways and then fly over it, and then fly to Auckland to be home by 7pm that night – wow, a really great day. I love the ferry trip across the Strait and recommend it to all and sundry, but this is an alternative option for those with less time who might want to drop straight into Picton and start their adventures from there or vice versa.

We have now ticked off the Northern Explorer, Coastal Explorer, TranzAlpine, Taieri Gorge, Coromandel Driving Creek railway, Kingston Flyer (long time ago) and Glenbrook Vintage Railway. **RV**

Glimpses of bays not seen before as we head out over the top of the south island

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Here we meet Sharon and Wayne George, a couple who have been living full time on the road in their bus since quitting the rat race in 2018 to live the RV Lifestyle dream. They have worked around the country doing everything from seasonal fruit picking, to working on farms, in offices and call centres as well as handling hospitality and cleaning work –just some of the occupations they've picked up since hitting the road. Now armed with a wide range of contacts and information on how to find seasonal and casual work around the country, they want to share that information and have put together a website - W: seasonalstaff.co.nz - offering a platform for businesses with jobs to connect with people seeking casual work.

Words + Photos Sharon and Wayne George

LIVING & WORKING ON THE ROAD

If you are like us travelling in a motorhome and are looking for something different, why not give kiwifruit a try, and meet some really cool people and see a different part of the country.

The kiwifruit season will soon be upon us again; you may have seen the vines with thousands of light brown globes hanging off them. There's a lot of work to be done with these and it gets really busy in the orchard and the pack-house.

It was March 12 and our first day at a kiwifruit pack-house. I was to drive the forklift and Sharon was to pack the kiwis into trays. We had never done anything like this but that's what this way of living is all about, trying new things, experiencing different jobs, and meeting people from all over the country and world.

"Could you shift those bins from that stack down the side of the shed to where the water blaster is and wash them all," I was asked by the supervisor. "There's about 400 in that lot. Soon there will be around 250–300 full bins coming in and we need the room." I was constantly going back and forward with bins all day, while every day a constant flow of trucks came from orchards far and wide. Of course you can start getting quite good at picking up and stacking these full bins, while all the time making sure that you don't back into the other forklift and most importantly do not tip any bins over. I managed to avoid this but not so for a fellow forky who dumped three bins over – I helped him shovel them up and deal with them. I think this broke the record of 10 years since a bin got tipped over, but you get that on the big jobs.

The season starts with gold kiwifruit coming in and moves to the green. At times there were gaps in the supply, with not many trucks coming in due to the rain, or the fruit not being ready, so I would get sent inside to help (Sharon liked this because she then could boss me around), and this is where the action is – loads of people in different jobs all busy with their own tasks while the machines hum away in the background until stopped for a coffee or lunch break – or dinner if you do the night shift.

Sharon was moved to supervise the tray prep team (where she would order me around to shift boxes – I couldn't wait to get back to the forklift) which had a constant demand for more trays all day; a simple enough job but you need be quick with your hands and willing to work as a team. It gets easier after a while as you get to know all the different box sizes. On the other side the packers put the fruit into the set trays of different counts, the stackers behind them take the full trays away and stack them on pallets, and the fork-trucks take the pallets away to the big chillers down the back. There are also quality control jobs that require a keen eye for spotting the damaged or marked fruit so they don't go in the trays.

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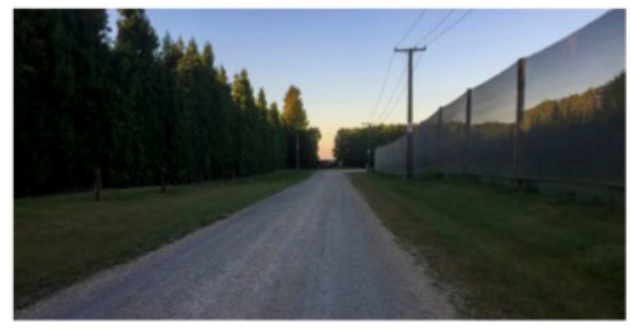
Apart from these indoor jobs there is of course the picking of the kiwifruit, which is best done by someone not too tall (but also not too short) as the vines are all fairly low so as to get everything picked without ladders. Testing the fruit to see if it can be picked is another job that needs to be done – there certainly is lots of variety.

Each Thursday I was moved to another job, the bin tip. This was fairly technical as there were two computer screen loads of sensors on the belts and plenty of moving parts to keep a careful eye on. The idea was to keep the belts full with kiwis so as to provide a constant flow to the many hands that had to sort, grade and pack. I considered that without me doing my job no one else could do theirs, therefore making me very important (well that's what I kept telling myself).

There are loads of pack-houses and orchards to choose from throughout the eastern side of the North Island from Kerikeri down to Hawke's Bay, and workers are always in great demand. While it may be a bit hard or monotonous, it is only for around 12 weeks, you meet some great people, and there is a lot of fun to be had.

Now here's the tip. Your kiwifruit experience will all depend on the place where you work. I am sure you have all heard some horror stories out there, and unfortunately for the horticulture industry some of those stories are true, but there are some great employers. We have visited some that we think are pretty good – the ones who provide facilities that make life on the road easier including showers, kitchens, laundry facilities and parking for motor caravans – and in the next few weeks will be featuring them on our 'Seasonalstaff' page on our website (www.seasonalstaff.co.nz) and on our YouTube channel 'Living the dream on our bus'.

For those of you who will be attending the national NZMCA rally in March, we look forward to seeing you there. We will have our bus there and also a stand, so make sure you come and say "Hi". RV



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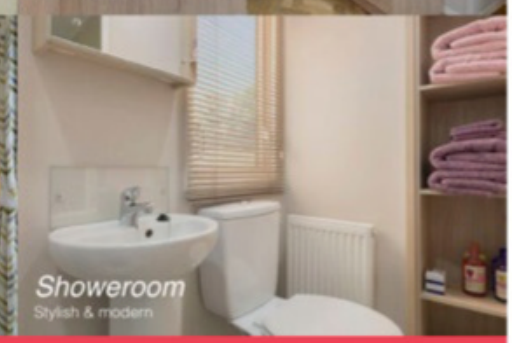

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CLASSIC CARAVANS CONTINUE TO CAPTIVATE

Restoration of classic, vintage and retro caravans is flourishing – our resident expert Don Jessen takes a look at the scene.

Story + Photos Don Jessen

1

The retro caravan scene is flourishing in New Zealand with numbers at retro caravan events and membership of online forums continuing to grow. While many members own restored vintage caravans, the online chat suggests an even greater number are in the process of restoring a vintage caravan with their own interpretation of features and retro styling individually imprinted on their caravan. Owners of retro vans are styling them with their own unique and creative flair, ranging from original (dressed up or not), shabby chic, American diner/rock n roll, cute as a button or practical modern retro. As the older 1950s and 1960s vans become harder to get, the retro scene is embracing 1970s and 1980s vans. These were built in my production heydays and hardly seem vintage to me, but being more than 40 years old in vintage car terms (older than 30 years) these vans certainly qualify.

A further development in online forums is the rapidly growing NZ Teardrop Camper Trailers site. With already up to 486 members, these little retro campers are set to become the next big thing on the retro scene. They first appeared in USA in the late 1930s and post war in Australia in the 1940s, and over the past few years have enjoyed a substantial revival in these countries.

As far as I can ascertain none were built in New Zealand in the early days. These teardrop campers (so called because of their shape) basically had a double bed in the main body of the camper and a large rear hatch that normally featured a kitchen. In New Zealand teardrops are mainly homebuilt replicas of early designs, making them a perfect fit for the retro caravan scene.

So, what qualifies as a retro caravan these days. In Australia they classify retro caravans as either vintage or classic. Vintage caravans are pre-1970 and classic are 1970 to 1980. This is possibly influenced by the much larger numbers of vintage caravans still in relatively good condition in Australia. It seems the larger numbers originally built, along with the dryer weather conditions, have ensured much greater numbers available to the vintage vanner.

New Zealand numbers pre-war were very few in comparison to Australia, and those that were built were unlikely to survive our climate given they were built in Masonite, a form of compressed hardboard. To date, the oldest caravans we have found in NZ are a 1939 Eccles, imported new into NZ from England,

2

and a 1939 Auckland Caravan Company caravan built in NZ.

In New Zealand our classification of vintage is a little different with caravans more commonly being given the retro label. You could be pedantic and classify them as pre-1970 vintage and post-1970 vintage. To call them classic would be confusing as one of the NZ post-war manufacturer's brands was 'Classic Caravans'. In New Zealand in 1990, some three years after the share market crash, caravan manufacturing basically stopped and didn't start again for another 10 years. Perhaps because of this we are now seeing mid-1980s caravans being restored and joining the retro scene. So the natural place to end the retro caravan scene in New Zealand would be 1990, as that would pick up all the olden-day manufacturers in New Zealand. Given that some 4000 caravans and campers were built before 1970 and around 48,000 were built between 1970 and 1990, there is still plenty of room for future growth.

Another factor in the New Zealand scene is the arrival of *new* builds that are deliberately styled on vintage designs. Some of these replicas are outstanding and, like the teardrops, could easily be mistaken for an authentic vintage caravan. These replicas also have their place in the retro caravan scene in New Zealand, and at this stage I think we are the only country to include them.

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With many younger families now buying old caravans and restoring them, we are seeing a reduction in the average age of Vintage Vanners and we are starting to see vintage rallies or 'gatherings' taking place. The NZ Retro Car and Caravan Club and the NZ Teardrop Camper Trailers Club are both becoming active in this area. Many of the hot rod and classic car club events across the country encourage Vintage Vanners to turn up and display the caravans at shows, and of course the Repco Beach Hop puts on a retro caravan show each year with numbers exceeding 100 vintage caravans in the last few years. Ten years ago, the Beach Hop's first vintage caravan show had just 12 caravans!

So, where to from here? I believe the retro scene will continue to grow steadily. The dream is alive and flourishing. The challenge of restoring an old caravan and stamping your own personality on it can become quite addictive, and the admiring comments you always get along the way, or when you pull into a campsite, make all the effort even more rewarding, but it is the pleasure couples and families get out of using them that is the best thing of all.

The same applies to the vintage new builds. Turn up with something unique, and before the end of the day you will have made lots of new friends and possibly inspired a newbie to have a go at doing something similar.

People are now also shifting into restoring hard-top campers and tent-top campers along with the pop-top caravans popularised by Liteweight Caravans' famous Pop-top that first appeared in 1977. Pop-top now seems to have become the generic term for all the campers these days, but it is great to see them being restored and joining the traditional caravans.

It is interesting to see where people gravitate to when choosing a retro caravan. For Marilyn and me, it was always going to be a 1950s Liteweight because that is what I remember as a young lad. On the other hand, my niece and nephew have both bought mid-eighties Liteweights because that is what they remember as kids. Vintage vans are caravans that bring back wonderful memories, but even more so they are character caravans that will create wonderful memories for families in the future. RV

6

RETRO CARAVAN EVENTS

- Beach Hop Whangamatā
- Kaikōura Hop
- Caroline Bay, Timaru Hop
- Kumeū Hot Rod Festival
- Rebel Roundup Pukekohe

Facebook Groups

- NZ Retro Car and Caravan Club (hold rallies throughout the year)
- NZ Retro Caravans
- Vintage Caravans
- NZ Teardrop Camper Trailers (hold rallies throughout the year)

1-2. 1960s Pixie
3. 1952 Homebuilt Tanner
4-5. 1973 Classic interior and exterior shots
6. 2009 Recent new-build teardrop

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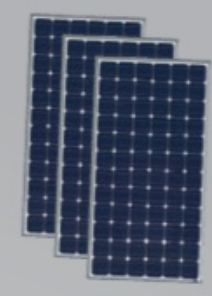

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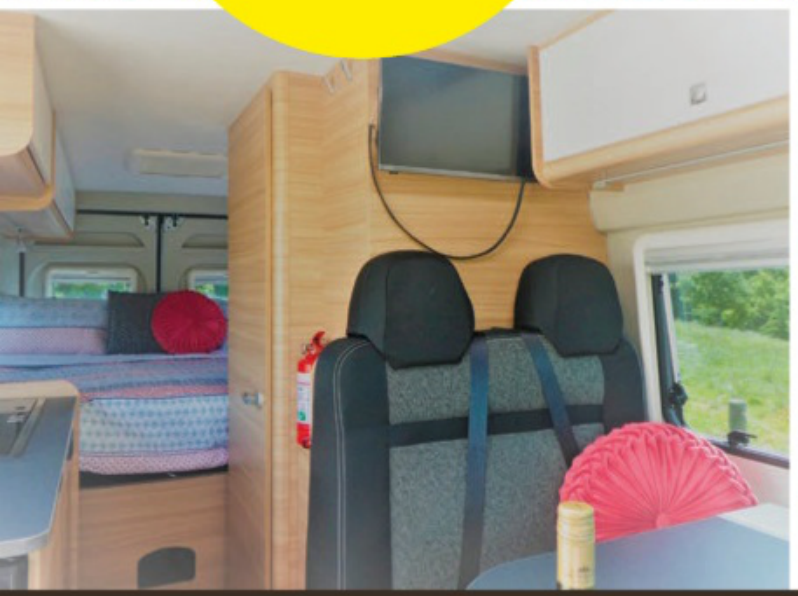

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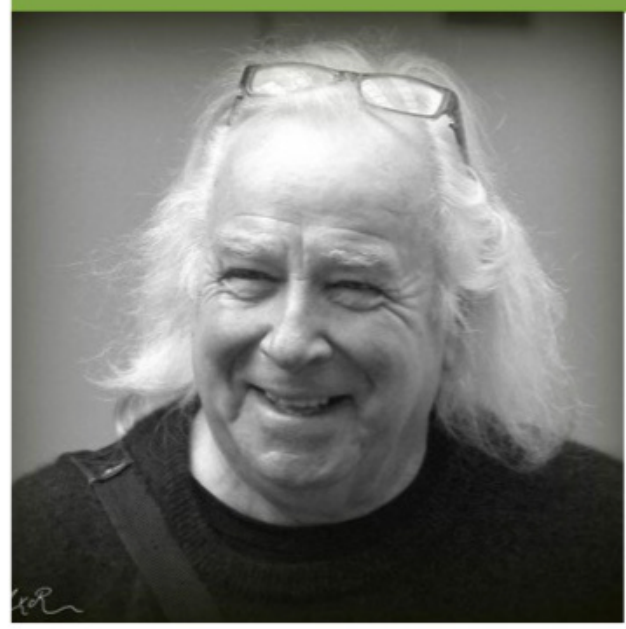

Reminiscences from NZTODAY founder Allan Dick

Words + Photos Allan Dick

For the love of camping

We weren't a family of campers so I have no idea why, but I have always had a love of camping.

During the days of 'the war' when my father was away in the navy, my mother's youngest sister stayed with us in Auckland and she was an inventive person. One day she fixed me a 'tent' on the back lawn. Tent? It was two Onehunga Woollen Mills tartan travel rugs pegged onto the clothes line, spread out at the bottom and held in place by a couple of bricks. It was meant to be for daytime use but I wanted to sleep in it, a notion that met stern resistance. So I whinged and whined until I wore that resistance down. That night, I was tucked into my 'bed' in this tent, followed by the inevitable "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon this little child …" then off to dreamland.

I woke up, in my proper bed! How did this happen?

I was told, "We thought it was going to rain …" (Onehunga travel rugs had the waterproof capability of blotting paper.) I looked out the window. My tent was still there, bone dry under a clear blue sky. They were worried I might go sleepwalking.

Our neighbours were more adventurous than us and they went *camping*. Not far away mind you – from Grey Lynn to Henderson – staying in Tui Glen.

We visited and I was jealous. They had a huge canvas tent set up in the native bush, and even though it was raining steadily, and they had dug a moat around the perimeter of the tent, it didn't deter me.

Still … no camping for us.

The closest we got was when the family moved from Auckland to Dunedin. We drove the distance, and the first night was spent on the roadside near the Mount Messenger tunnel. I didn't get a wink of sleep, being kept awake by the sound of possums using the Wolseley as a jungle gym and grunting and snorting at each other. How I longed for my bed!

Settled in Dunedin, my parents announced we were going 'camping', to this place called 'Central' – Central Otago, a vast and mysterious land to me.

Our camping equipment was minimal. We had a Thermette – didn't every New Zealand family? Bedding was a stack of Mosgiel travel rugs, pillows were cushions from the lounge and our tent was a small tarpaulin, tied to the back bumper of the giant Wolseley and stretched out to the ground, held in place with a couple of bricks!

This was for Colin and me. Mum, Dad and sister Janice would be sleeping inside the old limousine which, emptied of the stuff we had brought down from Auckland, was vast enough for a made-up double bed.

It was a day or two after Christmas Day and in the 'provisions' box, were the remains of the roast leg of 'lamb' (I suspect mutton). We headed into 'Central' via Middlemarch and Naseby.

It was dusk when Dad pulled onto the rough berm near Naseby and we set up camp. Just like that. Dad boiled the Thermette while Mum made thick sandwiches from a Vienna loaf, filled with slices of cold roast lamb – er, mutton. I took my sandwich and sat on the opposite running board, which was about the size of an average wharf, and munched away.

Something happened that night.

1. The writer 15 years ago – small tent, alfresco dining, a bottle of wine – and Kate the border collie. Bliss.

It was a purple, Central Otago dusk, the western sky a darkening orange and the stars were being lit. There was silence of the sort that presses so heavily on your ear drums it actually seems to have a sound. I sat chewing on the roast lamb (or mutton) looking out across the Central Otago emptiness with its tussock and rows of mountains in the distance and I felt a calm come over me. A feeling I had never felt before. I said to myself, "If this is camping then I am going to do a lot more of it."

Next morning we went to Naseby and then on to St Bathans where the lake was stunning blue and the rumpty, rusty old fences were strung with the mummified corpses of thousands of rabbits. I wanted to take some home to pull to pieces and see how skeletons worked. But I wasn't allowed.

Two years later we had a *proper* camping trip – a two-family camping trip through this place of mystery and loneliness called 'The Catlins'. By then we had a decent car – a flash 1948 Studebaker – while an uncle had an even flasher one, a brand new '52 Stude'.

Both families bought tents of the latest technology – Igloo tents. No more poles, just an inflatable tube at each corner reaching up from the ground and meeting in the centre, so they looked like – well – an igloo. They were inflated by a car tyre pump, taking only minutes, and compared to poles were a huge success.

We arrived at Curio Bay and found there was no formal camping ground, and we had the place entirely to ourselves. We chose a campsite way up on the bluff with awe-inspiring views of Chile to the east, Australia to the west and the South Pole to the south.

As we were settling in, a battered old Model T groaned its way up the hill and a grizzled old bloke under a battered hat, his trousers held up around his armpits with green baler twine, alighted and engaged the grown-ups in conversation. He was a local subsistence farmer – as most were at the time – supplementing farming with logging. He warned that a southerly change was on the way, and if we didn't want to get blown back to Dunedin we should shift downhill.

We did. The forest of large flax bushes saved us from the worst of the southerly and in the morning the Igloos were still up and the sun was shining. That was the only time we used the Igloo for family camping.

Four years later, a mate and I bought an ancient Model T Ford, 'did 'er up', painted it red and yellow and set out for our first grown-ups holiday away from our parents. The Igloo provided our accommodation on the shores of Lake Wakatipu next to the Queenstown Botanic Gardens. Today you'd be arrested if you tried it.

Two years later I planned another big adventure: this time, Dunedin (Brighton

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really) to Auckland and back. In 1958 this was a *huge* adventure. In Auckland we stayed with friends, but the Igloo provided accommodation on the road.

The return journey to Wellington was via Taranaki. In a New Plymouth motor camp I was on the hand tyre pump pumping up the Igloo when an AA man pulled up. "Save yourself there. I can do that for you without strain!"

He hauled out a long tube, fitted one end onto the tent valve, took one of the spark plugs out of his Zephyr and screwed the other end of the tube into the spark plug hole. Before we knew it, the Igloo was going up about 50 times faster than I could manage with my pump. We were smiling, when suddenly there was an explosion that echoed off the hills; the canvas cover on one of the pneumatic legs of the Igloo ripped and a great black rubber balloon burst forth.

Over inflation!

The AA man dived for the ignition switch of his Zephyr while I wrenched the connector off the valve in the tent. Too late. Like an enormous wad of black bubble gum, the balloon expanded until there was a secondary explosion that deafened us. The Igloo collapsed. "Oops," said Mister AA. "I've overdone it a bit … sorry." With that, he coiled up the inflator, screwed the spark plug back in, and with another "Sorry, I was only trying to help," he left us. We scrounged a spare tent pole off a fellow camper, one that was long enough to put in the centre of the now non-inflatable Igloo and hold the roof up. At least we had shelter.

Later I used the Igloo with a length of straight mānuka on a couple of other boys-own camping trips until my life took another direction and camping came off the agenda.

Camping has returned in the past 20 years and it is the thing I look forward to (almost) more than anything else. Today, the Navigator and I are pretty well equipped and get away as often as we can, even if it's just for a night or two – even in the middle of winter.

Last winter I did a road trip for a story for *NZTODAY* and spent the first night camping at Butcher's Dam near Alexandra. With the temperature down to minus something, I sat outside in my armchair wearing enough clothing for an expedition to the South Pole. It was a moonlit night, my breath was huffing, there was snow on the Old Man Range and ice on the surface of Butcher's Dam. Earlier, I had seen some ducks fly in and land on the ice and chuckled as they skated on for 100 metres or so. I looked at the moonlit white and dark landscape, across at the distant lights of other

campers and thought how lucky I was.

All of these thoughts came back to me over the New Year break when the Navigator and I headed through Dansey's Pass to grab a couple of days. Our destination was the Homestead campsite in the foothills of the huge Oteake DOC Conservation Area that separates Central and North Otago.

Homestead is DOC operated and because the facilities are 'basic', it's free. I had been there before, but from the other direction – from Ōmarama over the saddle and via a pretty-demanding 4WD track – so I knew what was there. There's a large area with a single long-drop, and the original 'homestead' had been converted into a pleasant shelter with kitchen, an area to relax in and a pot-belly stove. In an unused back room covered in guano, there's a pencilled sign saying this has been "shelter for wayfarers" since the 1920s. The place is surrounded by old-man pines and there are a couple of taps that dispense potable water.

'Homestead' is a grand title for a small, corrugated iron shed.

DOC is criticised for many things, including 1080, but I admire much of the work the department does. And in particular the work they do with their camping areas. Popular places are often crowded with international travellers seeking cheap accommodation, but places like Homestead give people like the Navigator and me the chance to get out and experience 'old New Zealand' without breaking any laws. Getting there involves a 15km drive along the narrow, dirt Hawkdun Range Road off the main road to St Bathans,

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and even though we were in the height of summer, I didn't expect to find many others there. I was right.

On the way in I stopped to take some photographs and we were passed by a large 4WD vehicle towing a trailer on which was a quad bike and a bunch of kids pushbikes. When we arrived at the campsite, despite the vast area available the large 4WD was parked right alongside the 'Homestead' and so close to one of the water taps that nobody else could use it. It was clear they were laying down a rather selfish claim so they could make maximum use of the facilities.

So we parked about as far away as we could and set up camp.

It was a pleasant night, sitting having pasta and spicy sausage under the stars, a bit of a talk about the meaning of life over a glass of wine and then solving three of the greatest world problems before we turned in.

Next morning, we arose, I made 'Camp Coffee' and then the wind started – the bane of our summer. It started slowly, but by the time we packed up and headed for St Bathans it was a howling gale. St Bathans was lost in a dust storm. We sat and looked. Eventually I decided the wind had set in for at least a fortnight so we chickened out and were back home in Ōamaru by 4:30 that afternoon.

But we will be back.

Have I mentioned I love camping? RV

2. The grandly named Homestead – a DOC camp in the mountains near St Bathans
3. Early attempt at a homemade campervan!
4. Camping at the beach as it used to be 'back in the day'

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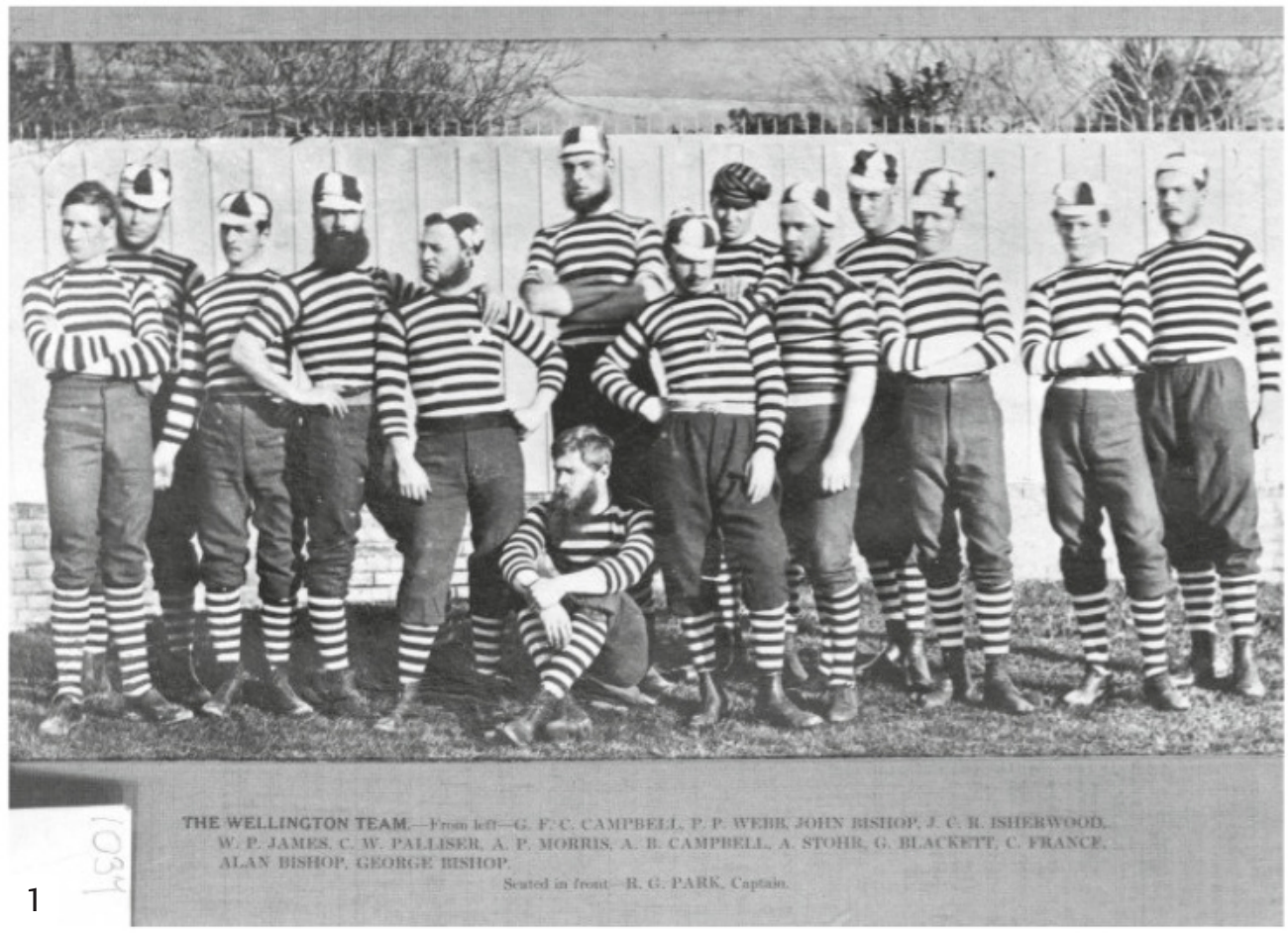
Although we all know Keith as a sport commentator for nearly 50 years, there's much more to him than sports. He collects memorabilia and books related to the Beatles, loves to travel to mystical places and has a secret addiction – ice cream! In addition, he loves writing. And with 16 books to his credit, penning a column for NZToday is a great fit for him. Hopefully Keith will be spinning many more yarns as he travels around New Zealand and the world.

Words + **Photos** Keith Quinn



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150 years ago it began ...

The grand old game of rugby union achieves a significant anniversary this year in New Zealand. I am not talking about All Blacks or Super teams here but instead about the origins of the game in our country and how there is still a place to celebrate it in these modern professional times.

The game goes back to a time over 150 years ago when 15 men from two towns were formed into modest clubs and bashed the hell out of each other for a couple of hours while trying to carry an oval-shaped ball across the other team's painted white defensive line. It was simple stuff.

Even before that year, back in 1863 a club was formed in Christchurch for men to play a new game called 'Football'. And in 1868 a club was formed in Nelson to play a similar type of game, but with slight differences. The Wellington Football Club followed in 1871. (Then came Dunedin in 1871 and North Shore in Auckland in 1873.) These clubs were all playing differing ways of kicking a ball about. One version was called 'soccer', another was 'The Melbourne game' (a forerunner of 'Australian Rules') and a third version was 'Rugby rules', which had come from a school in the Warwickshire town of Rugby. The last two ways of playing differed from what Christchurch had started; Nelson and Wellington introduced a game where players were allowed to control the ball or pass it to a team mate by hand. Using the hands was a major difference – and had come from the school in Rugby town.

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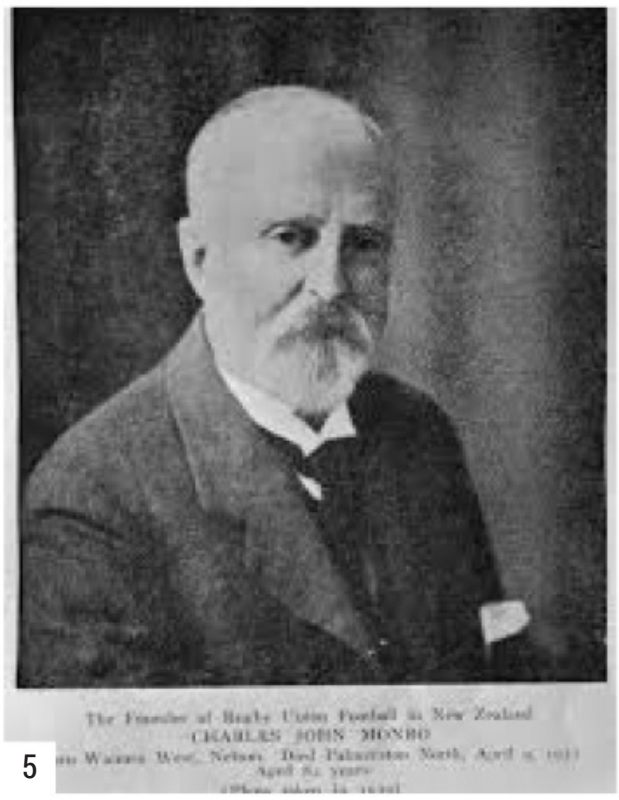
In 1870 the Nelson club heard by letter from a Mr Charles Monro (a Nelson original, but by then living in Wellington) that some Wellington lads were keen for a game of 'something' on some future date, and he advocated that both towns' clubs used the Rugby School laws. So both teams practised the same rules, and in September 1870 14 sturdy locals from the Nelson club boarded the good ship *Luna* and sailed for Wellington.

The *Luna* docked after a bumpy crossing of Cook Strait and the Nelson blokes no doubt blinked at the size of the place they had arrived at! Several horse-drawn carriages were waiting, and the men of the two teams bumped away from the dock along a muddy track to an open field (at Mr Laing's farm) in what we now call Lower Hutt, or Hutt City. But there was great disappointment when the paddock was deemed far too muddy and slushy for playing any sort of game. No matter though; the carts turned back to an open area

1. The Wellington FC team which played Nelson in 1875
2. Nelson Rugby Football Club emblem
3. Wellington Football Club emblem
4. Christchurch Football Club emblem
5. Charles Monro – 'The father of rugby in New Zealand
6. How the teams of 1870 went from Wellington Harbour to Petone to play the first inter-town rugby game in New Zealand
7. Wellington Harbour as it was in 1868, two years before the Nelson club



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of ground someone had seen as they passed a Māori pā at Petone.

The visitors won the game by two goals to one. (The curious natives who saw this crazy new ritual take place must have liked it as only 18 years later they organised a 14-month, 107-game world tour – calling themselves 'The New Zealand Natives Team'.)

Such was the enthusiasm of the locals that by May 1871 a Wellington Football Club had been formally created. Rather cheekily, it has to be said, the Wellington men claimed that the game at Petone and two other games against visiting British naval ships proved that they had 'constituted' enough 'football' activity to say they had actually been 'formed' the year before – in 1870!

Now in 2020, the same two clubs, both much older and wiser, are still dedicated to following a similar bouncing ball about open fields each winter. Both clubs have come through many highs and lows and ups and downs. The original Nelson Football Club, which adopted rugby rules in 1870, is now called the Nelson Rugby Football Club. Having played first in 1868 it celebrated its 150th year of 'sporting formation activity' in 2018 so they of course are having rugby activity functions in 2020.

The Wellington Football Club has not changed its original neutral sounding name and does not have the word 'rugby' in its masthead. But when planning started for this year's celebration of its 150 years who were the only team the Wellington FC wanted to play against? Why Nelson RFC of course! What a grand idea!

You ought to know that I must declare a personal interest: the humble author of this piece is actually the President of the Wellington Football Club, a position I have held since 2014. For the last two years I have also been on our club's committee planning several celebratory club events for 2020. And by May you will also be able, should you desire, to purchase a weighty tome I have written detailing the rise and fall and rise again of our club.

Occasionally, slightly naughty WFC club members have tagged our club's masthead with the expression "The Wellington Football Club – the Oldest 'Playing Through' rugby club in New Zealand." I refuse to do that out of deference to the Nelson club. It went into temporary recess during the dark years of the two World Wars when all of Nelson's young players were absent serving their country.

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No teams could be formed, and the only rugby played in the town relied on temporary arrangements.

The same did not apply in Wellington, and this was partly because some of the Nelson men who came to Wellington for their military training actually joined Wellington FC and therefore assisted in keeping us going.

So in summary, Christchurch is the oldest 'Football' club in New Zealand, Nelson is the oldest 'Rugby' club and Wellington FC is the oldest in the capital, older than the city's controlling body the Wellington Rugby Union by nine years, and older than the formation of the NZRU by 22 years! We will take that with pride.

And yes, while we did 'play through' the two World Wars, we did so only with great help from outsiders, some from Nelson.

Nonetheless, I will not diminish my club's record in times of war. It is really gloomy to look at the old reports and note that 85 fully playing youngsters who had worn or who were still wearing our proud yellow and black colours died in action during the two main global conflicts. Many more were wounded, scarred or shattered to the point of never playing again – or ever enjoying the highest quality of life. They included two amazing club men, one from each conflict.

In 1917 at the Battle of Messines in Belgium young 'Sandy' Weir of Brooklyn, Wellington, who was good enough to be a rep in 1914, had an arm blown off and suffered a dreadful leg injury which had him hobbling for the rest of his long life. Yet Sandy coached, administered and mentored future rugby players at the Wellington club every winter thereafter including 26 years as club captain.

The other was Michael (Mick) Kenny who was a Johnsonville club man as a youngster but

● THE KENNY FAMILY relax at home in readiness for another busy rugby weekend. Mick, his wife Grace, and son, Bryan Taku.

Germans decided for N.Z. fullback

Staff Reporter

MICK KENNY is a name belonging to any short list of great New Zealand fullbacks.

New Zealanders who served in the Middle East and Italy with the 2nd N.Z.E.F. are well informed on the greatness of Kenny.

However, because of a strange twist of fate from a German machination and ... of Kenny's ... on calling that ... his ... ...

switched to the Wellington Axemen to better himself at senior level. Rep and All Black status followed.

Murray was so good during his All Black career he was never once dropped by the selectors in 34 consecutive test matches, and he played over a span of eight seasons in the national team. What is more, since his retirement he has continued to be involved in the changing face of the game. It is in his bloodstream. He has been a colourful TV commentator, then a coach, as well as running a rugby business to coach new talent.

His years cover the time when rugby was totally amateur and when men before him set examples of commitment to playing the game for sake of it. (He reckoned Wellington FC's greatest All Black Graham Williams was truly faithful to the club. "If Graham had played in wartime he'd have won the VC," said Murray at Graham Williams' funeral in 2018. But his words kind of fit with the examples set by Messrs Weir and Kenny from generations before.)

Of course these days there are many very serious issues facing the game of rugby in New Zealand and worldwide. The main one is the danger of concussions caused by heavy collisions in tackles – now more frequent because of the increasing number of heavy players. That has to be sorted out very, very soon. (A young player from our club tragically died on the field in 2017. He is still greatly mourned.)

Rugby also has to contend with competition from other games, games that have a lower physical commitment than rugby and games that have attained more status in the media's eye. Also of significance is that the 'powers that be' who control the game now seem to place less emphasis on club rugby than they used to. More and more often in clubhouses like Wellington's and Nelson's do we hear the grumbles of "there's not much that trickles down to us at the grass roots' level."

However, when the Wellington Axemen meet Nelson on Saturday March 7 at Hataitai Park in Wellington and gather over Queen's Birthday weekend (May 29–31), glasses will be raised in celebration, trepidations for the game will hopefully be put aside, and in their place will be a 'thanks' to rugby – and to the horses and carts and men who drove the first teams forward up that bumpy road 150 years ago. RV

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8. The 1934 All Blacks with both the captain (Frank Kilby) and vice-captain (Rusty Page) from the Wellington FC
9. G H (Sandy) Weir – he lost an arm in WW1 but he courageously served the Wellington FC for the rest of his life
10. Michael (Mick) Kenny – a famous Wellington FC player horrendously wounded in WW2 but he resumed playing
11. In 2020, Nelson RFC the oldest rugby club in NZ (established 1868) will be celebrating too!
12. The Patron of the Wellington FC, ex-All Black Murray Mexted, seen here when he was inducted as a Legend of Wellington Sport in 2017
13. Scenes like this occur every Saturday at Hataitai Park in the Axemen's clubhouse

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Pilgrimage to transport history

Southland is a place very, very close to this writer's heart. As a boy I lived there for six years, and as a young adult I worked at the local radio station for a time. I love visiting the place as often as I can, even if it's not the easiest or the cheapest place in the world to get to.

It's a place that is often, to put it kindly, meteorologically challenged. Especially in the middle of summer. Therefore it makes sense that the town's greatest tourist attraction is indoors.

In early January we made a pilgrimage south from a Central Otago holiday, to see firsthand what has become the country's most talked about truck and car museum, the Bill Richardson Transport World.

It was the perfect day to do it. The dashboard thermometer stoically refused to edge beyond 10 degrees, the westerly blowing up Tay Street felt like gale force while the frequent squally showers were mostly horizontal.

But in the world's southernmost city, apparently sparsely populated during the peak holiday season, Transport World stands out like a beacon, the recipient of accolade upon accolade since it opened to the public just over four years ago.

A little background. The Richardson family has been a part of Southland since 22-year-old Samuel Richardson arrived in the small country town of Wyndham from County Antrim in Northern Ireland in 1878. He was one of the province's pioneer transport operators using horse and coach, a business carried on by his widow after Samuel died young.

After nearly 40 years becoming a familiar face on our TV screens, Peter Williams has now returned to his original broadcasting trade on the radio. He hosts a nationwide daily 9am to midday show on Magic Talk originating from sunny Tauranga. Peter still loves travelling to all parts of the country and telling the stories of some of New Zealand's hidden secrets.

Words + Photos Peter Williams

1. Trucks, trucks and more trucks
2. Bill Richardson Transport World - Tay Street, Invercargill

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Their son Robert (Bert) inherited his parents' business genes, but his specialty was building and construction. R Richardson Ltd was a key part of Invercargill's 20th century development. The company was responsible for many of the city's landmark buildings like the laundry block at Kew Hospital, Tweedsmuir Intermediate School and the Scottish Hall, let alone 156 state houses.

Bert's son Harold became the third generation of Richardsons in the business, taking over his father's company in the late 1940s. It had begun to expand into sawmilling, farming – and trucking. Harold bought Southern Transport just after World War Two when his son Harold William (Bill) was just six years old. The young boy thus began a lifelong fascination with the trucking and transport industry, and with the trucks themselves.

By the age of 20, Bill Richardson had taken over Southern Transport. During the next 45 years, through acquisition, expansion and ambition the HWR Group, named for the initials in Harold William Richardson, became an industrial conglomerate the likes of which Southland had never seen before. It moved into concrete, farming, road construction, and through Allied Petroleum, fuel.

But along the way Bill's love of trucks and vehicles never left him. He collected old models, seldom traded or let go the machines he replaced in the business and, subconsciously or otherwise, was gathering the base for what would become the outstanding Transport World.

Bill Richardson died suddenly in 2005, aged 64, and with his son Harold having been killed in a car accident 10 years earlier, the job of continuing the business fell to the surviving fifth generation of the family, Bill's daughter Jocelyn (Joc) and her accountant husband Scott O'Donnell.

In the next decade Joc and Scott doubled turnover to make HWR Group a billion dollar business, before they both stepped back from day to day operations in late 2015. Scott O'Donnell remains on the board with Joc the major shareholder.

It was Joc who wanted to have a monument to her father, the man who built the company from small beginnings into a nationwide

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transport and industrial force, but who deep down, just loved trucks. He loved driving them and he loved collecting them.

At various stages in the last three decades, parts of the Richardson empire were used to store Bill's collection, and as the collection grew, extra sheds had to be built. They were all brought together under one roof when Bill Richardson Transport World opened in December 2015, the major part of which is named, not surprisingly, Bill's Shed.

There are more than 300 vehicles on display including Ford Letter Cars, a VW Kombi collection, Minis (including a *Goodbye Pork Pie* exhibit), Invercargill's first public bus, motorbikes and of course trucks, trucks and more trucks.

But what becomes obvious the more you meander through the sprawling displays – it takes up a city block – is that Bill Richardson was also a collector of things that have helped make modern life far more comfortable than those of our ancestors.

So wander the upper levels of Transport World and you'll see lawnmowers, washing machines and fridges. They include a tribute to one of the great unsung heroes of New Zealand Industry, Karl Pallo. Originally from Estonia, he arrived in this country in 1929 to install fuel pumps for French company SATAM.

In time Pallo invented and patented his own petrol bowser, one that broke new ground by measuring the amount dispensed. He also invented the first electric wringer washing machine in this country. At one stage he employed nearly a hundred workers at his Lower Hutt factory before selling to Sunbeam in 1962.

Such are stories about our industrial history, stories about which you find yourself constantly saying, 'I didn't know that.'

But isn't that the point of a museum? It is a place to remember our past, learn more about it and think about what life might have been like when these machines were part of New Zealand life.

As befits a company that has been part of the fuel distribution industry for nearly 30 years, the Bill Richardson Transport World collection of pumps and bowsers takes you back to your childhood and to brands that are long forgotten. When today's petrol retailing is dominated by the Big Three of Z, BP and Mobil we often forget about days past when we powered our gas guzzlers on Europa, Atlantic and Big Tree.

Now a personal recollection.

The first car I ever owned, which I bought in 1974, was an Austin Mini. Like all cars in those days it cost a relative fortune – $1200 – an extortionate amount when my salary was less than $5000 a year.

So in the course of my travels around Transport World, what an absolute delight to encounter a display of Austin Minis, complete with such luxuries as a combined ignition and starter switch, an interior rear vision mirror and hydrolastic suspension!

I'm probably the same size now as I was back then, so when I look at the photo of me posing beside a car similar to what I owned 45 years ago the inevitable question is, how the hell did I fit inside it? And even more significantly, how did I drive it in comfort from Blenheim to Invercargill when I shifted south in 1975?

I can't answer those questions, except to say that I did.

There's been an extraordinary recent bonus for cricket tragics too at Transport World. For the last year, the New Zealand Cricket Museum has been displaying many of its artefacts and souvenirs here while earthquake strengthening and renovations are undertaken at its usual home in the Museum Stand at the Basin Reserve in Wellington. Bill Richardson was not necessarily a cricket or a sports fan but

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Joc recognises the need to show all aspects of New Zealand history. The cricket mementos, including the bat Martin Crowe used to score his 17th and final test century and the infamous aluminium bat Dennis Lillee tried to use in a test match in 1979, are scheduled to go back to Wellington sometime this year.

If you're thinking this is a man's world, don't be put off. Transport World is also home to Fibre Octave, Invercargill's annual wearable art and musical extravaganza, and on another mezzanine floor in Bill's Shed are numerous outfits from all the years of Fibre Octave's existence. It might seem an incongruous mix, trucks and cars and fashion but it works brilliantly and adds to one of the country's premier museum experiences.

But the HWR tourism experience doesn't end with Transport World. A combination of lack of time and poor weather meant we weren't of a mind to sample the other two legs of what sounds like a great day out – Motorcycle Mecca and Dig This.

In short, I'm told, they're a collection of vintage and modern motorcycles unmatched in the country plus a hands-on experience with diggers in a gravel pit. Every grown-up boy's dream.

I'll save those experiences for my next foray to the deep south, and hope the weather is just a wee bit warmer. RV

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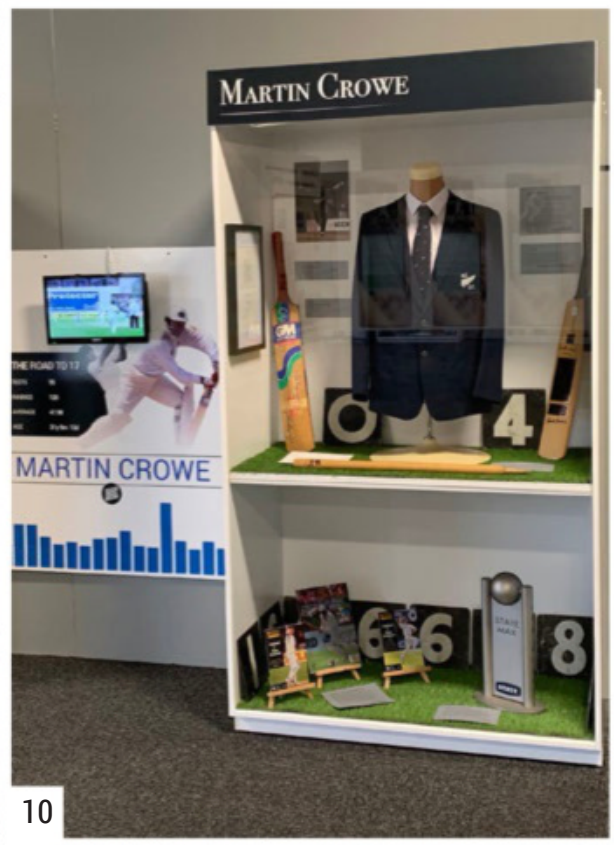

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3. Peter beside an Austin Mini - how did I ever get inside one of those?
4.What an old Southland farm shed might have looked like
5. You don't see these brands of petrol anymore
6. Transport World's smallest car - a 1961 BMW Isetta with a 247 cc engine
7. Invercargill's first public bus - from 1946
8. New Zealand invented Pallo wringer washing machines flanked by vintage fridges
9. The infamous Dennis Lillee aluminium cricket bat on the left
10. The Martin Crowe display with his final test century making bat on the left

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Biggest Prize Ever at the Covi SuperShow

GRAND PRIZE

If travelling around New Zealand in style is on your bucket list, you should plan to head along to the Covi Motorhome Caravan & Outdoor SuperShow, March 13–15, 2020 at the ASB Showgrounds, Greenlane, Auckland.

You could find yourself travelling New Zealand in style in the Grand Prize from Covi SuperShow. This year the Covi SuperShow has teamed up with the good people at Jayco, and Jayco Auckland to offer visitors the chance to win a $64,432 Jayco Starcraft 19.61-4 caravan.

This is the biggest prize ever of any motorhome and caravan show in New Zealand. Getting in the draw to win this sensational prize is as easy as visiting the country's premiere motorhome and caravan show – at the ASB Showgrounds in Greenlane, Auckland from March 13th to the 15th – and collecting seven stamps as you wander around the show, then filling out your details and dropping off the entry as you leave. The Jayco Starcraft 19.61-4 caravan comes packed with extras including air conditioning, a roll-out awning, a washing machine, an innersprung mattress and Alko Electronic Stability Control, plus plenty more features to make your time on the road memorable and comfortable. Jayco is Australasia's leading caravan and motorhome manufacturer and the Covi SuperShow is proud to partner with them to give visitors the opportunity to win. Check out www.supershow.co.nz for the full list of features and terms and conditions.

But even if you don't collect the Grand Prize, you can still be a winner – see $10K cashback, below.

SEMINARS

The annual Covi SuperShow is also a chance to learn more about life on the road. Experts will be holding free daily seminars on a wide range of subjects including: living permanently on the road; what to look for in an electric bike; making the most of technology on the road; travelling in Australia; and what to look for when buying a motorhome.

NO RESERVE AUCTION

The last couple of years we have seen a brand-new caravan go under the auctioneer's hammer for No Reserve. This year it will be different. At this year's Covi SuperShow we will be auctioning a brand-new Benimar motorhome – at NO RESERVE. That's right, the Covi SuperShow has once again teamed up with TrailLite to bring you the biggest No-Reserve auction we have ever had. The exact model Benimar is under wraps but we will reveal it closer to the time.

The auction will take place 12pm Saturday in the outdoor food court

So, come along to the Covi SuperShow and try and pick up a bargain. The full range of Benimars can be viewed on the TrailLite Stand 398 in Hall 3.

$10K CASHBACK

Also back for 2020 is the $10,000 cashback offer. In conjunction with Covi NZMCA Insurance, the Covi SuperShow is again giving $10,000 cash to one lucky visitor who purchases a motorhome or caravan at the show or in the two weeks after the show (you must have registered at the show and some terms and conditions apply).

RALLY

Remember you can stay for free at the Covi SuperShow Rally at Ellerslie Racecourse and this year your pets are welcome (they can't come to the show but you can exercise them at the rally on a lead). There will be free buses to and from the show.

GETTING THERE

Getting to the Covi SuperShow is easy. Parking at the ASB Showgrounds is limited; however, there will be plenty of parking at Alexandra Park off Campbell Cresc. There will also be free buses running from the Z Station by the Greenlane roundabout, making it easy to catch the train to Greenlane and then the free bus to the show.

SIGN UP AND WIN

Head to www.supershow.co.nz and register for the visitor newsletter and you will be in the draw to win a motorhome- or caravan-levelling system from Apollo Entertainment valued at more than $10,000. The MAVE automatic hydraulic levelling kit is state-of-the-art technology that will ensure it is quick, easy and comfortable to get your motorhome or caravan perfectly level when you reach your destination.

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MORELO Palace

Words Robyn Dallimore **Photos** Bruce Mountain

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With the March Covi SuperShow approaching, new models are arriving at dealers everyday now. This week we caught up with Jonas Ng from Zion Motorhomes in Pōkeno, the dealer principal for a range of quality German brand motorhomes including the MORELO luxury motorhomes from Schlüsselfeld, Bavaria, Germany.

I don't have a Class 2 licence, nor does the Rock, so I jumped in with Jonas and we headed to the Tuakau Bridge to take a few photos of the beast.

First, lets take a look at the Morelo's technical details.

CAB CHASSIS AND CONSTRUCTION

The IVECO cab chassis is substantial and incorporates all the latest technology. The vehicle's body with its aluminium and GRP motorhome shell includes lots of advanced design features such as minimum Grade 3 insulation and an awning integrated into the roof corner in order to keep it to the legal width of 2400mm. The new rear spoiler looks good, improves driving dynamics and even helps keep the back relatively dust free.

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The interior and exterior walls are aluminium alloy, meaning less maintenance and easy repairs in the future. The hydrophobic XPS rigid foam provides insulation in walls, floors and ceiling and is light in weight, important for an RV. The roof has optimum hail protection and lightning protection. The underbody is constructed from aluminium while the underbody floor is GRP and partition panels are moulded in ABS plastic.

MANUFACTURER

The MORELO brand started with an idea stemming from founder Jochen Reiman in January 2010. A few sketches, and ideas grew quickly, with Reiman pulling together a team of six employees including Reihnard Löhner, to assist with the build. Reihnard later became his business partner. With a design on paper and construction commencing, the team had an August 2010 deadline for the prestigious Düsseldorf Caravan Salon event. Not an easy build as they worked out of a rented, small metal hall – sweltering in the summer and freezing over winter – but they made the show with a completed vehicle. From there they secured eight orders from customers and their business has flourished since then.

MORELO pride themselves on their designs, and their team of professionals, from decal specialists to joiners, from construction engineers to mechatronics and design engineers, all of them helping to produce luxurious motorhomes that are distributed world-wide.

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1. Jonas Ng from Zion Motorhomes, relaxing enjoying the Waikato river views while we climbed in and out of the MORELO discovering all it has to offer **2.** The aerodnamic rear design is new, the top shape changes the airflow down the back, helps keep the dirt off apparently. Looks very good, external bumper **3.** The rear boot has shelves and drawers for storage as well as tie downs, power and lighting - and to top it all off it opens at the push of a button, electric opening system both sides

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For customers who buy into Jochen and Reihnard's vision to fulfil their dreams of wanderlust, all accomplished with excellent comfort and superior quality, MORELO means the feeling of being at home anywhere in the world.

Time to check out this luxurious baby.

INTERIOR

As I stepped up the double electric entry step I was genuinely taken aback – there was so much floor space. Seated in the luxury leather passenger seat I noticed that the floor was on one level, even into the cab, very nice.

The large windscreen and side windows are impressive, plenty of view up here, and the glass is tinted so you do feel a little private, not on display to the world. There's lots to love about the front cab area, spacious, well-appointed for drinks with a chiller unit, stereo for tunes, reversing camera and navigation. Lots of buttons to play with … oops that one makes the electric blind come down in the windscreen, better stop playing with that while we are driving! The A-pillars are noticeably slim, allowing for improved driver safety as well as great views. I notice what looks like a remote control on the driver's side. Upon inquiry, Jonas tells me he can adjust the suspension height with airbags, stop the back end dragging on the ground on the ferry, that sort of thing. What a great feature. The big exterior three-way mirrors also took my attention, they look so space age.

The rest of the interior oozes luxury, the large lounge benches are impressive, with an extension table that adjusts to suit. With a push of a button the large ceiling electric bed will drop down, LED touch lights in the ceiling, easy access – the Rock made me get up to take photos. Another button to push and the 32″ TV drops down out of the overhead locker, now that's fancy.

The kitchen bench is Corian with two sinks complete with covers and a three-burner gas hob with glass cover. Under-bench drawer storage with two fitted bins is out of this world. I wouldn't need much else but this unit offers overhead lockers, and a full-height pull-out pantry unit split into two, with a double lock on the top one in case it is full. Opposite this is the tech tower with the new Dometic 10 fridge – the doors open either way, pretty neat. There's a gas oven/grill unit above here, and a full-height storage and wardrobe cupboard next to the fridge. The floor space in this area and the living area looks and feels as if there is a big slide-out at work, but it is just the extra 100mm in the width that allows for so much room.

The bathroom breaks the record for all previous models I have seen in size, storage and luxury features. There is a sliding privacy door from the kitchen to the bathroom, and again from the bathroom to the bedroom, enclosing a really large space. Two people could use this area easily together. Full-size shower with glass not plastic, ceramic pedestal 12V electric flush toilet to a 250L black tank. Electric vent fan

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overhead, lots of LED lighting and the vanity unit – what can I say, I want this at home. So many drawers and shelves below the sink unit, big mirrored cabinet above, and yet another cabinet to the right, full-height. I was totally enchanted with the sliding doors between the bedroom and bathroom, two long mirrors facing into the bathroom, pulling just the right door catch pulled both doors together smoothly. Yes, there's no doubting all of this vehicle's luxurious fittings and fixtures.

The bedroom is the only stepped up area in the unit, just one step up onto the bedroom floor, no trip or slip hazards here. The bed is large, has a EvoPore mattress with water gel top layer. Deep drawer storage at the bed end, side wardrobe and a small drawer each side of the bed, with book and cup shelf as well. Nice sized windows, roof vent, backlit headboard. This is a lovely boudoir.

EXTERIOR

The outside repeats the inside with the amount of storage space available, including a huge boot accessible from both sides. Another full-width pod midship with more drawers and cupboards actually inside the boot area. The technology of the vehicle was on show here with the electric boot opener, I kid you not – press the button and it will pop open the locked door, both sides. There is a lock button inside the doorway for security.

The electrical, utilities, pipes and necessities all have homes of their own, easily accessed as required. The inverter in this puppy will satisfy any woman yearning for hair dryers, electric toasters or coffee machines – whatever you want honey!

There are so many features to note within this luxury liner I can't even tell you them all as it would fill so many pages, and with the price point being the price of an average house it is fun discovering them all. Check the photos to get more details, or contact Jonas for more information and a brochure. Better still, this model will be on show at the Covi SuperShow in March, so I encourage you to check it out if you are there, and if you can't make the show but think that this may be a vehicle for you, contact Jonas to arrange a private viewing. RV

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4. Nice interior door finishes, privacy blind, and this is the extra wide 700mm doorway, with pull-out flyscreen

5. The driver's area is a cockpit for sure, latest technology steering wheel with controls for the phone, stereo, cruise control all integrated

6. The table is adjustable, extensible and folds in half for less space. Long lounge couches face each other, belted seatiing faces forward

7. Electric secondary bed, generous size, comfortable. LED lights are touch operated, roof vent above and privacy curtains

8. Kitchen bench boasts two sinks, with covers, three-burner gas hob, with glass lid for bench space. Note the fitted coffee machine on the shelf

9. A great assortment of utility and storage drawers below the bench, all soft positive-close fittings

10. Full-height pantry split into two, double lock on the top one. Fridge with overhead grill unit and another storage or wardrobe unit to the left

11. Nice bedroom, one step up into the room, bed has two drawers for storage, has the Evo Pore mattress with water gel top layer and comfort sprung base

12. Toilet suite sits beside the large shower box, roof vent above, opening window, there is an extendable shower-top head behind the sink, for easy cleaning of the unit I presume

TECH SPECS

MORELO Palace 93MB 4-berth $575,000

Cab: IVECO Daily 70 C 18, Emission class: EURO 6d Engine: 3L 152kW metric hp, 8-speed auto transmission. Class 2 licence required. ABS, airbags, remote and central locking, electric-heated external mirrors, traction control and alarm.

Chassis: Hot dipped galvanised ladder frame. The high-strength steel design works with the false floor to create a level living room floor with the cockpit fully integrated into the living area. The underride guards prevent a car from sliding under it. Double rear axle, 16" alloy wheels, air suspension on front and rear axle. Lower garage rear – with lowering of up to 380mm available, low loading sills.

Weights: GVM 7500kg, tare 6400kg, payload 1100kg

Dimensions (mm): length 9500, width 2400, height 3640

Lounge bench, left (mm) 1740 x 1000 Couch – right (mm) 1250 x 650

Rear bed (length x width) 2000 x 1630mm

Overhead electric pulldown bed (length x width) 2000 x 1300mm

Rear garage doors 1230 x 1120mm

Self-Containment: Awning, 32" LED TV, fully automatic Sat Dish, Freshwater tank 380L, greywater tank 250L, Ceramic cassette toilet bowl with 250L black tank

Gas supply in 2 x 9kg bottles

Electrical package: Energy 420 Premium Power gel batteries 420Ah, combined charger/inverter 3000W, up to 120A charging power when driving – 440W solar panel

Hot water central heating: Alde Flow is a separate hot water tank that you can connect to the water-glycol circuit of the heating system. The hot water tank preheats the fresh water before it gets into the actual hot water tank of the boiler. Alde Flow, along with the Alde Compact 3020HE with boost mode activated and a flow rate of 3.5L/min (capacity of a normal shower tap), will provide continuous 40° C shower water as long as the fresh water supply is sufficient. Alde high-performance hot water central heating system, Gas-operated 5.8kW heat output, Electric heat output up to 3kW, integrated boiler with the water-glycol circuit floor heating, adjustable between areas. Heated false floor, bathroom radiator towel dryer and heater.

Living: Outside shower and BBQ point

Electric 6m awning with awning light, flush fitted into the corner of the roof, improving driving dynamics

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RnR future proofing

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1. Powertec Cel-Fi GO 2 mobile signal repeater – this will keep us connected
2. Powertec inside cupboard – very little space required

Powertec Cel-Fi GO 2 mobile signal repeater

We are so happy to have RnR back that we decided to get some work done to future-proof her for the next few years. Now we have sold *NZ Classic Driver* magazine, and *NZTODAY* magazine now sits within these pages, we plan on being on the road a lot more. With that in mind we decided to get the Powertec Cel-Fi GO 2 mobile signal repeater system installed for our future internet and phone accessibility around the country. It can be pretty annoying at times trying to get good coverage, especially if you work on digital devices as much as we do. We've actually had the unit for a few months, but when we decided to sell the vehicle held off installing it.

In the end the process was pretty simple – down to the local auto electrician here in Pukekohe for a few hours, a sturdy-looking antenna installed on the outside and the small box to run it (on the inside of a cupboard), download the Cel-Fi WAVE smartphone app and we were ready to hit the road.

Essentially the Cel-Fi GO 2 amplifies the available LTE/HSPA mobile signal, increasing your data speeds dramatically. Email, internet, video and social network access speeds can achieve up by as much as four times, so knowing how dodgy reception can be around the country this will greatly improve our business connectivity, as well as allowing us to watch Netflix on the telly if we want to. In theory our indoor and outdoor mobile signal should be higher, and the battery life of our devices will be extended. Up to 900m2 of coverage and 100dB of system gain should be sweet – we'll let you know how that goes.

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Prolan rust maintenance and protection

We then looked at a common creeping problem in any vehicle – rust. We don't have a rust problem thus far, but RnR is a 2005 model so at 15 years of age a bit of under-carriage work at this point could save us a lot of money in the future – prevention is cheaper than trying to fix it later. For this the Rock contacted long-time advertiser Prolan in Tauranga. We are all about sustainability and natural products, and the Prolan lanolin-based industrial lubricant and corrosion inhibitor made here in NZ has always intrigued Bruce, so down to Tauranga we went.

The product is safe to use, environmentally friendly and biodegradable. We could have done it ourselves by buying the product from them, and applying it using a trigger sprayer, garden sprayer or airless spray gun. A pretty interesting product derived from sheep wool, Prolan can be directly sprayed over existing rust and will stop it in its track. But of course it's better to do a bit of work first, checking the chassis to remove any flaky rust with a wire brush prior to an application of Prolan. Once coated, if the Prolan is left to dry as long as possible before returning the vehicle to the road it will attract less dust and dirt and leave a cleaner finish. The coating will last anywhere from one to five years or longer depending on the situation, and water blasting does not strip it off. The beauty of the Prolan lanolin coating is that it sticks to chassis long-term, stopping corrosion by preventing air and moisture attack. Farmers, fleet owners, fertiliser and truck companies as well as marine industry people are using the product in some pretty harsh industrial environments, so using it on the motorhome seemed quite tame in comparison, but if it works for them we reckoned it would be brilliant for our motorhome.

We decided to try the Prolan system to help protect our asset and increase its value longer term, and help save time on maintenance. It ticks all the boxes for being environmentally friendly, with multiple uses for motorhomes and caravans as well as industry. They even export Prolan to Scandinavia and the UK.

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3. Before Prolan lanolin rust treatment
4. After the Prolan treatment underneath
5. Once the underneath is ready, applying the Prolan is quite easy really
6. Dropped off at Rhino Coatings in Hamilton

I like their promo as well – 'Try our Prolan "Sheep 'n' a Can" because it really works – made from nature to protect nature!'

NEXT MONTH

Now we have moved onto the roof. We spend money every couple of years getting every seal and join checked and re-sealed for water tightness. This is one of the most important checks every RV owner should do at least yearly. Stopping water getting into the vehicle is of paramount importance, and it is a responsibility many owners do not undertake until water ingress becomes obvious, by which time serious damage can have occurred in the walls or ceilings.

So at the moment RnR is at Rhino Coating in Hamilton where she will get a new coating sprayed on the whole roof surface. The solar panels, satellite dish and other fixtures are removed, a heavy-duty protective coating is applied to seal and create a new stronger protective surface over the fibreglass roof, and everything then put back on again – hopefully it will give us years more use in our tough UV environment. Looking forward to seeing how that goes. Then she goes across to Pro-bars in Frankton, because we have decided to get a tow bar fitted for future use as well.

We have started looking at maybe getting seat belts fitted so we can take the kids with us – we are a 3-berth at the moment – but don't know how this will pan out. Getting seat belts fitted and certified is a right old drama by all accounts. The rules and regulations are becoming really difficult for the industry I am told and many places are putting their hands in the air saying it's in the 'too-hard basket'. We will see what happens here. RV

6

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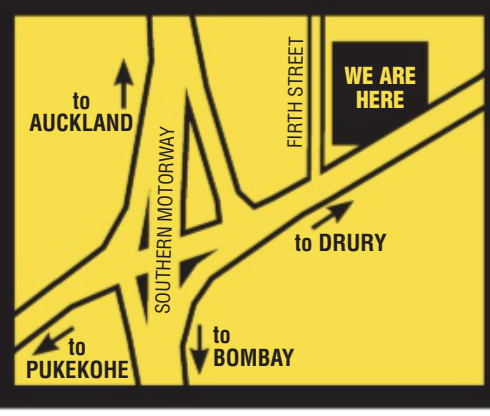

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Ooh la la Le Voyageur

Words Robyn Dallimore **Photos** Bruce Mountain

We caught up with Laura and Brett from DeLuxe RV Group in Blenheim recently. They are a premier supplier and seller of caravans, motorhomes and RVs in New Zealand, dealing in prominent brands such as Bailey, Pilote and Le Voyageur, with sub-agents in Levin and Mt Maunganui carrying their Pilote brands. They pride themselves on offering customers a range of RVs that cover everything – from economical caravans for the budget conscious to luxury RVs for the discerning buyer – and after-sales servicing is paramount at DeLuxe RV.

The DeLuxe Group business was first established in Blenheim in 1926. They may have expanded and changed over the years when it comes to their products and services, but the one thing you can always be assured of is their ongoing care, warranty servicing and repairs for your vehicle for many years to come. Brothers Gary and Greg Smith are the family seniors, daughter and son Laura and Brett joined the family business seven years ago and are taking over the DeLuxe RV side of the business a little more each year, expanding service and sales staff to keep up with demand.

The Le Voyageur brand of motorhomes is French luxury at its best. These models are constructed by a team of 45 at the production facility in La Membrolle-sur-Longuenée, Angers, hand-crafting approximately 308 luxury Le Voyageur motorhomes for the world market per year. Fewer than five of these come to New Zealand each year for discerning customers looking for this level of quality at the price point.

The habitation entry door is on the right (driver's side) of the vehicle – there is no driver's door as such. The other entry point is via the passenger kerb side door, stepping into the vehicle via a single 550mm-wide electric step, then an internal step up into the home – this lifts for shoe storage within. Directly right is a comfortable lounge bench seat 1000mm long, and opposite is the L-shaped lounge with forward-facing seat-belted seating and an impressive 1500mm lounge bench seat along the wall, with storage underneath. Add in the AGUTI 'lounge' cab seats that swivel and are adjustable, and there is plenty of seating for eight people, I am sure. The table is foldable and fully height-adjustable to suit as well. The hand-stitched finish on the upholstery looks classy, as do the individual adjustable headrests for seat-belted passengers. Inside the extra-wide 700mm doorway there's a slide-out storage cabinet for up to eight bottles, and monitors above the door. The doorway has a pull-out fly-screen. Above the lounge seating are two cabinets with fitted wine-glass storage – a nice touch.

The main house floor is all one level including the front cab area. The bedroom has steps on both sides of the bed. I like the single-level flow of this design, into the cab area as well – ideal ergonomically. The second bed option is in the cab roof where a pull-down bed of 1400 x 1900mm is tucked away. When pulled down you can still use the entertainment lounge/dining space as it does not come down over this area. LED lights and even a USB charging port are located in this area for guests.

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There are floor lockers in the double floor offering more storage areas as well. Flooring is vinyl with a wood-look finish, with removable carpet in the front cab area.

The kitchen is opposite the entry with under-bench combined grill/oven, sink and gas hob in the bench top, quality fixtures and fittings in this area, three soft-close utility drawers are also lockable in travel. Overhead locker shelving for more storage, a back lit polycarbonate kitchen splashback and deep laminate workbench. The large fridge/freezer unit is opposite with the full-height glide-out pantry.

Sliding privacy doors are tucked away in the walls between the living area and the bathroom and again between the bathroom and bedroom area. A full-sized shower and separate vanity unit is on the left passenger side. A normal swing-opening door gives access to the separate toilet area. The 12V electric flush pedestal toilet is on a plinth for a bit more height; lots of storage for toiletries in here and a large mirrored cabinet. Roof vents and LED lighting throughout. To the right of this is a full-height split storage cabinet. The sliding door to the bedroom fits nicely behind this. Lot of extras here with towel rails, toilet-paper holders, storage galore, roof vent and electrical sockets.

Step through to the rear bedroom with island bed, fitted with electric headboard adjustment, and two drawers under the bed end for easy access. The LED backlit headboard makes an attractive feature. Each side of the bed has a wardrobe storage space and overhead reading lights; also overhead locker storage and a roof vent. Windows on each side offer light and views, with fly screens along with fitted blinds and decorative curtains to finish the look. The heating system vents on each side of the bed area are part of the heating and ventilation system that flows around the internal vehicle walls and floors.

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Less obvious are the quality finishes, like the roof lining being 'soft-sound' acoustic fabric to block outside noise for your comfort, and also shield outsiders from hearing your interior activities. The windows are double-glazed poly-vision with aluminium frame, have smooth-slide catches, and are flush fitted to the vehicle. The cameras in the exterior mirrors are cool. The AL-KO chassis is low slung giving designers the double floor option, and tanks are placed between rear axles for balanced weight distribution. The domed roof design that takes water straight off the roof, and the cab passenger and driver's door windows are double-glazed. Door fixtures, locks and catches are high quality. The services are frost protected in the double floor system, and there's a dedicated locker for controllers, inverters and utility items.

All in all the Le Voyageur is a quality vehicle for those stepping it up in the budget, from the entry-point vehicles under $200K, to a range of vehicles offering just that bit more for the discerning buyer. If this model is a bit bigger than you might want, talk to DeLuxe RV about what you need and see what model may fit your bill. Le Voyageur is part of the Pilote Group, so everyone's needs could be fulfilled with a little investigation perhaps.

Have a look for yourself at the upcoming Covi SuperShow in Auckland in March 2020, or talk to DeLuxe about visiting Mt Maunganui, Levin or Blenheim to see this or other models that may suit you. **RV**

7

1. Upon entry the lounge – dining is behind the cab, electric bed in the ceiling, kitchen behind front dinette seats. Under-bench combined oven/grill unit. Storage drawers below, deep bench with splashback. Overhead locker and shelf storage **2.** The long couches offer this area genuine feet-up relaxing comfort. The adjustable table is fantastic as well. Upon entry the TV is to the left, pull-out storage beneath, monitor cupboard above the door, a second lounge seating area between the driver's swivel cab seat and the habitation entry door
3. Electric ceiling bed comes down over the cab area, leaving the dining/lounge area free for use
4. Large rear boot, accessible both sides, plenty of tie down positions, extra storage shelves and drawers as well
5. The kitchen is compact but well planned with an under-bench grill/oven combo, drawers and pull-out storage options. The gas hob and sink are set into an extra-deep bench, both with lids to provide more preparation space. Splashback and window behind, storage shelf and cupboards above **6.** The rear island bed lifts on gas struts to access storage, overhead lockers with strip and LED spot reading lights. Fancy headboard is a feature. Wardrobes both sides, shelf and drawer storage **7.** Full shower on the passenger side of the vehicle, en-suite toilet on the opposite side, walk through to the bedroom. Privacy doors to kitchen and bedroom zones

TECH SPECS

2020 Fiat Ducato LeVoyageur 8.5CL
$264,990 4-berth
Fiat Euro 6 134kW, 2.3L turbo diesel engine, 6-speed auto trans, COF, car licence, ESP, AB and anti-skid, cruise control. Front exterior rear-view mirror cameras, and on the rear a wide-angle reversing camera. Heavy-duty AL-KO low chassis, double rear axle, front strengthened higher suspension.
Dimensions (mm): length 8550, width 2240 with mirrors 2800, height 2950, wheelbase 4590 + 800. Rear storage boot 1050 x 1080 (2.55m^3 storage), doors 1160 x 960, double floor height 260, interior height 2000, shower height 1900. GVM 5000kg, on-road 3950kg, payload 1050kg, braked tow limit 2000kg
Construction: Polyester side walls, moisture-resistant wall battens and 35mm insulation; to conserve heat, walls and roof are composed of Styrofoam-lined aluminium; 7mm ply-wood floor with 25mm insulation and fibreglass protection panel; a one-piece fibreglass dome roof with no water retention; hail-protection covering on the roof; a 26cm double floor that is Class 3 insulated, and heated so well it retains and moves heat around (sort of acts like underfloor heating, though it is not); aluminium side skirts; double-glazed windows with aluminium frames and the front and rear pieces are a polyester monobloc construction.
Living and Freedom camping: Island bed 1450 x 1950mm with Bultex mattress and electric headboard, step access height 740mm; over-cab pull-down bed 1400 x 1900mm. Kitchen: 3-burner gas hob, under-bench combined gas oven/grill unit, turbo-vent roof air extractor, Dometic 160L 3-way auto fridge/freezer. Separate full-size shower, en suite with 12V electric flush pedestal, 23L cassette toilet. 200L fresh, 120L grey water tanks. 2 x 150W solar panels, 200Ah battery with 20A charger. Alde gas/electric heating and hot water system. Auto-sat dish, 24˝ flat screen TV with Freeview and DVD, radio with Bluetooth.
BBQ gas point, Fiamma wind-out awning, 16˝ alloy wheels

4
AMAZING BRANDS

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WHY BUY FROM DELUXE RV?

ADVERTORIAL | DELUXE RV GROUP

Because DeLuxe RV is a family owned and operated business and we really care about our customers.

What sets us apart?

The Smith family have always focused on this best possible outcome for our customers. By learning about you in the first instance and what your requirements are, this assists us to make sure that you purchase the best available R to suit your needs. When it comes to purchasing an RV from DeLuxe you will be our No. 1 focus at that time. We pride ourselves on being flexible when it comes to delivery. If you want your RV on the day of purchase of soon after, then we will bend over backwards to try and make this happen. Here at DeLuxe we don't open our workshop for small outside jobs. We focus firmly on our new and existing customer base to deliver the best available service. The Smith family also firmly believe that two of the most important aspects of our business is the delivery process, and our aftersales support. Brett Smith is out dedicated workshop manager and has a wealth of knowledge in all models that we sell. DeLuxe RV have relationships with dealers throughout New Zealand to have warranty servicing done for the habitation side of your RV, so that you have peace of mind. Being a family owned and operated business means that we are responsive to our customers' needs and can make instant decision's. DeLuxe RV work closely with Levin RV Centre who stock many of the DeLuxe RV range. Freedom RC in Christchurch and RV Mega in Tauranga also have a range of Pilote motorhomes on display and hold a wealth of knowledge on the product.

We are premier supplier and seller of caravans, motorhomes and RV's in New Zealand, dealing in premium brands such as Bailey, Pilote, Le Voyageur and Talvor.

Visit us at stand # 330

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Royal Flair Piazza

Latest Royal Flair arrives at Levin RV

2

Words Robyn Dallimore **Photos** Supplied

We introduced readers to the Melbourne-built Royal Flair caravan brand back in RV78, showcasing the most innovative caravan design feature seen in recent times with the Royal Flair Piazza Sky-Deck model and its electric drop-down bed over the rear lounge: the nose cone lifted up, a deck floor dropped over the towing frame and sides folded out to create a fantastic fully enclosed and fly-screen curtained 4.5sq metre deck.

At that time, in July 2019, Brian and Varee Anderson were one year into owning what was then the Gypsy RV Centre. They had a lot going on with a complete rebranding to become the Levin RV Centre, following a nationwide trend to identify with the RV identity and the town location. They had received their first shipments of a new brand sourced by themselves, and had landed the distributorship for New Zealand from the Australian manufacturers of the Royal Flair brand of caravan.

Royal Flair are manufactured in Melbourne. The Deralas family established the caravan manufacturing business in 1975, and Billy Deralas owns and runs the business today. Some readers may have met Mr Deralas at the NZMCA Motorhome and Caravan show at Mystery Creek in September last year, when he came over to work with Brian on their stand, introducing visitors to his company's luxury caravans.

Brian began working in the caravan sales industry over 30 years ago, and despite leaving and coming back to it some years later, he has a strong knowledge and insight about what his customers are looking for. This knowledge sent him offshore to source a limited number of models that he felt would suit parts of the New Zealand market, and it would appear from sales and public interest that he has picked a winner with this brand. It is well established in the manufacturing realm in Aussie, has great backup and warranty service systems in place, and has some innovative design features that are titivating discerning buyers right here in NZ.

Now there is a new arrival to check out, this time the Piazza Sky-Deck model with a dining slide-out area designed to increase the living space, and a separate rear bedroom area instead of the electric ceiling bed over the rear lounge option of the shorter model previously reviewed.

This model Piazza is just one of the size and models available from Royal Flair, and

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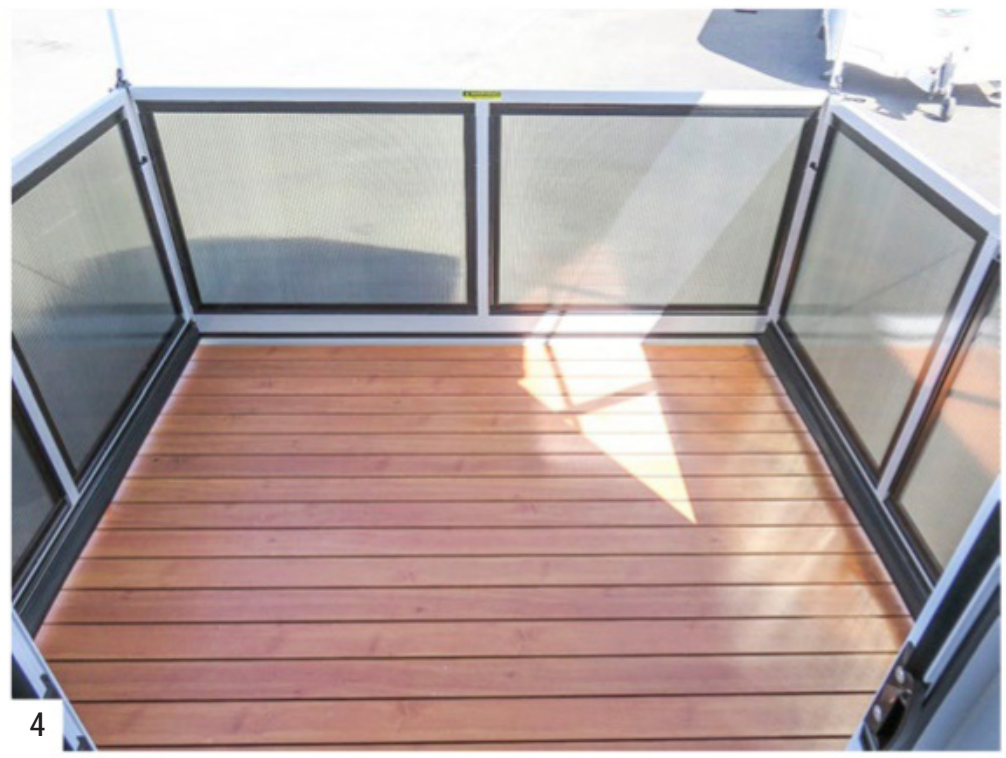

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price brackets to suit a variety of purchasers as well. The unique features of this model brings it to the top of the range, and a tow vehicle with over a 3500kg towing capacity will be required. The smaller, lighter weight models in the range pop with great features, fixtures and finishes, but these Sky-Deck models are just so fantastic with the extra living space on offer, and especially this model with the dining slide-out expansion situated nicely over the twin-axle area of the chassis. These models must be on the list for those looking for a caravan for two, with luxury finishes and all the extras you might want.

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1. The dining slide-out is centred over the twin-axles and has an integrated weather blind
2. Royal Flair Piazza Sky-Deck with slide-out
3. Love the slide-out BBQ in one of the rear storage lockers
4. The Piazza has a really useful, strong, good-looking deck that drops down from the nose of the caravan over the drawbar; you simply unclip the aerodynamic nose front and lift it up, dropping the deck down. Brilliant for pets and kids, and so quick and easy to set up and put away
5. From Sky-Deck to rear bed area, light bright and airy
6. Bedroom area is wired and fitted with TV mounting, ready to add the 24" Flat screen TV supplied
7. Battery controller system, the BMPRO
8-9. Decent kitchen bench size, lots of under bench storage, pull-out pantry, drawers and cupboards. Round stainless-steel sink with small drainer, the full oven with separate grill, three gas and one electric hob – comes with a nice cover to expand bench space

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A tiny home option is another strong possibility – with the Sky-Deck and slide-out this design offers expanded living features that are unique when compared with other caravan designs and layouts.

Get along to Levin RV to check out this model or the other Royal Flair models on site. They have family options for five, off-road options for two, and the Vanroyce ultimate luxury home on wheels if these Piazza Sky-Deck models don't fill the bill. Brian and Sales Manager Billy are ready to show you through and talk about all the features within. Levin RV is also a sub-agent for the Pilote and Bailey brands in motorhomes and caravans – both new vehicles and a range of pre-loved RV vehicles are available – and they will have something to tick the boxes on most customers' RV shopping list. RV

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10. A decent 184L fridge with separate freezer unit, microwave above

11. The rear bedroom offers multiple overhead, bedside and under-bed storage options, as well as the wardrobes on each side. Great sized windows with fitted screens and blinds

12. Air conditioning roof unit – nice for these 33-degree days

13. On the left opposite the en suite is the full-size shower – moulded composite shower box has no joins so no potential for leaks in the future

14. Washing machine – such a handy little unit, storage above and beside it, space on top – such a luxury

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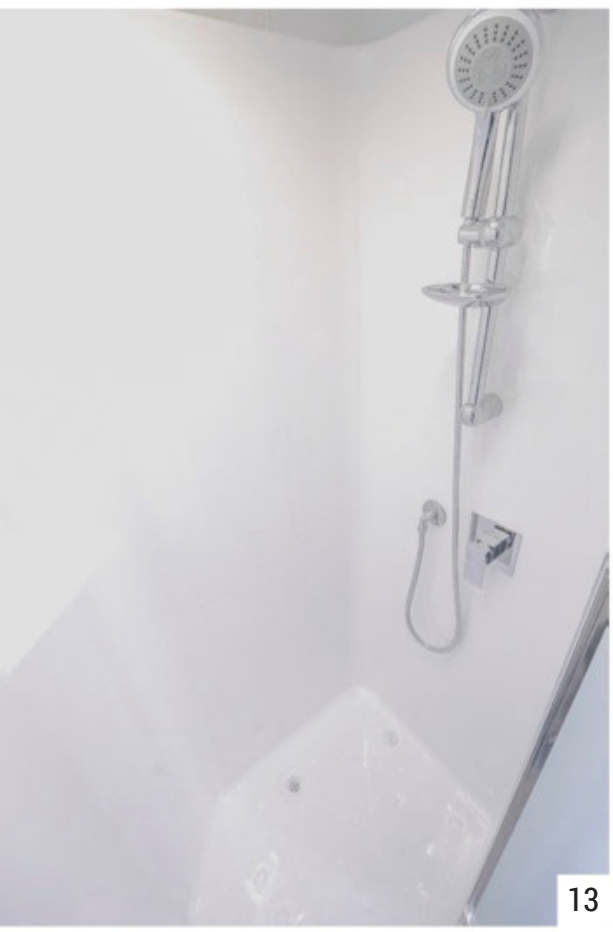

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TECH SPECS

2020 Royal Flair Piazza 2-berth caravan with Sky-Deck and slide-out
$160,000 this model.

Dimensions:
Body length 6400mm, body + drawbar 8300mm + spare wheel and carrier = total overall length to park up 8900mm. Width 2350mm, external height 3150mm, internal 2000mm. GVM 3500kg, tare 2924kg, payload 576kg, 189kg tow ball weight.

Chassis:
Tandem axle trailer – Supagal box section galvanised chassis which has 100mm (4in) RHS rails and 150mm (6in) RHS drawbar. Leaf spring suspension is fitted to the tandem axle wheels and there's a ball coupling up front. Also fitted with stability control, electric brakes, Torflex 2700 GTM 12˝ brakes and 245x16˝ Hawks Silver rims. A pre-coated one-piece floor goes down, the body built on top of that.

Body Construction:
Body frame is built from Meranti timber with aluminium cladding on the sides, 350mm Alucobond composite panels for the front wall, roof and rear wall. CNC cut solid walls made of structural ply for the interior, fully insulated and bonded to the Alucobond system. A looped bumper with spare wheel fitted, grab handles front and rear, hydraulic jack, galvanised wheel arches. Double-glazed acrylic windows, three roof hatches for airflow, security door triple lock for security and Vista Door Keyless entry. Interior Laminex kitchen bench and laminated cupboards.

Freedom camping features:
BP35 battery management system with Trek, 2 x 160W solar panels, 2 x 105Ah batteries, gas/240V hot water cylinder, 2 x 95L fresh water, 2 x 95L grey water fitted tanks, 2 x 4.5kg gas bottles. 12V electric flush cassette toilet, separate shower.

Living:
184L Thetford fridge with separate freezer, Thetford full gas oven with separate grill, three-burner gas hob plus one electric. 240V microwave, Truma Gas/240V hot water cylinder, diesel heating system. Entertainment – 24˝ TV with built-in Freeview and DVD player with auto satellite dish, 6-speaker Bluetooth CD/MP3 player, AUX and USB inputs and a 240V air conditioning, and a compact top-loader washing machine.
Rear bedroom with north-south queen island slatted bed frame 1900 x 1500mm with inner-sprung mattress.
7177
Dining area expands with the electric slide-out 1800mm high by 2000mm length x 560mm depth, offering much more living space, and houses the three-piece adjustable dining table set up. The kitchen can still be used with the slide-out in – the caravan functions well in both positions.
The unique Sky-Deck offers 4.5 sq metre covered, enclosed outdoor deck area, with fly-screen security entry door, fly-screen curtains all round, power and TV outlets.

OTHER GREAT FEATURES
Roll-out awning
Slide-out BBQ drawer fitted with Weber 'Baby Q' BBQ
External drop-down table

Levin
RV CENTRE TIMES

March 2020 | 0800 RV CENTRE | 3 Oxford St, Levin

NEW ROYAL FLAIR MODELS HERE FOR YOUR SUMMERS ENJOYMENT!

Levin RV Centre will be onsite and proudly representing the **Royal Flair** brand at the **COVI Motorhome, Caravan & Outdoor Super show 13th-15th March** sites **43 & 39** (side by side). Call in to meet the team and take a tour through our amazing Caravans. Don't forget that if you purchase your new Royal Flair caravan at the show you go in the **COVI Super Show draw to WIN $10,000 off the purchase price!** (T's & C's apply).

21´ FAMILY PIAZZA 5 BERTH MODEL

THAT'S RIGHT, WE HAVE 3 NEW MODELS IN STOCK TO TALK ABOUT TODAY

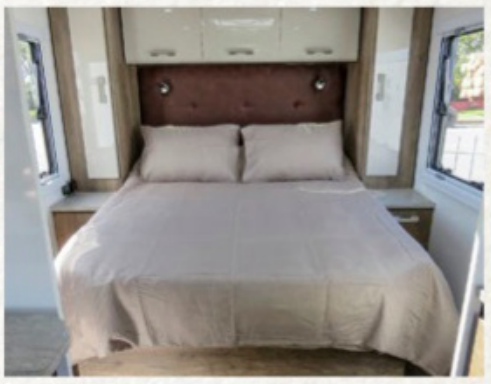
21´ FAMILY PIAZZA 5 BERTH MODEL

So you want a Caravan with a deck but you like to travel with family or friends? Then this is the model for you. The 21´ Family Piazza layout has been based around a large club lounge to the rear of the Caravan with a near Queen-size drop-down bed over. With a large galley area in front of the club lounge, a huge amount of storage and additional bench space on the opposite wall it feels like a bigger version of the 18´6" Piazza model, but here's where it all gets a bit interesting. As you enter through the habitation door turning left instead of right puts you into the "bunk-room". With 3 bunk beds that measure 1850x700mm (that's 6´2" long in old money), each bunk features its own drop-down DVD player with individual headphone sets, 2 x USB charging points, a 12V charging point, individual lighting, its own opening window with insect screen and black-out blind and the option of a Sirocco personal fan, you can rest easy knowing that your family and friends are accommodated in the most comfortable of surroundings. Opposite the bunks is the bathroom featuring a large separate shower, cassette toilet vanity with sink, storage and mirror and the whole bunkroom area can be closed off in the evenings by way of a concertina privacy door.

21´ PIAZZA WITH SLIDE-OUT DINETTE

Based on the standard 21´ model layout but with a twist, this model has a larger dinette area that's been built into a "slide-out" fitted to the right-hand side (facing the deck) of the Van. The feeling of room this open plan design provides to owners must be experienced to be believed. Featuring a 3-piece fold-away table and comfortable seating for 4 people (or six when required).

Royal Flair has not been shy with storage in this area either. Starting with overhead cabinets in the slide-out, a 2-door cabinet under the table and finishing with a large slide out drawer in each of the bench seats every opportunity has been taken to provide our Royal Flair clients with usable storage solutions. With an Island bed to the rear, a large kitchen area, separate bathroom and shower and our 'standard extra's' like 2 x 160W solar panels, 190L Fresh & Grey water capacity etc, our Caravans represent excellent value for money all the while giving you a luxury holiday experience that we could only have imagined 10 years ago.



20´ 4 BERTH PD MODEL

For those of us who have had a long association with caravanning, this model will hold loads of appeal. Based around an Island bed forward layout the Caravan is complimented by a good sized kitchen/galley area featuring a full oven with separate grill, 4 burner hob (3 gas, 1 electric), large 184L fridge/freezer, microwave oven and a large deep stainless steel sink for cleaning up. Entertaining/relaxing is taken care of by way of an L shaped lounge/dining area opposite the kitchen. The rear layout consists of 2 bunk beds with storage drawer's underneath and finally an ensuite bathroom featuring its own separate shower. Sitting on 15″ wheels and a lower profile chassis this Caravan can be towed anywhere with ease.

ASK US ABOUT THE NEW 20´ PIAZZA COMING SOON!

FACTORY FITTED ACCESSORIES

At Levin RV Centre we have decided to draw a line in the sand and supply our Royal Flair models with the highest level of specification we can. With fully galvanised chassis, honeycombed insulated flooring, air-Conditioning, washing machines, slide-out Weber BBQ´s, diesel heaters, roll-out awnings, additional water tanks TV´s, auto satellite dish and solar panels being fitted to our stock models our customers will get the most out of their new Royal Flair Caravans.

If you're thinking about moving your current motorhome or caravan on, then you should talk to us here @ Levin RV Centre about our 'On Behalf' sales service. We can prepare your Van or Motorhome for sale, take care of the marketing, offer finance and warranty options to any prospective buyers while you sit back and wait for the cash to appear in your bank account. Selling your valued asset couldn't be easier! Pick up the phone and call Billy on 021 909 932 to find out more.

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Contact our Sales Manager Billy Gist on **021 909 932**

or Brian Anderson on **027 821 0053** or Email: **sales@levinrv.co.nz**

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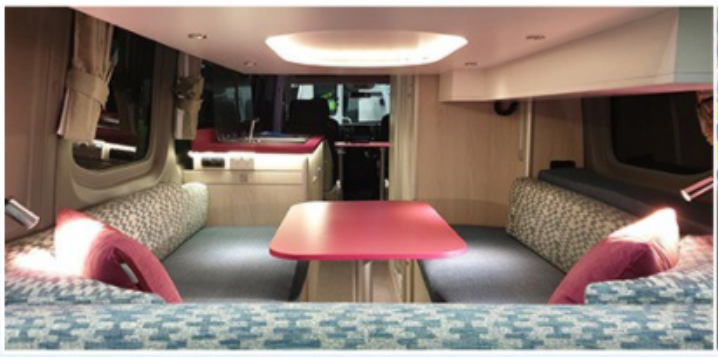
WENDEKREISEN FREEDOM RANGE

THE KORU STAR 4 FREEDOM (VW CRAFTER 50)

- 4 Seats in close proximity
- 2 Large beds can be permanently set up whilst still allowing a 4-seater dining area to be set up. The top bed can be retracted into the sealing
- Complete independence of 12V power
- Eberspacher diesel heater connected to the vehicle diesel tank
- On-demand water heater (Suburban Nautilus IW60)
- Great privacy due to tinted windows
- Insulated with sheep wool



THE KORU STAR 3 FREEDOM (LDV V80)

- 3 Seats in the front cabin
- Multiple bed configurations (1 X Double + 1 X Single or 3 X Single)
- Complete independence of 12V power
- Eberspacher diesel heater connected to the vehicle diesel tank
- Hot water heat exchanger utilising engine heat
- Insulated with sheep wool

THE KORU STAR 2 FREEDOM (LDV V80)

- Walkthrough to drivers cabin
- Complete independence of 12V power
- Eberspacher diesel heater connected to the vehicle diesel tank
- Hot water heat exchanger utilising engine heat
- Previously insulated with polystyrene, new units insulated with sheep wool

FREEPHONE 0508 109328 | wendekreisen.co.nz

AN INTRODUCTION TO WENDEKREISEN TRAVEL LTD

It all started in August 1990, when our father founded Wendekreisen Travel Ltd. As German immigrants to New Zealand, the name was based on a dream ‘to create change’ (Wende) whilst travelling or circling (kreisen/reisen).

Our organisation is a true New Zealand-based family business involved in all aspects of campervan rental and manufacturing. Today, we employ over 35 staff and numerous New Zealand suppliers to manufacture, operate and maintain a fleet of 250 campervans.

To us as a family, it is important to consider and review how we conduct business. Our goal is to achieve a balanced profit with a focus on sustainable practices. These include and support the interests of our customers, staff, suppliers and the environment. As such, by purchasing or renting a Wendekreisen campervan, you are supporting New Zealand-based projects and people. More specifically, we are proud to fund local tree-planting initiatives, fair wages, healthy families and the local economy. Most of our fleets are in fact ‘New Zealand Made’ accredited. By buying into our New Zealand-made product, you gain access to our suppliers and their associated warranties. Some reputable brands seen in our fleets are Hercules Tanks, AA Solar, Starfish Interiors, Plytech, Paneltech, Avtex, Warwick, Dunlop, Dualcom, Laminex, Dometic, Suburban, Vitifrigeo, Alutrack and many more.

Our campervan manufacturing team recently developed exciting and unique campervan vehicles.

The Wendekreisen ‘Freedom’ campervan range is designed to maximise time away from powered campsites and fuel dependencies. These vehicles are truly capable of getting away from it all.

UPCOMING VEHICLE SALES

Model	Rego	Vehicle	Price (incl GST)	Year	Estimated Mileage	Transmission
Budget 2+1 Berth	CFF357	Toyota Hiace	$15,990.00	2004	659937	Manual
Budget 2+1 Berth	CCQ169	Toyota Hiace	$15,990.00	2004	643100	Manual
Budget 2+1 Berth Premium	CFF339	Toyota Hiace	$16,500.00	2004	652276	Manual
Budget 2+1 Berth Premium	CFF362	Toyota Hiace	$16,500.00	2004	640381	Manual
Koru 2 Berth	DNE229	Volkswagen T5	$16,990.00	2006	540223	Manual
Koru 2 Berth	DNE228	Volkswagen T5	$16,990.00	2006	532839	Manual
Koru S/T 2 Berth XL	EMP864	Volkswagen LT35	$26,990.00	2005	628785	Manual
Koru S/T 2 Berth XL	ENW723	Volkswagen LT35	$26,990.00	2005	596568	Manual
Budget 4 Berth	CFP500	Volkswagen LT35	$32,990.00	2004	674527	Manual
Budget 4 Berth	CFP502	Volkswagen LT35	$32,990.00	2004	664407	Manual
Koru 4 Berth	DNE234	Volkswagen LT35	$33,990.00	2006	619529	Manual
Koru 4 Berth	DNE235	Volkswagen LT35	$33,990.00	2006	598157	Manual
Koru Star 2 Berth	JDT563	LDV V80	$50,000.00	2015	175000	Manual
Koru Star 2 Berth	JZH524	LDV V80	$54,990.00	2016	175000	Manual
Koru Star Premium 2 Berth	KKE434	LDV V80	$62,990.00	2017	125000	Manual
Koru Star Premium 2 Berth	KRK686	LDV V80	$62,990.00	2017	125000	Manual
Koru Star Walkthrough 2 Berth	LAZ858	LDV V80	$64,990.00	2017	100000	Manual
Koru Star Walkthrough 2 Berth	LAZ859	LDV V80	$64,990.00	2017	100000	Manual
Koru Star Freedom 2 Berth	LRC618	LDV V80	$69,990.00	2018	90000	Manual
Koru Star Freedom 2 Berth	LTE678	LDV V80	$74,990.00	2018	70000	Manual
Koru Star Freedom 2 Berth	NEW	LDV V80	$95,500.00	2020	0-200	Manual
Koru Star Freedom 2 Berth	NEW	LDV V80	$97,500.00	2020	0-200	Automatic
Koru Star Freedom 3 Berth	NEW	LDV V80	$96,500.00	2020	0-200	Manual
Koru Star Freedom 3 Berth	NEW	LDV V80	$98,500.00	2020	0-200	Automatic
Koru Star Freedom 4 Berth	NEW	VW Crafter 50	$164,990.00	2020	0-200	Automatic

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Lowburn, Central Otago

The Willows, West Melton

45 low-cost parking sites for NZMCA members

This years opening of two new properties – Lowburn, in Central Otago, and 'the Willows', just south of Christchurch, at West Melton – brings to 45 the number of New Zealand Motor Caravan Association owned or leased camping sites exclusively for members' use.

And there's more to come; work or planning is already underway on two more new sites, at Kaikoura and in Invercargill.

As a member of the NZMCA travelling in a CSC vehicle, you're entitled to park overnight at these properties for just $3 per person per night.

That's the bargain of the year in anyone's language. But that's only the start of the benefits you receive as a member of this vibrant organisation that's devoted to helping its 91,000-plus individual members have more fun.

Other benefits include:

- Generous discounts on your Cook Strait ferry crossings;
- Handy low-cost, on-site parking at dozens of events through the country on the Motorhome Friendly Events Calendar;
- Access to campsite discounts through the DOC Pass;
- More campsite savings in the off-season with CampSaver;
- Discounts with big-name suppliers;
- Kiwi Fuelcard discounts that will save you more than your total annual membership fee;
- The opportunity to insure your vehicle with the country's leading specialist motorhome insurer – Covi NZMCA Insurance;
- NZMCA DATA – fast reliable broadband on the road;
- Plus, you also get a bi-monthly magazine; a biennial Travel Directory; your passport to fun via www.mhftowns.com; 24/7 access to an information-packed NZMCA website; and even an annual calendar.

Don't delay, join today:

New Zealand Motor Caravan Association | P 09 298 5466 | **www.mhftowns.com** | **www.nzmca.org.nz**

Nature's Head now has a PASS

After six short years the Nature's Head Waterless Toilet has now become New Zealand's leading compost based toilet for off-grid living, boats, motorhomes and baches. Now, importing agent and distribution outlet Alan Morton is pleased to announce that the Nature's Head Toilet has been industry recognised with a PASS certification for building compliance.

This means that the toilet has been assessed for structure, durability, hazardous building materials, personal hygiene and industrial liquid waste within the requirements of the NZ Building Code. Now, where a Building Consent Authority consents to a waiver, the toilet can comply with the Building Code. Additionally, the Nature's Head Toilet contributes to compliance for the Standard for Self-containment for motorhomes and caravans, as well as meeting the 'No Discharge' Regulations for US Coastguard type III marine heads.

A copy of the PASS document can be downloaded from www.thebuildingbusiness.co.nz/pass/natureshead or for further information contact Alan at admin@natureshead.co.nz

SmartRV take $10,000 off

Leading motorhome retailer SmartRV will be back at the Covi SuperShow in March with a range of RVs for every lifestyle, including brand-new 2020 models that have just arrived from Germany.

SmartRV is the exclusive New Zealand importer of value brand Carado, popular Bürstner and premium HYMER motorhomes from Germany, and operates sales centres in Auckland and Christchurch.

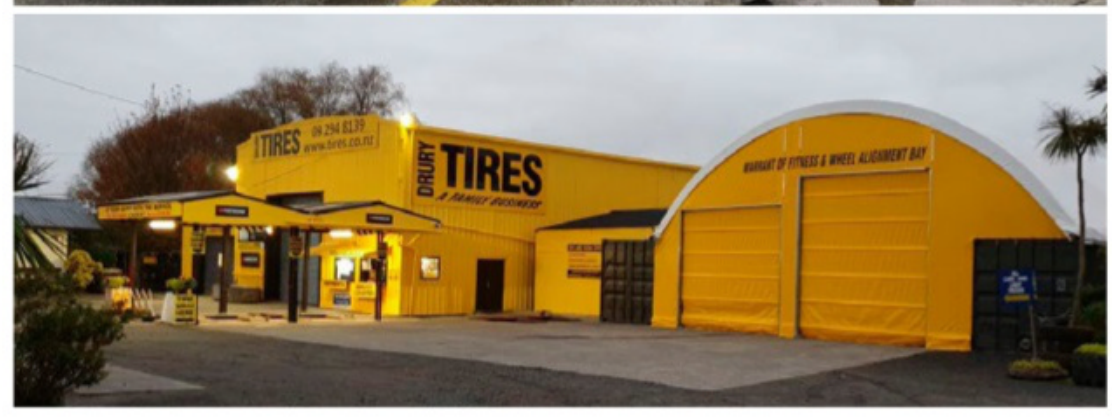
SmartRV won 'Best Stand In Show' at the Covi SuperShow in 2019 and will have another inspiring display for 2020 with 21 new and used motorhomes on site for viewing.

Highlights will include the new 2020 HYMER ML-T 580 4x4. This RV is a collaboration between HYMER and prestige brand Mercedes-Benz and represents the pinnacle of motorhome travel in New Zealand

SmartRV is taking $10,000 off all its 2019 Bürstner models – only while stocks last – and offering visitors to its Covi stand the chance to win a $2000 Wilderness motorhome holiday, or a $500 fuel card.

What: The Covi SuperShow **When:** March, Friday 13 to Sunday 15 **Where:** ASB Showgrounds, Auckland. SmartRV's pavilion will be by the main entrance at Gate 2, on stands OS55, OS51 and OS47 **Tickets:** supershow.co.nz

Drury Tires



This family business in Drury is now broadening its reach by aiming to become a one-stop-shop for motorhomes.

- FREE alignment checks in under 10 minutes. Latest technology brand-new Bluetooth Facep motorhome alignment machine.
- Established in 1980, owner Anthony offers 40 years of experience in tyres. For tyre issues ask for Anthony – and he will ensure you have the best tyres for all your motorhome requirements.
- Park and Stay – free park-over when we are working on your vehicle, with power toilet and shower block, lock in after-hours.
- They also do batteries, Nitrofill on tyres and motorhome servicing and grooming.
- Easy motorhome access – simply hop off the southern motorway north or south and pop into their massive yard to book in your RV.

Don't forget to like their Facebook page, as every month they have fun competitions where you have a chance to win $300 cash.

Drury Tires, 1 Firth Street Drury. Open Mon to Fri at 7.30am to 6pm. W: tires.co.nz

Biggest Prize Ever at the Covi SuperShow

GRAND PRIZE

This year the Covi SuperShow have teamed up with the good people at Jayco and Jayco Auckland to offer visitors the chance to win a $64,432 Jayco Starcraft 19.61-4 caravan.

Visitors can enjoy a wide range of activities including free seminars on a wide range of subjects from industry experts. The No Reserve Auction at this years' Covi SuperShow will be for a brand-new Benimar motorhome – at NO RESERVE. The Covi SuperShow is again giving $10,000 cash to one lucky visitor who purchases a motorhome or caravan at the show. See page 105 for more details.

EXHIBITORS LIST

Covi Motorhome Caravan & Outdoor SuperShow, 13–15 March, 2020, at the ASB Showgrounds, Greenlane, Auckland. W: supershow.co.nz

AA Solar	441,443	Ebenz Electric Bikes	456	Merit RV	380	Snowy River Caravans	OS18
ACM Motorhomes	287	Ebo E-Bikes Ltd	402	Mighway	250	SOTA RV Ltd	OS6
Adjusta Mattress New Zealand	401,405	Eden Juice Ltd	410	Motorhomes, Caravans & Destinations	409	Starfish Interiors	450
African Touch Safaris	459	Ekko Magic Wipes	446	Nationwide RV	300	Sunliner RV	OS56
Air Opus	OS 26	Explore Waimate	430	NZMCA	115	SunSaver	412
Airvolve NZ	417	Explorer Motorhomes Ltd	240	OCD Covers by Matamata Saddlery	455, 457	Takacat.com	OS68
Alliance RV	426	4U Ltd	418	Outland Living	463	TANZ Products	OS3
Apollo Entertainment	276	Flying Cat NZ	258	Oztent / Weber	298	Tararua District	424
Aqua Max RV Water Filtration	440	Fridgetech Marine & Outdoors	406	Pacific Eyewear	OS72	Tenspro	471
Aquapick NZ	413	Gallivanting Oz	220	Pak A Bach	OS25	The Motor Home Share Company	277
Auto Leisure and Marine Group	361,379,384	Gateway Caravans Whakatane	OS58	Pilote and Le Voyageur	330	Top 10 Holiday Parks	447
Bailey NZ / RV Mega	360	Great Journeys of New Zealand	100	Pop Top Campers Ltd	140	Torpedo7	205
Bionic Bikes	216	HCB Technologies	246	Power Products LLC	261	TrailLite	398
Bluebridge Cook Strait Ferries	224	Hikobike	OS84	Real Journeys Discovery Expeditions	433	Tranztec RV Motorhomes	236
BOP RV	OS17,OS21	InsideOut RV	OS5	RnRV	OS35	Triple One Care	442
Camplify	260	Jayco Caravans	600,OS48,52,60,64	RSE (NZ) Ltd	221	Trustees Executors	479
Central RV / Dethleffs Caravans NZ	OS31	JB Caravans / D & E Outdoors	OS30	RV & Marine Supplies	200	UCC Motorhomes & Caravans	268
CI Motorhomes	OS34	Juice Lithium Ion Batteries	462	RV Leisure Centre	251	Volkswagen New Zealand	267,273
Cornerstone USA Imports	OS13	Kiwi Fuelcards	112	RV-NZToday Lifestyle magazine	Hall 4 437	Wendekreisen Travel	OS22
Covi NZMCA Insurance	115	Land-n-Sea Leisure / Lagun	218	RV Super Centre	155,301	West Built Recreational Vehicles	OS86
Credit One	419	Leisure Imports Ltd	OS10	Rvfinders	415	Whale Watch Kaikoura	436
Deluxe	330	Levin RV Centre	OS39,OS43	Select Caravans	OS14	Wireless Nation	110
DroneTech	451	Lifestyle Gear	OS76	SHAREaCAMPER	416	ZeroPak	434
Dualcom Technology	254	Lilliput Caravans	Village Green	SmartRV	OS47,OS51,OS55	Zion Motorhomes Ltd	120,OSP1
Duralite Modular Systems	408	Majestic Global	230	Snapper Clips & Food Seals	429		

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Liquid Rubber New Zealand

Product Safety Recall

REDARC Electronics

Tow-Pro Elite V2 Electric Brake Controller sold at various independent automotive/towing stores between the 1st September 2018 to the 21st January 2019.

Tow-Pro Elite
EBRH-ACCV2

Defect – There is potential at any time during use for the Brake Controller to fail to engage the trailer brakes (indicated by a flashing yellow/red warning lamp).

(Trailer should brake normally if installation was carried out exactly as specified by the product manual using dedicated wiring from a single battery - owners should seek out a repair regardless).

Hazard – If the trailer brakes fail to engage, there may be an increased risk of an accident of the tow vehicle or to other road users.

What to do – If a consumer is affected, they should either go back to their installer to seek free repair or call REDARC Electronics Technical Support line to receive details on a dealer network to arrange a free repair.

If the Tow-Pro V2 electric trailer brake controller is not installed on a vehicle, the consumer should contact REDARC to arrange a free replacement.

Affected customers can contact REDARC Electronics by calling 09 222 1024 between 10:30am - 7:30pm Monday - Friday, or by email at service@redarc.com.au

Customers can also check the REDARC Electronics at (www.redarcelectronics.co.nz/recall-notice) and use the serial number checking tool to see if their product is in the affected batch.

See recalls.govt.nz for other New Zealand consumer product recalls

RnRV
Rest n Recreational Vehicles

www.RnRV.co.nz

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COVI
Motorhome Caravan & Outdoor SUPERSHOW
13-15 March, 2020
ASB Showgrounds, Auckland
www.supershow.co.nz

Come see us at the Covi Show! We will have
a sample of whats on offer to be viewed. See our lovely
Rapido's with the King sized beds & opposing twin seats
& our gorgeous GT Model Malibu van

carthago
Das Reisemobil.

With *117 models available, we are able to match
you with a vehicle that meets your requirements
and fits within your budget.
If you would like to view more of our range of new
and pre-loved units, you can visit our yard.
We're just 17 minutes north of the Harbour bridge,
just down from the Snow Planet.
**We will be open from 9am to 5pm every
show day including Sunday.**

**not all in stock*

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Paul Cook
Founder/Director

66 Small Road, Silverdale, Auckland | 0800 767 808 | 09 426 7679 | Email: sales@RnRV.co.nz | RnRV.co.nz

We are proud to be the only authorised South Island agent for Leisure Line caravans.

These stunning caravans are a superbly made luxury caravan, built in New Zealand for our unique conditions. Our caravans can be bespoke manufactured to your select specifications, floor plan layout and decor requirements.

We are proud to exclusively bring to you the Victory Caravan, Australian built with New Zealand specs these vans are sure to impress.

With family in mind we have got a range of models our two berth is ideal for mum and dad and if you want to take the kids or the grand kids we have a 5 berth with triple bunks, there is room for everyone.

We are proud to be the only authorised South Island agent for Sunliner.

These motorhomes are Australian built with New Zealand specs. The finish is light and bright, rear wheel drive and even a 4X4 model available. There is number of different layouts so will be one to suit you I'm sure.

The Swift Coastline is our exclusive dealer model based with features such as:

roof mounted solar panel, special graphics, Horrex window blinds, double width curtains, upgraded upholstery, chrome accents, fitted microwave, factory fitted stereo, LED TV, alarm with key fob, BBQ outlet, outside power point, extra outside locker, full length awning

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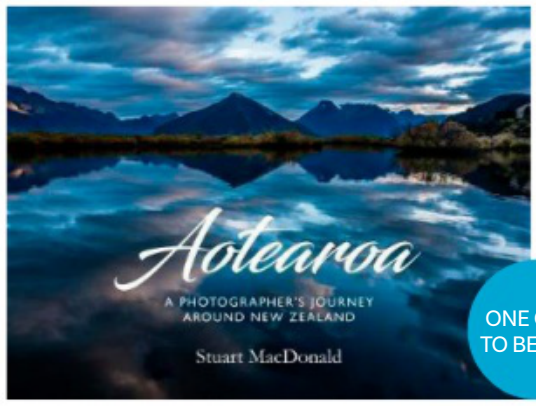
Ph: **03 3433 643**
Email: **office@rvcentre.co.nz**
rvcentre.co.nz

CHRISTCHURCH RV CENTRE

On site we have a huge parts and accessories showroom which showcases almost everything you may need for your caravan or motorhome.



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Aotearoa: A Photographer's Journey Around New Zealand

Stuart MacDonald

RRP $49.99

New Holland Publishers

Photographer Stuart MacDonald has travelled around Aotearoa for the past 10 years capturing iconic landscapes and the unique character of New Zealand towns and cities and he shares his journey around the country with these images of Aotearoa.

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A Conversation With My Country

Alan Duff

RRP $38.00

Penguin

Returned from living in France, he views his country with fresh eyes, as it is now: homing in on the crisis in parenting, our prisons, education and welfare systems, and a growing culture of entitlement that entraps Pākehā and Māori alike.

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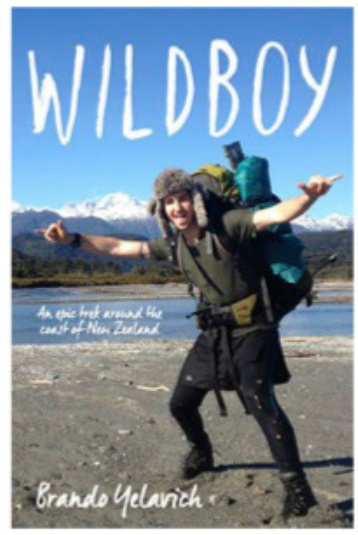
The Path made Clear

Oprah Winfrey

RRP $27.99

Pan Macmillan

Everyone has a purpose. And, according to Oprah Winfrey, "Your real job in life is to figure out as soon as possible what that is, who you are meant to be, and begin to honour your calling in the best way possible." That journey starts right here.



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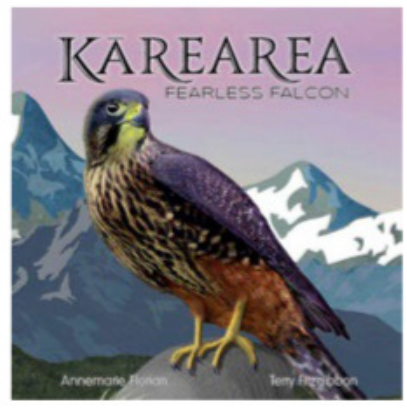
Wildboy

Brando Yelavich

RRP $35.00

Penguin

The full story of Brando 'Wildboy' Yelavich's whirlwind tour of the coastline of New Zealand: 8000km almost entirely on foot. Extreme adventure, near misses, good sorts, and one beautiful country – *Wildboy* has it all!



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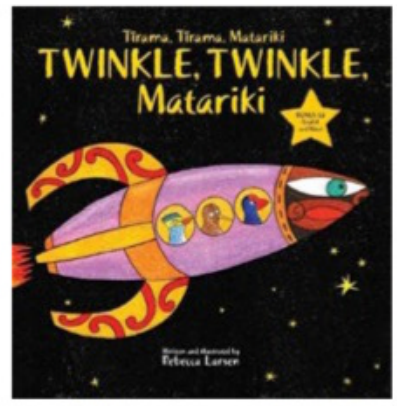
Kārearea: Fearless Falcon

Annemarie Florian

RRP $24.99

New Holland

Kārearea have a fierce zest for life. They're fast and agile fliers. They're tenacious and tough. See how this spirited bird hunts for food, and finds places to settle and raise its chicks. Find out about the challenges it faces to survive.



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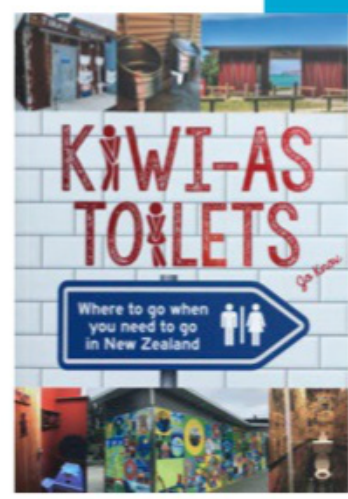
Twinkle, Twinkle, Matariki

Rebecca Larsen

RRP $19.99

Imagination Press

Pūkeko, Kiwi and Hoiho want to fly very high. Join them as they blast off to explore the nine stars of Matariki.



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Kiwi-As Toilets

Jo Knox

RRP $29.99

BookPrint Ltd

Where to go when you need to go in New Zealand. These toilets are places you will want to go to when you don't even need to go!

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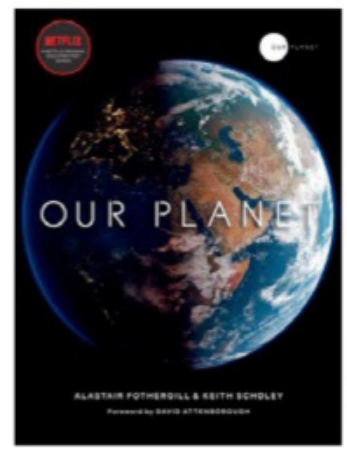
Branded Culture

Steve Bayliss

RRP $39.99

Imagination Press

Branded Culture is a serious book about creating exceptional marketing and cultural change within the context of today's turbulent environment.



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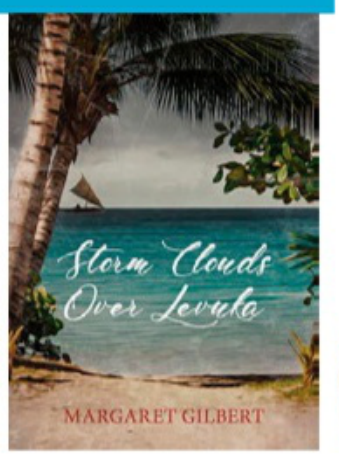
Our Planet

Alastair Fothergill & Keith Scholey

RRP $55.00

Penguin

Companion to the groundbreaking Netflix original documentary series narrated by Sir David Attenborough, *Our Planet* presents a new view of the world, using stunning photographic images and graphics to reveal animal behaviour and environmental change that we've never seen before.



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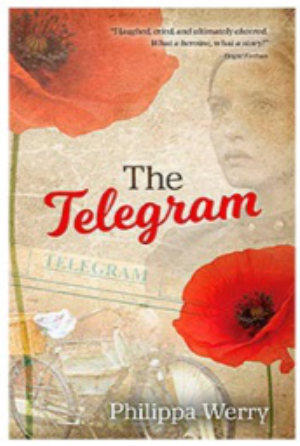
Storm Clouds Over Levuka

Margaret Gilbert

RRP $30.00

The Copy Press

Fiji in the 1860s is a politically unstable, violent country, a dangerous place for a woman alone. This is where Charlotte Swann finds herself when her husband, Richard, is murdered the day after their arrival in Levuka, the country's capital.



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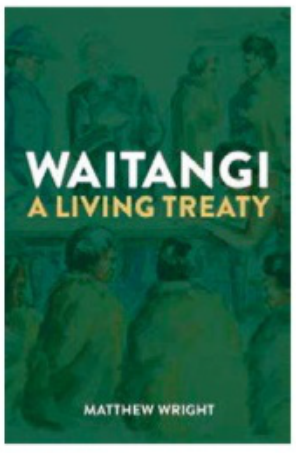
The Telegram

Philippa Werry

RRP $23.00

Pipi Press

Fourteen-year-old Beatrice Thomas lives with her widowed mother and younger sister, in a small New Zealand town overshadowed by the events of WWI.



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Waitangi: A Living Treaty

Matthew Wright

RRP $39.99

Bateman Publishing

Acclaimed historian Matthew Wright explores the evolution of New Zealand's most historically significant document, the Treaty of Waitangi, from its origins to its place in the present day.

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Supper Club

Lara Williams

RRP $35.00

Penguin

Supper Club is outrageously good – an exploration of female appetites and friendships that is dark, funny and joyful. From the first page to the last, it's a delight.

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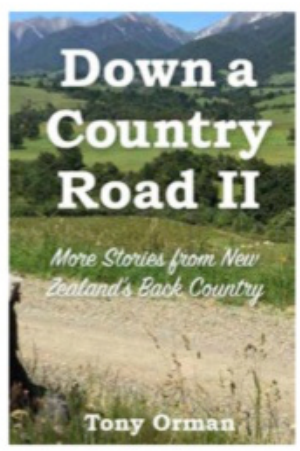
The Internal Flame

Dr Roderick Mulgan

RRP $34.99

Wild Side Publishing

New insights into silent inflammation, longevity and the science of functional food.



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Down a Country Road II: More Stories from New Zealand's Back Country

Tony Orman

RRP $34.99

New Holland

Down a Country Road II returns to New Zealand's challenging and beautiful back country and the colourful personalities who have made these isolated regions their home.

BOOK GIVEAWAYS

One copy of each title to be won, email the book title as subject to:
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with your full details, go in the draw to win. Closes 31 April 2020

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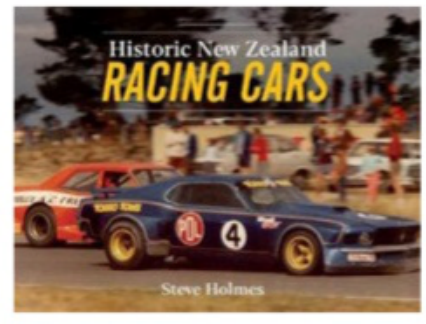
Warbirds over *Wanaka 2018*

Ed Taylor & Mandy Deans

RRP $26.90

The official record of the 2018 International Airshow.



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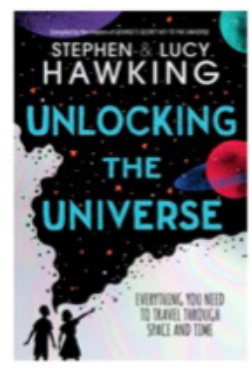
Historic New Zealand *Racing Cars*

Steve Holmes

RRP $39.99

Bateman Publishing

Historic New Zealand Racing Cars reveals the fascinating histories of 18 cars whose stories are intertwined with our motoring history.



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Unlocking the Universe

Stephen & Lucy Hawking

RRP $30.00

Penguin

From the brilliant Lucy Hawking and her father, the world's most beloved scientist Professor Stephen Hawking, comes the ultimate children's guide to the universe.

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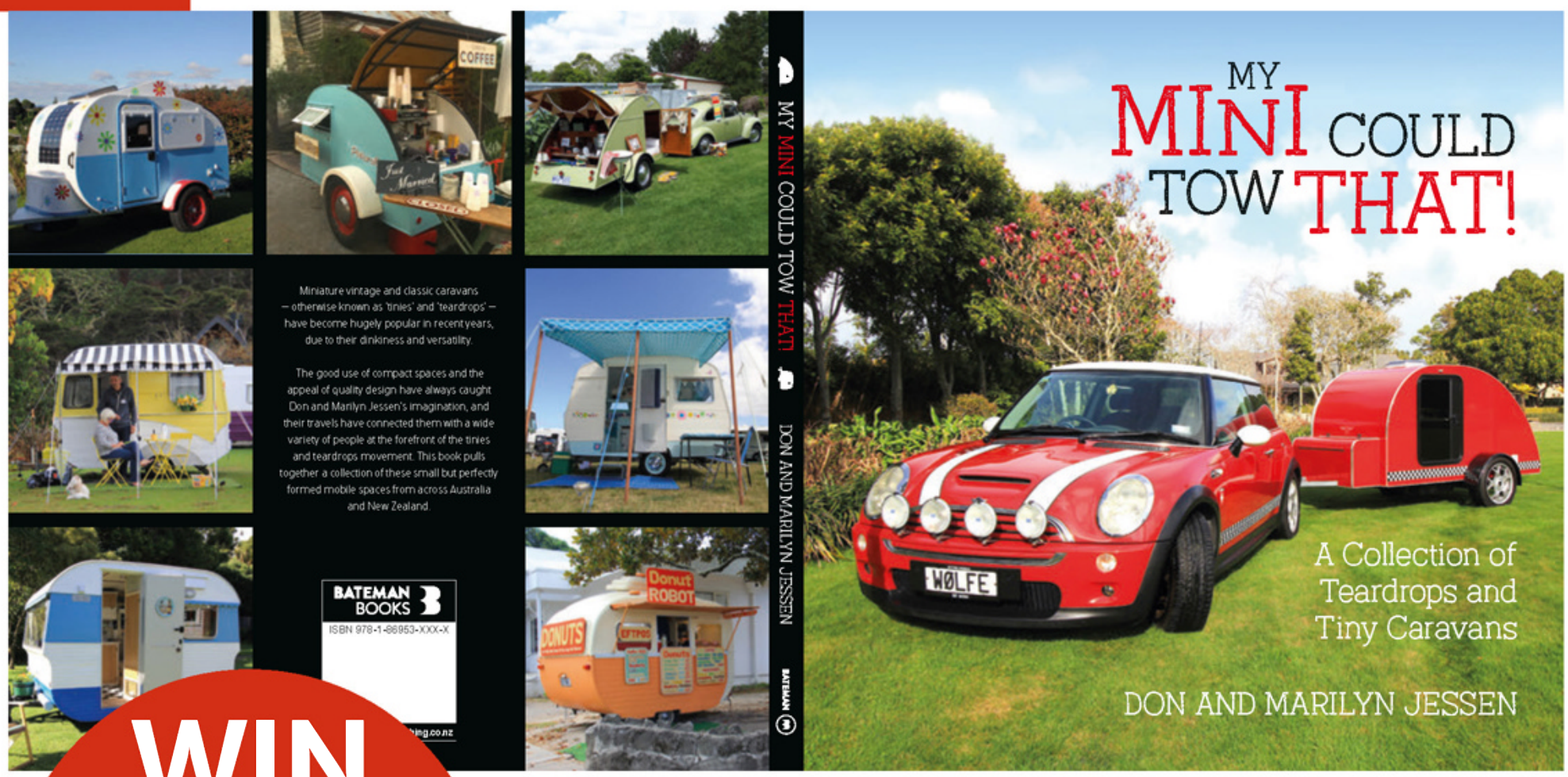
The product disclosure statement for the offer of units in the CFML Mortgage Fund is available at companiesoffice.govt.nz/disclose or www.cfml.nz

*Past performance is not an indication of future performance.



WIN

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To enter, post or email: Win My Mini,
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With your name, address, email,
and contact phone.

Closes 25 April 2020

MY MINI COULD TOW THAT!

Book review

Words + Photos: Don and Marilyn Jessen

If you cast your mind back to the late 1970s – those of us who can – New Zealand was in the grip of a fuel crisis, with carless days introduced in July 1979 and the open-road speed limit reduced from 100kph to 80kph. Just eight weeks prior to that, then-Prime Minister Rob Muldoon had announced without consultation a 20 per cent sales tax to be levied on caravans and boats, putting both local industries into a freefall. Many manufacturers quit and those that remained scrambled to find workable solutions.

Liteweight Caravans, Don's family business, responded by creating a 10-foot by 6-foot (3 by 1.8 metres) caravan with a fibreglass base reminiscent of a multi-chine boat hull. Named the Pinto, it weighed in at a mere 1100 lb (500kg) despite having four berths, a kitchen with fridge and stove, a wardrobe, and a dinette which converted to a double bed. It also had full head height.

Sitting around the canteen, conversation turned to what size car would be able to tow it. Don decided to put it to the test. Using a borrowed 1000cc Mini, Don and Marilyn set out on a road trip from Hamilton to Whitianga, on to Coromandel and Thames, and back home to Hamilton again. In those days, the roads from Whitianga to Coromandel were loose metal. Don and Marilyn were not entirely comfortable about how the Mini would perform, so they hedged their bets with a backup car driven by friends who also took photos and video to prove they made it. However, the Mini handled the road trip beyond expectations, returning a fuel consumption of 26 miles per gallon (9.2km per litre). Not bad for towing. This highly memorable trip became the inspiration for the title of this book: *My Mini Could Tow That.*

But the story continues. So impressed was Don that he next hooked the Pinto to a 185cc Honda farm trike and towed it across the loose metal hills of Old Mountain Road over the Raglan deviation. Undertaken in pouring rain, the Pinto trip was again recorded as highly successful, with the rig hitting 70kph on the short straights. The ultimate conclusion – the Pinto could be towed anywhere in New Zealand with a small car.

Not all tiny caravans were made in response to the fuel crisis. Jackson Caravans released their Cub in 1959, proudly advertising it as towable by a Mini. A number of other manufacturers, including Lilliput, Clipper, Explorer and Pioneer, produced small caravans, some as tiny as 8 feet (2.4 metres) long.

Six years later, in 1986 Liteweight produced the Caravette, a reverse teardrop weighing in at around 551 lb (250kg). Little did Don know that many years later he would own a Caravette, which he towed behind his 1300cc Kawasaki Voyager motorbike and sidecar rig, with two adults on the bike and two kids in the sidecar.

In recent years, teardrops of all shapes and sizes have undergone something of a revival. It started in Australia with the restoration of teardrops from the 1940s. As stock got harder to find, new builds came to the fore with the involvement of manufacturers as well as homebuilders testing their DIY skills. Picking up on worldwide trends, New Zealanders also embraced the teardrop, but with no vintage stock available in New Zealand they had to resort to building them from scratch, often from the original plans from the forties and fifties as found on the internet.

The usage of tiny spaces and the appeal of good design have always captured our imagination, and we are not alone. Our travels have connected us with numerous people who are also fascinated by the teardrop and tiny caravan movement. Whether you are a member of the group or a bystander, you cannot help but be drawn to the cuteness of these small holiday rigs. Within these pages we bring you a selection of teardrops and tiny caravans from *My Mini Could Tow That!*

We hope you enjoy them.

GARY + ROSE

Before retiring, Gary was a boat builder who in his youth had constructed a trimaran and sailed from California on a Pacific adventure. While moored in a bay in a Micronesian island he met a Kiwi girl who was crewing on another boat. Her name was Rose and, as they say, the rest is history. After living in Hawaii for a while they eventually returned to Rose's hometown on the Coromandel. Her folks were pioneers in the town and there is still a very strong family presence in the area. Gary continued building boats.

Around 2011 he started to think about building a teardrop camper. He looked at all sorts of plans online and purchased two sets. The plans were from the 1930s. Taking the best points from both he designed his own teardrop and built it in 2012. Being a boat builder, he designed and constructed it using marine technology. He reckons he built it inside out as he had to get the roof lining in before skinning the outer roof.

The exterior is clad in marine ply, resined and glassed over. Gary has made a lovely job of coving the area where the side walls meet the roof and front wall. The gentle curve eliminates any kind of moulding and gives a beautifully clean look to the exterior. The roof is painted in two-pot white with the yellow walls painted in marine enamel.

A travel box is mounted on the drawbar, and the wheels and mudguards sit outside the body in true teardrop fashion. A spare wheel is attached to the bodywork of the teardrop just behind one of the mudguards. The body length is 3 metres with a width of 1.5 metres. It has twin access doors that feature an intriguing window setup. The angled timber frame on the inside of the doors has two triangular gussets that hold the window closed against the body of the door. To open the window, you slip the gussets out and the window leans towards the back of the frame. The gussets can then be slipped back in to lock the window in the open position. Fly screens can be attached to the outside of the window opening. Very clever!

Inside at the front is a headboard with cupboards. Then comes the double bed with two cupboards and an open shelf mounted above the foot area at the rear.

A full kitchen is housed at the rear with a hatch supported by cut-down windsurfer booms. No gas struts here! With open cupboards, bench top, two drawers, a slide-out gas stove and room for good storage underneath including a cooler bin, this little teardrop is ready to hit the road.

Gary and Rose really enjoy their teardrop and have travelled far and wide in it, going as far south as Queenstown and as far north as Cape Rēinga. This little teardrop is well used and attracts a lot of attention on its travels.

These little Anglo Imps are very cute and are becoming extremely collectable, especially when restored. Jon and Marlene are keen hot rodders and own a very nice Ford Model A pickup that sports a V8 engine and Jaguar suspension.

Feeling that they were getting a bit old for tenting, their main motivation for buying a caravan was to get off the ground. They started looking around for an old caravan and found one in Te Kowhai, close to Hamilton. It needed new window rubbers, so they visited CaraVamp just down the road to see if they had any and what they would cost.

The owner, Brent, was flat out with customer work but did have a few caravans in stock which caught their interest. He had bought the Imp partially restored inside and had repainted the exterior. Instead of leaving with window rubbers for the Te Kowhai caravan, Jon and Marlene left CaraVamp owning the 10-foot Anglo Imp.

Jon, with his perfectionist hot rodding background, was not quite happy with the interior, so he improved the quality of the furniture and repainted the interior, giving it a modern take on the retro style. The white, grey and black paintwork is accented with a pop of colour in a range of yellow accessories which Marlene has cleverly put together to create a real treat for the eyes. There is so much to look at.

The exterior is similarly well dressed with a bright yellow table and chairs, window box, retro books, and a picnic blanket complete with picnic basket. The smart black-and-white striped roof awning was made by Master Trim in Hamilton, and when this wee caravan is set up on display it looks a treat. It was certainly noticed at the Retro Car and Caravan Club's rally at Hot Water Beach motorcamp in the Coromandel where it took out first prize.

Marlene and Jon have owned the Imp for two years and have used it a few times at hot rod events. Attending their first caravan rally, they mixed with other retro caravan enthusiasts and found that other owners were as passionate about their caravans as hot rodders are about their cars. Some of the caravanners were even towing their retro caravans with hot rods and classic cars. Maybe in the not-too-distant future we could see a tow bar being fitted to the Ford Model A pickup. What a cool car and caravan combination that would be! RV

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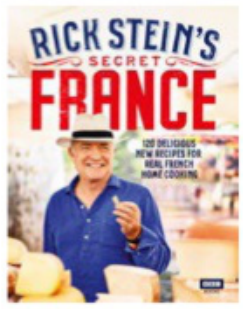


Winner Vol 2

Rick Stein's Secret France

K Clark ***Kaiapoi***

Quinoa Cakes with Chimichurri Yoghurt

Feeds 4, takes 40 mins

Utterly moreish, hot or cold, these make a delicious veggie burger and are also brilliant for parties as bite-size canapés with the chimichurri yoghurt as a dip on the side. They are a great way to use up leftover quinoa, but if you want you can make them from scratch. Just remember to cool the quinoa right down, don't try to cook these with hot quinoa! Serve with a refreshing green or tomato salad.

Small onion or 4 spring onions, finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 big handful of fresh coriander, parsley or basil, leaves and stems finely chopped separately
2–3 tbsp butter
A pinch of chilli flakes
2 eggs
50g flour, such as chickpea (gram)
540g cooked quinoa (which is 200g uncooked quinoa, rinsed well and drained – ideally soaked first)
100g feta, crumbled, or a hard cheese like Parmesan or Cheddar, grated
Sea salt and black pepper

CHIMICHURRI YOGHURT
100mL full-fat natural yoghurt
1 big handful of chopped fresh coriander, leaves and stems
1 big handful of chopped chives, spring onions or onion
1 big handful of chopped fresh parsley, leaves and stems
2 tbsp apple cider vinegar or lemon juice
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 fat garlic clove
1 tsp dried oregano or thyme
Chilli flakes, to taste

In a wide frying pan, fry the onion, garlic and herb stems over a medium heat in 1 tablespoon of the butter with a good pinch of salt (less if your leftover quinoa has already been seasoned), pepper and chilli for 5 minutes, stirring from time to time.

Meanwhile, whisk the eggs in a large bowl, then mix in the flour, followed by the cold quinoa and crumbled feta. Add the garlic, onion and herb mix to the bowl with the herb leaves. Mix well and shape into 12 cakes (or 24 bite-size), about 1cm thick. The easiest way to do this is to split the mix into two, and then keep dividing. If you're finding it tricky to form them, try adding a touch more flour.

If the cakes feel firm, then go ahead and start frying them. If not, pop them onto a plate and into the fridge to firm up for 15 minutes. Use this time to make the chimichurri yoghurt by combining all the ingredients with some salt and pepper and blitzing in a food processor. Or you can chop all the ingredients, then thin it out with a few tablespoons of water if you like it saucier.

Heat 1 tablespoon of butter in the original pan then, once hot, add however many cakes you can fit into a single layer – I could fit four in my pan. You don't want them to be touching or they'll steam instead of fry. Let them sizzle for about 3 minutes on each side to get nice and golden and hot throughout. Then repeat for the rest of the batch. I turn the heat up as I add the cakes, then lower to a medium heat to fry. Put your cooked cakes in a low oven to keep warm while you finish the rest.

Chickpea Caprese Salad with Spinach Walnut Pesto

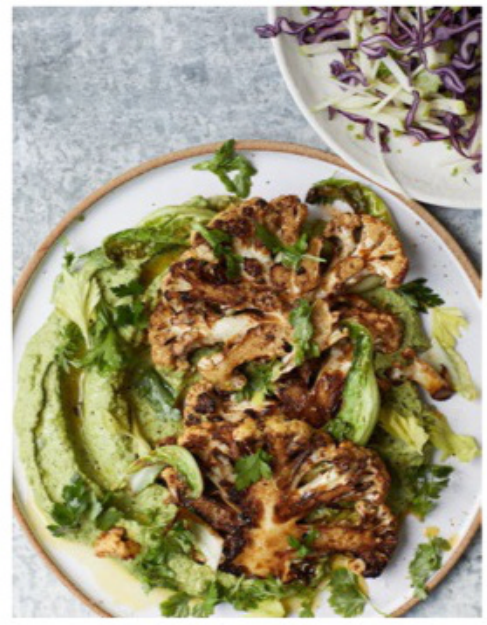
Feeds 4 as a side, takes 10 mins

A simple 10-minute starter which you could double up for a big sharing plate. Make sure all the ingredients (especially the mozzarella) are at room temperature – I've eaten far too many fridge-cold tomatoes and cheeses that don't taste of anything. Use any nuts, seeds or greens in this, but don't skip toasting the walnuts – it's worth it and you've got a pan out already for the chickpeas.

1 tbsp ghee or oil
240g cooked chickpeas (1 × 400g tin, drained and rinsed)
1/4 tsp smoked paprika
2 tsp maple syrup
350g ripe cherry tomatoes, halved (look out for the yellow ones)
200g fresh mozzarella or burrata, roughly torn, or crumbled feta
Sea salt and black pepper

SPINACH *and* WALNUT PESTO
8 walnut halves
1 big handful of baby spinach
1 big handful of fresh basil, leaves and stems, plus a few extra for garnishing
2 tbsp apple cider vinegar or juice and zest of 1/2 lemon
1 small garlic clove, roughly chopped
1 handful of grated Parmesan or pecorino
6 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling

In a large frying pan, gently toast the walnuts for 1 minute until they smell fragrant, keeping an eye on them so they don't catch. Transfer to a food processor with all the other pesto ingredients except the olive oil. Blitz, adding the oil as you go, until smoothish. Season to taste.
Put the pan back on a medium heat with the ghee or oil, add the chickpeas, smoked paprika and a pinch of sea salt and fry for 2 minutes until golden brown. Drizzle over the maple syrup, add a pinch of salt and leave to bubble for 30 seconds. Toss once more to coat in the salty-sweet oil.
Meanwhile, arrange the cherry tomatoes, torn mozzarella and extra basil leaves on a large platter, then scatter over the chickpeas, drizzle over the pesto and serve straight away while the chickpeas are still hot.



Fried Chermoula Cauliflower on Herby Bean Dip with Slaw

Serves 2 with leftovers, takes 30 mins

These spiced cauliflower steaks on green dip steal the show at any dinner party, but are super simple for a midweek dinner too. They come together in 30 minutes on the nose! If you want to get ahead, the dip and slaw can be made in advance, then dress the slaw while you're cooking the cauliflower. You'll want to try the chermoula-esque spice mix on everything, or you could fry it with onion for the base of a pumpkin soup.

1 medium cauliflower, save the leaves (about 800g)
2 tbsp ghee or oil
Sea salt and black pepper

CHERMOULA SPICE MIX
2 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp sweet paprika
2 tsp ground coriander
Chilli flakes or 1/4 tsp cayenne, to taste

HERBY BEAN DIP
240g cooked white beans or chickpeas (1 × 400g tin, drained and rinsed)
1 garlic clove
2 tbsp tahini
Juice of 1 lemon
1 big handful of a mix of fresh parsley and coriander, leaves and stems roughly chopped separately
Extra-virgin olive oil, to serve

SLAW LAW
1/4 red cabbage (150g), finely shredded
1 green apple, cut into matchsticks
1 celery stick and leaves, sliced
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
1 tsp mustard

Preheat the oven to fan 220°C/Gas mark 9. Slice two 2–3cm thick steaks off the cauliflower and roughly chop the remaining cauliflower florets and the leaves, keeping them separate. Mix together all the ingredients for the chermoula.
Put the cauliflower florets in a roasting tray with 1 tablespoon of the ghee or oil, half of the chermoula spice mix, sea salt and pepper. Roast in the oven for 15–20 minutes, adding the chopped cauliflower leaves halfway through and tossing everything together.
Melt the remaining ghee or oil in a large frying pan and fry the cauliflower steaks for 2 minutes on each side, then add the remaining spice mix and carefully turn again, coating the steaks in the spice. Cook for a further 2 minutes until just tender (you could now pop them in the oven to keep warm).
Meanwhile, mix all the slaw ingredients together with the parsley and coriander leaves in a medium bowl and season to taste.
Blitz all the dip ingredients in a food processor with the parsley and coriander stems and taste for seasoning. Add 2–4 tablespoons cold water until nice and thick. Divide the green bean dip between the plates, drizzle with olive oil and top with the hot cauliflower steak and the florets and leaves. Serve the slaw on top or on the side.

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Upcoming EVENT GUIDE

2020 NZMCA NATIONAL RALLY & AGM

When: March 6–8
Where: Ōamaru Racecourse, Ōamaru
W: nzmca.org.nz

A big part of the experience, of course, is the trip to the area – with lots to see and do on the way to the rally.

COVI SUPERSHOW 2020

When: March 13–15
Where: ASB Showgrounds, Greenlane, Auckland
W: supershow.co.nz

The Supershow is the largest motorhome and caravan expo in New Zealand, featuring all the latest models and accessories.

WOMAD NZ 2020

When: March 13–15
Where: Brooklands Park, New Plymouth
W: womad.co.nz

Come and lose yourself in the sights, sounds and tastes that all blend together to make up the vibrant WOMAD experience!

GIANT PUMPKIN FESTIVAL

When: March 29
Where: Hamilton Gardens, Hamilton
W: thegreatpumpkincarnival.co.nz

A great fun family event. Come and see the amazing creations, the smallest miniature pumpkins and the heaviest giants. Will the NZ record be beaten again this year?

ROUND THE VINES

When: March 20
Where: The Square, Martinborough
W: roundthevines.org.nz

A fun 10km walk or run through quiet country roads and through accessible vineyards in Martinborough.

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Upcoming EVENT GUIDE

WILD WESTIE FUN CAR RUN/RALLY

When: March 22
Where: Rathlin St Carpark, Blockhouse Bay
W: bhbl-lions.org

Treat yourself, family and friends to a great day with a bit of adventure out west in the annual Wild Westie Fun Car Run/Rally. Since 2009 the Lions have revealed to rally entrants the many exciting features that Westies enjoy.

REPCO BEACH HOP – 20TH ANNIVERSARY

When: March 25–29
Where: Williamson Park, Whangamatā
W: beachhop.co.nz

Based in the Coromandel beach resort town of Whangamatā, which once a year comes to life to the sound of Rock n Roll music and V8 engines! Undoubtedly the largest event of its type in New Zealand with crowds expected in their tens of thousands.

FEAST WAIKATO

When: April 2–5
Where: Hamilton
W: waikatofoodinc.com

Feast Waikato celebrates their wonderful region with a selection of fabulous foodie events, from dinners and lunches, tours, talks and markets.

ROYAL EASTER SHOW 2020

When: April 9–13
Where: ASB Showgrounds, Epsom, Auckland
W: eastershow.co.nz

The Royal Easter Show had its beginnings 176 years ago, beginning as a purely agricultural event to help the fledgling colony develop a sound farming economy. The first A&P show was held in 1843. The aims of the event were to demonstrate excellence in agriculture and animal husbandry, and to promote the breeding of stud animals to establish and increase the farm animal gene pool in the emerging colony.

WAIRARAPA BALLOON FESTIVAL

When: April 9–13
Where: Wairarapa
W: nzballoons.co.nz

The Wairarapa Balloon Festival features many free events and loads of family fun throughout the Wairarapa.

WARBIRDS OVER WANAKA

When: April 10–12
Where: Wanaka
W: warbirdsoverwanaka.com

A three day extravaganza of aeronautical marvels, the airshow is ranked amongst the top four Warbirds Airshows in the world and with certainly the most spectacular scenery. With a background of epic mountains and the magnificent Clutha River valley, this event is a must do for everyone – not just the aviation enthusiast.

COLVILLE EASTER FESTIVAL

When: April 10–13
Where: Colville Hall, Colville
W: colvilleartsfestival.co.nz

The festival includes music performances, comedy, movie screening, kids' activities and artistic workshops during the day. An outdoor exhibition of sculpture is presented at the hall grounds.

REPCO REV UP WHANGĀREI

When: April 18
Where: Whangārei CBD
W: revupwhangarei.co.nz

Big V8 engines cough into life. Rumble, roar. Turbochargers whine. Superchargers whistle. This is a hot rod and custom car show. Cars up close, outdoors. One rock and roll band starts up. Then another. This is a real good old-fashion street party not to be missed.

CLYDE WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL EMAILED FOR TICKETS

WIN TICKETS

When: April 21
Where: Olivers Central Otago Lodge & Stables, Clyde
W: promotedunstan.org.nz

The festival is Central Otago's biggest celebration of locally produced wines, food produce, market, live music and children's entertainment.

ITM AUCKLAND SPRINT 400

When: April 24–26
Where: Hampton Downs Motorsport Park
W: hamptondowns.com

The Virgin Australia Supercars Championship will welcome a new circuit to the 2020 calendar, with Hampton Downs Motorsport Park confirmed as the host venue for this year's ITM Auckland Super400.

BAY OF ISLANDS COUNTRY ROCK EMAILED FOR TICKETS

WIN TICKETS

When: May 8–10
Where: Bay of Islands
W: country-rock.co.nz

One of the top tourist spots of the country. Each year the festival features more than 50 acts from New Zealand and Australia performing at multiple venues. Street music and line dancing are also popular features.

To WIN tickets Post or email subject to:

RVNZT Win Tickets, PO Box 220, Martinborough 5711.
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New Plymouth, 13 - 15 Mar '20

Wairarapa Wine Festival
Gladstone, 14 March '20

Havelock Mussel Festival
Havelock, 14 March '20

Silverpeaks Hoedown
Mosgiel, 20 - 22 March '20

Repco Beach Hop
Whangamata, 25 - 29 March '20

Kimbolton Sculpture Festival
4 April '20

Highlands Festival of Speed
Cromwell, 4 - 5 April '20

The Great NZ Muster
Te Kuiti, 4 April '20

Warbirds Over Wanaka
10 - 12 April '20

B.O.I Country Rock Festival
Paihia/Russell, 8 - 10 May '20

Tussock Country Festival
Gore, 23 - 31 May '20

NZ Gold Guitar Awards
Gore, 29 - 31 May '20

NZMCA Motorhome Show
Christchurch, 3 - 4 July '20

NZMCA Motorhome Show
Hamilton, 18 - 20 Sept '20

Rod Stewart Tour
Napier, 14 - 15 November '20

Covi Supershow

13 - 15 March, 2020

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT

mhftowns.com/events

Know of any events that have parking for motorhomes and caravans? Let us know by emailing:

safariandevents@nzmca.org.nz

Get amongst it and tackle a Kiwi trail

What better way to get up close and personal with New Zealand than to navigate its amazing variety of stunning landscapes via walking, cycling and hiking? The Motorhome Friendly website brings you a comprehensive listing of the country's most popular walking and cycling tracks which you can filter by difficulty, location, duration, distance and whether you can take your beloved pets. Your feedback can make this listing better so take some time to send us your reviews and photos. Check it out for yourself here: **www.mhftowns.com/trails**

Bannockburn to Cromwell Walkway

Runs along the western bank of Bannockburn Inlet

Total Length: 5km | Duration: 1 - 2 Hours

The track was built by the Cromwell and Districts Promotion Group and is managed by Council. This track has been extended to the Kawarau Gorge. The track is well maintained and of undulating terrain suitable for fit persons only.

Ashburton – Hakatere River Trail

The trail is an air of tranquillity and beauty

Total Length: 19km | Duration: 3 Hours Cycling

The Ashburton / Hakatere River Trail is an easy walk or cycle which follows the Ashburton River from Melrose Road to the sea at Hakatere. The trail is an air of tranquility and beauty once the township of Ashburton is left behind.

Waihaha and Waihora Tracks

Dominated by native bush & large outcrops of volcanic rock

Total Length: 13km | Duration: 3 - 4 Hours

Explore the remote bush, cliffs and waterfalls of the Western Bays of Lake Taupo. Normally accessible only by boat, these trails take you through a variety of landscapes with fantastic lookout points. These are shared-use tracks - respect each other!

Wairau Lagoons Walkway

Good bird watching to the rusting remains of the Waverley ship

Total Length: 6km | Duration: 3 Hours Walking

A feature of the walk is the Waverley wreck, an old rusting hulk abandoned in the lagoons. There are opportunities to see birdlife, and explore the unique salt marsh habitat. Due to the flat nature of the walkway, it is suitable for any level of fitness.

Have we missed a great kiwi trail on the Motorhome Friendly Towns website?

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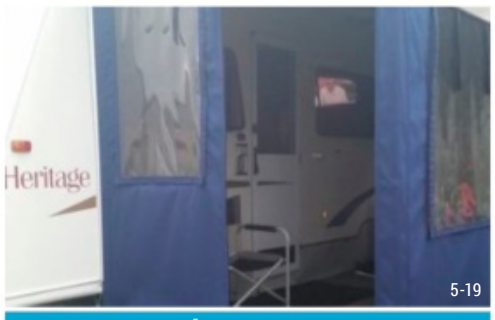

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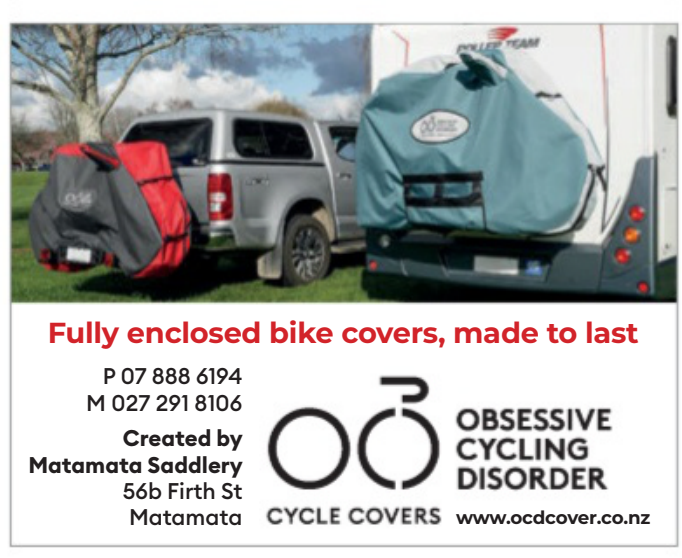

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Hot & scratchy

1

It seems like sooo woooofy long since I last wrote a column, that I had to go back through mama's photos to catch up on everything we have been up to.

Last time we were getting ready for Christmas. It was all go before that though with a quick trip down to Tauranga to see papa's grandson Finn, another little kid to train, woof woof, though he does have my mate Mac licking him into doggie mate shape. We visited lots of friends I hadn't seen for a long time – my first home was in Tauranga with my big mama Deb and little mama Shannon. One of the friends who visited lots was Aunty Leslie. She would take me on walkies when she could, which was so great as mama Deb was sick and I stayed at home to look after her and didn't go for many walkies with her. When mama Deb went away to the sky to live I got a new home with mama Robbie and papa Bruce, and I moved to Martinborough, where my different life started – walkies every day, and travelling around with them in a big motorhome all over the country, meeting hundreds of new friends a year. It was great to visit with Leslie and have cuddles and plays with her, and a bit of bacon off her plate too – woofy good times.

2

There were also lots of times when I was left at home before Christmas while mama and papa went shopping and visiting work people – that was a bit grrr grumbly grumble for me coz I do like to go everywhere with them. So a little run around at the Gypsy Fair was good fun, and a few friends to meet and sniff about with as we wandered around the tents. I always get taken to the markets as well, and that can drive me woofy crazy with the food smells and nibbles on the ground. The competition with the other dogs to get that bit of sausage is pretty fierce, in a leisurely relaxed doggy way, but we are all well behaved in the markets – that's why we are allowed to go.

Thankfully I got a haircut before Christmas. I was getting so hot with my long hairy ears and chest – I was nearly pulling the hair off myself it was so hot, and the pesky prickles and grasses getting stuck on me were sooo annoying. We went to a new groomer, and boy did I get the shaving of my life – don't think I have ever been so naked. Mama got quite a shock as well and made me stay in the shade all the time for the next week – no rolling in the sun for me – she said I might get burned. Fortunately it doesn't take long for my hair to grow, and it was super great with all the hot weather – in fact I need another hair cut now. I wonder if we will go back there or if the search will be on for another groomer.

I was right in my last column – Christmas meat was in very limited supply, but I did get some ham and chicken from da mama. My new toys are great fun, and I really enjoy taking

3

1. Christmas day was fun. I got new toys, and have managed to keep them all out for me to play with
2. There are always lots of friends to meet at a Gypsy Fair. We sometimes go to these around the country and I'm sure I see the same people at them
3. This little fella Finn is learning to be gentle – wish mama would get me a haircut before we see him next time

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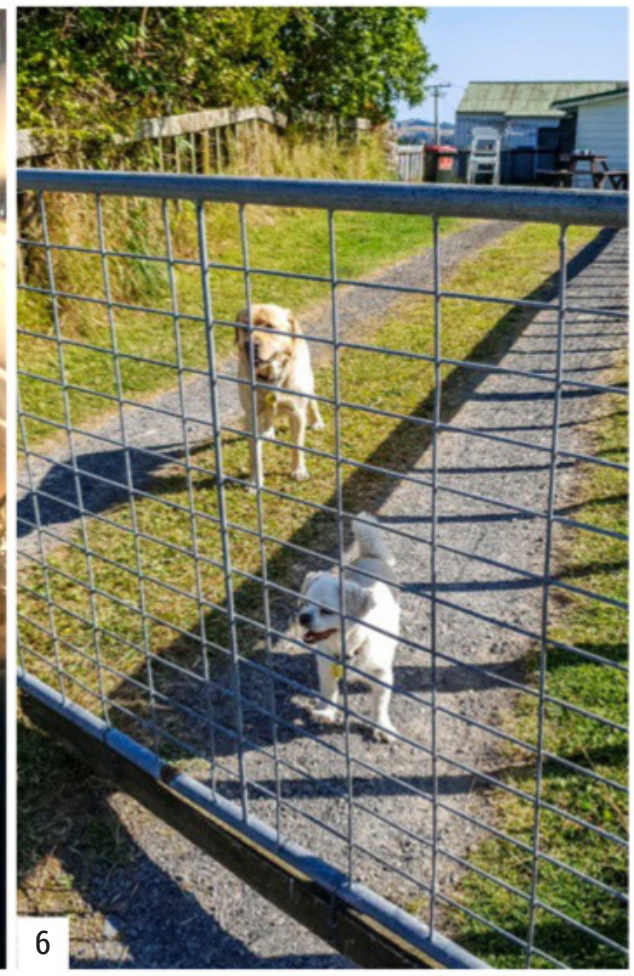

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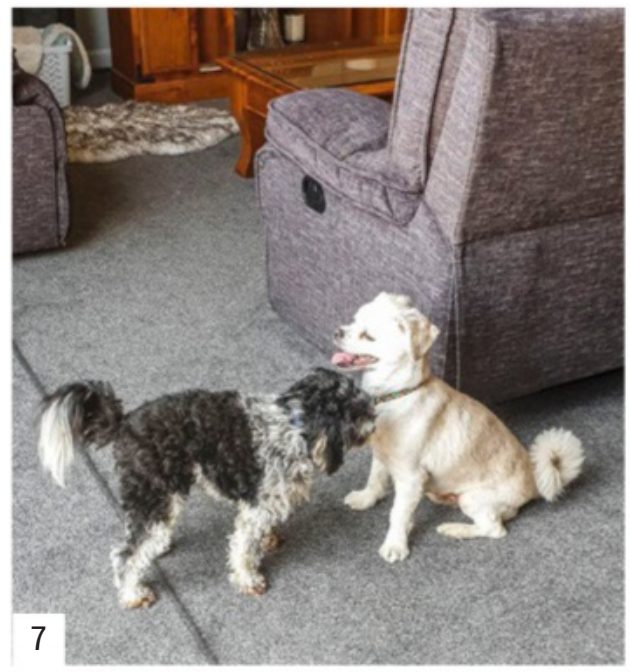
them outside together for a big throw around and chew. Mama tried to put the sausage Santa and bear away in the Christmas tree box the other week, but I watched her and got them back out for more fun.

We had another trip to Tauranga to visit baby Finn and his mama Maura, papa Ben and Mac. That's where I got into a bit of trouble – a first for me I admit. They all headed off in the car to have fun, and I wasn't happy about that at all, grrr grumble growl. Sure enough I was left locked up in the property with Mac, and yes there was woofy water, but they left me there – how dare they. So I decided maybe I would go find them. When they left they yelled out at the man across the road, and I thought maybe they are over at his house. I woofed to Mac about it and I managed to wriggle myself under the gate. He tried too but he was just too big. So off I went across the road to the house and into the garden, looking and sniffing for da mama and papa. Then I got yelled at, chased and unceremoniously picked up by this big man in gumboots. He told me off and got on the phone – I think I heard Ben's voice – oh oh woofy nooooo. He dropped me back over the gate, back to Mac, and big pieces of wood blocked off my escape hole. Woofy woof so sad.



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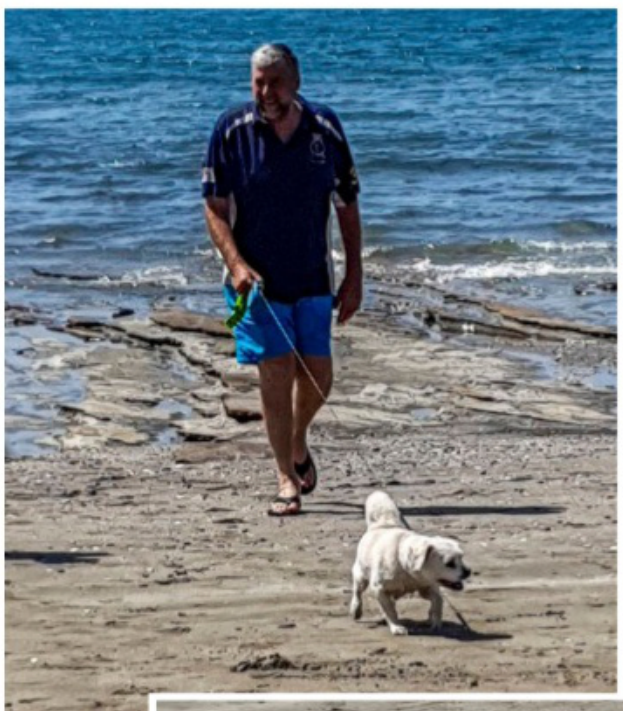
Not long after, mama and papa came back with the others and I got the biggest growling I have had since I first moved to Martinborough and chased the dog in the motorbike sidecar down the road. I was tied up to the motorhome for the rest of the day by myself, and both mama and papa growled at me so I realised they knew I had got out and were woofy woofy worried and disappointed in me. And I thought I was being clever, oops better not do that again. I made another mistake the other day, another first-time too. They left me in the car with the windows well open as they went to look at a house. I decided I wanted to have a look as well so jumped out the window and cruised on up. Boy did I get in trouble for that one. I don't get let off my harness attachment now when we park up. I used to be able to wander around inside the car while they were out of it, but now I am sat in my seat locked in – I can't be trusted I am told. Damn. You would think I could get away with one time in eight years, but woof woof they have totally cut me off at the knees with this trust issue. Wish I hadn't bothered. I hadn't ever done it before and don't know why I did it this time, but it's really got me in a pickle – sad woofie moan.



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After that trip mama and papa packed up and disappeared on holiday without me. They went away in a plane this time, so I stayed with Mike, little Charli and Ricky. It was great – I got walkies everyday with Charli. She is really being good with me now, throws me balls, combs me with my hair brush, even rubs my head – woof woof – finally she is coming around to me, but she has been hard work.

When they got back it was time to pack up and head away in the motorhome, and away we went to do the rounds visiting our friends – back up to see Loxi at her house in the bush and out to Army Bay to the beach to play with Marty and Barb. Papa made me get in the water at the beach – why woofy why does he always make me get in the cold water when he knows I don't like it. But it is fun really once I'm in, and rolling in the sand and shaking it off in the car later is a bit of fun. A few doggie mates to sniff with, and lots of people talking to me on the beach, though

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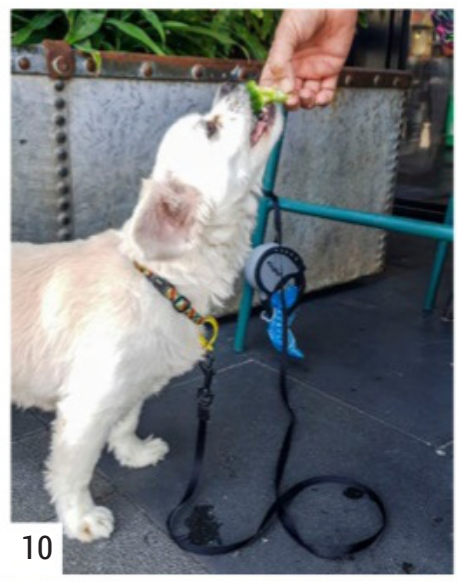
the sand can get pretty hot.

We have been to town lots of times for walkies on the waterfront coz this is a favourite for us all, starting at North Wynyard Wharf where Charli can play in the playground and water if she is with us, and we walk with lots of other people (and doggie friends) across the big bridge that scares the woof out of me still. Sometimes I can walk it all, but other times I have to whimper till papa picks me up – it's scary on bridges with water under them. The best part of these walkies is stopping in at food places. We have tried them all so lots of people know me now, and lots of them have doggie water bowls ready for me and other doggie mates out walkies. This time around, a new place got our attention, and though I do admit a bit of meat as a treat would be awesome when we are out, the greens are pretty damned good too. I just loved the broccoli papa was eating at Good George, a new place we stopped at. Mama and papa both loved the food here (and everyone who reads this magazine knows how hard papa is to please with this vegan lark he is on) so we will be back.

It has been so very hot lately that the footpaths and roads have been getting superhot, and I have to be really careful when we got out that I don't burn my feet. Mama and papa are aware of this and mama will often check the temperature before we head out somewhere on really hot days. She says "It's the four second rule Caspie – if I can't hold my hand on the ground for four seconds at least, it is too hot for your paws," then she and papa talk about doggie booties; I looked at them like … seriously, what the heck are they on about now. But I said that when they talked about the safety harness I have to wear in the car, and the car seat when they put that in, and look how that has turned out – fantastic.



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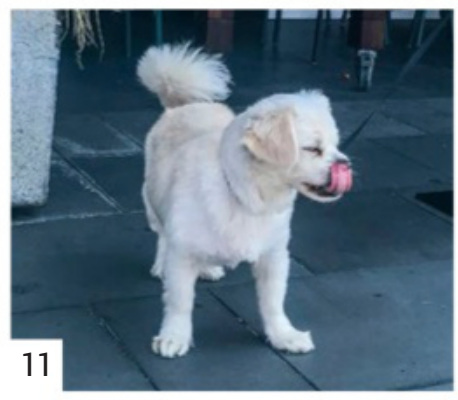

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Aside from those trips it looks like work has started again – mama is in her office, papa is in his, and they are on their computers all the time again, woof woof, so I wasn't surprised when mama sat me in front of the keyboard and said get on with it.

I have a vet visit due next month for my shots, hopefully another haircut isn't far away, and I hear an Aussie visitor is coming to stay for a while, so maybe that will mean more walkies for me and getting out and about in the motorhome with them as well – maybe – I will let you know next column. Remember to look after your doggie friends with water, shelter and hot walking surfaces, including sand, in this superhot summer weather we are having right now.

4. So nice to see Leslie – she was like my aunty when I was a puppy and I lived with my first mama in Tauranga
5. I love my car seat and harness, though I wish I hadn't jumped out that window, lesson learnt – you can teach old dogs new tricks
6. I wasn't happy when mama and papa left me with Mac. I managed to get under the gate and go looking for them, but that didn't end too well for me
7. Good fun playing with Loxi – mates are just different when you have shared a bed with them – we connect so well when we see each other
8. I wasn't keen at first to get in the water, but papa helped me in. I shook the water off me, then rolled in the sand – woofy good fun
9. Thanks to da mama – she checks the footpath to make sure it's not too hot for my little feet
10. Eating my greens at Good George in the viaduct – shame papa is vegan now though
11. Mmmm mmm that was a tasty lunch
12. Me and Peter Williams, so happy he reads my column

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Editorial Team

Robyn Dallimore
Editor - Writer - Publisher

Peter Williams
Writer

Now based near the beach at Mt Maunganui, Peter Williams has worked within the national media world for over 45 years. More recently, as Peter winds down his TV career he is looking forward to sharing more *RV-NZTODAY Lifestyle* ramblings as he reflects on some of the places around the country he's come to know and plans to test a few other towns and villages to see what lurks beneath their surfaces.

Keith Quinn
Writer

Although we all know Keith as a sport commentator for nearly 50 years, there's much more to him than sports. He collects memorabilia and books related to the Beatles, loves to travel to mystical places and has a secret addiction – ice cream! In addition, he loves writing. And with 16 books to his credit, penning a column for *RV-NZTODAY Lifestyle* is a great fit for him. Hopefully Keith will be spinning many more yarns as he travels around New Zealand and the world.

Allan Dick
Writer - Photographer

55 years a journalist, including 25 years as a radio talkback host and 15 years at Radio Pacific. Founder of *Driver* magazine, as well as *NZ Classic Driver* and *RV-NZTODAY Lifestyle*, Allan is passionate about living in New Zealand and has visited pretty much every corner of it. Dunedin raised, Allan left Auckland nine years ago for Oamaru, a move he's never regretted.

Matt Winter
Photographer - Writer

Matt is a full time outdoor photographer and writer who spends around nine months a year exploring places that tend to be by-passed by the majority of New Zealanders and tourists alike ... 'off the beaten track' you might say. Matt loves writing about these places so others can also enjoy them. Other interests include wildlife photography, fly fishing, tramping, free dive spearfishing, bow hunting and white water kayaking.

Jane Dove Juneau
Photographer - Writer

A professional photographer, Jane loves exploring and capturing images of New Zealand, so for Jane contributing to *RV-NZTODAY Lifestyle* is a perfect match. Our coastal wilderness and native forests are unique in the world and it is up to us to treasure and protect them.
janedovejuneau.com

Alistair Hughes
Writer - Illustrator

Fulfilling a life-time dream, we finally moved to Golden Bay, last year. I am a freelance writer and illustrator, and when not balancing a cat on my lap while at my keyboard, I'm usually out exploring my new home by foot, pedal and paddle.

Gary Patterson
Writer

Creating the free Great Rides App provides Gary with the perfect opportunity to cycle (+ recycle) all of the NZ Great Rides up and down the country. In addition there are lots of other day and multi-day trails that he is discovering. Luckily for *RV-NZTODAY Lifestyle readers*, Gary enjoys sharing his riding experiences.
greatridesapp.com

Allan Walton
Sub-Editor - Writer

RV-NZTODAY Lifestyle's second Allan has been writing about cars for almost three decades, and has kept busy editing national classic car magazines for over 20 of those years. As you'd expect, Allan enjoys driving – especially his Lotus Elise sports car – less expected, he is also an enthusiastic music lover and owns a ridiculously large collection of old-fashioned vinyl records.

Sheryl Bainbridge
Writer

Sheryl started writing for *RV-NZTODAY Lifestyle* because she is passionate about the cool people doing cool things in the far north. Since that time she has met so many awesome people from all over the country that it's been, and continues to be a real pleasure to talk to them and write about their achievements to share with readers – all while sitting at her laptop overlooking beautiful Coopers Beach.

Cameron Leggett
Photographer - Designer

Award winning magazine designer, Cameron 'Cam' Leggett left the big smoke of Auckland city and now enjoys the good life in New Plymouth with his French partner, Stephanie. Other than making each issue look superb, he also finds the time to pursue his passion for photography.
camleggettphoto.com

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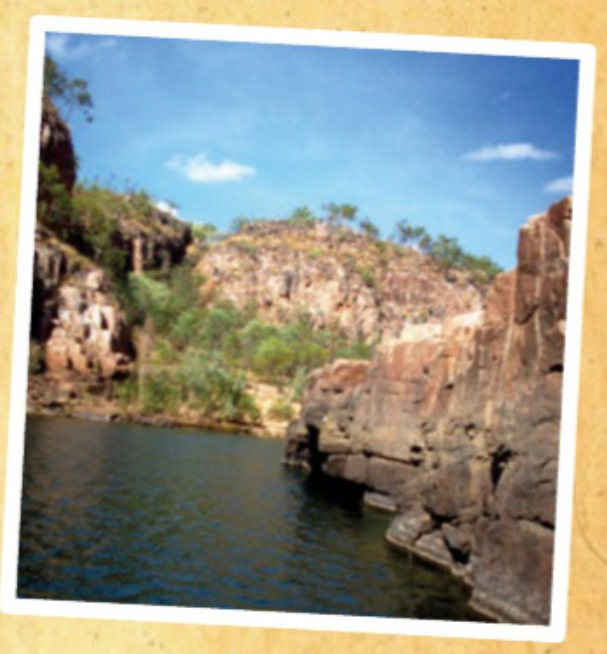

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