

Weekender



The Treetops experience

Treetops super lodge is all about nature and nurturing. Megan Singleton escapes to an estate of grace.

I HAD heard about it, read about it and even seen pictures, but nothing prepares you for the Treetops Lodge and Estate experience. This rustic super lodge is set in 1000ha of forest and has been designed with nature in mind. It is in the "super lodge" category for a reason, ranked in the top five of New Zealand's best lodges by discerning travellers.

The 20-minute drive from Rotorua eventually leads to wrought iron gates swinging from rough stone pillars, and the slim gravel driveway keeps secret the grandeur about to unfold.

If money was no object and you wanted a piece of paradise for people to enjoy — this is the lodge you would build. Created as the dream of Auckland property developer John Sax, the eco-lodge harmonises with its rugged surroundings. A stream that ran through the property now runs under the Great Room over giant rocks at the front entrance and around stepping stones at the back. If you're patient, you will even spot trout swimming under the bridge leading to the carved doors.

We were greeted by managers Scott Brown and Jackie Grant, who knew we were desperate for a coffee. Scott whipped up the flat whites while Jackie brought out a tray of ginger crunch and we sank into the plush furniture in front of the 9m quarry-rock fireplace, taking in the beauty.

No detail has been overlooked in creating this idyllic retreat. Much of the timber was felled and milled on site and is now back where it used to stand, as enormous beams, table tops and elegant carvings. The heated floor is New Zealand fossil stone and wool carpet. The library, day room and board room have different decors and stud heights and the games and trophy room makes a full-sized billiard table look positively tiny.



SWEET DREAMS: A peek inside a Lodge bedroom at Rotorua's Treetops Lodge and Estate.

John has planted 70,000 trees around the property in his quest to nurture the wildlife back into the area. More than 100km of walkways meander through the estate, past several streams and lakes, including a magnificent waterfall. Trout has been introduced and guests can try their skill at fly fishing (or join a guide for a sure thing) then bring it back to be prepared by the chef.

Even water buffalo have made Treetops their

home after being brought to New Zealand by Massey University on an unsuccessful breeding programme. They now wander about with the deer and wild sheep. Pheasants whizz around the paddocks and peacocks caw in the hills. The only things not welcome are possums.

We were shown to our villa, just far enough from the main building for privacy, but close enough to walk along the floodlit paths or take an electric golf

cart if we weren't in the mood. The fire was set and the spa bath and luscious white robes beckoned before meeting our hosts for pre-dinner cocktails and canapés.

Warwick Brown, of Cin Cin and Mikano fame, is the new consulting chef currently designing a new menu. In the meantime Scott cooked a fabulous fillet steak with hollandaise sauce and fresh summer veges, matched with a mellow glass of red, followed by creme brulee in front of the fire.

A deer wandered on to the front lawn and ignored us as we moved in for a better look. Later we walked to the glow-worm caves in the moonlight.

For this price you expect extra touches and we were not disappointed. A freshly baked apple and cinnamon loaf was delivered to our rooms in the afternoon, handmade chocolates and a decanter of spring water from their streams were beside the bed at night.

The next morning, just the sound of the waterfall cascading at the front door and the call of native birds broke the stillness. We drank orange juice, squeezed as we chatted with Scott and Jackie, before opting for the continental breakfast with fresh pastries — and a few lattes.

■ **ON THE WEB**
www.treetops.co.nz

■ **Megan Singleton was a guest of Treetops Lodge.**

■ **Special offer for New Zealand Herald readers:** pay for two nights and enjoy a third night at Treetops Lodge free. Book before December 30 this year. The holiday must be taken by October 1 next year — offer subject to availability.

TRAVEL ACCOMMODATION LISTINGS

Bay of Islands
AAA "The Retreat" at Paika
See our quiet private scenic coastal peninsula but only minutes from ocean centre. 6 pavilions 1 and 2 bedroom units all with panoramic sea views.
Can enjoy from 11.00pm till 11.00pm and enjoy local culture or relax on your own balcony, watch the day go by.
Reservations: 0800 222 407 or 09 407 9282
PHONE JAN & KEVIN 09 407 9282 email: retreat@paika.co.nz or refer www.paika.co.nz

The Duke of Marlborough Hotel
History & Romance
The largest waterfront experience in the Bay of Islands.
Dinner, Bed and Breakfast Package from \$125 per person.
Phone: 09 407 9282 Fax: 09 407 9282
email: info@theduke.co.nz

Kerikeri
Kerikeri Homestead Motel
"Come and discover the beautiful Bay of Islands"
KERIKERI HOMESTEAD MOTEL can offer you quality 4-star accommodation set in 2 acres of parklike grounds, complete with huge swimming pool and a spa pool, panoramic rural and golf course views, very quiet, close to all shopping, restaurants and bars.
Quote this ad @ review for continental breakfast.
FREE Phone 0800 222 407 website: www.kerikerihomesteadmotel.co.nz

Doubtless Bay
Taipua Bay Beach Resort
"Beautiful Accommodation"
STAY THREE NIGHTS AND PAY FOR TWO
28 October to 24 December 2002
THREE NIGHTS Studio, 2/200/330 Apartments \$370-410
Subject to special conditions - includes GST
Phone: 09 406 9551 Email: taipua@taipubay.co.nz
Fax: 09 406 9551 Website: www.taipubay.co.nz

Hamilton
Tudor Motor Lodge
Very quiet - close to city with parking and swimming pool.
FREE CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
BOOK NOW FREEPHONE 0800 888677
Email: info@tudor.co.nz

Coromandel
Slipper Island Resort
Private Island Paradise
1 or 2 bedroom private dhaka on main slip or boat exclusive use of our lodge 121. Aromatic fishing, diving, bushwalking or just plain relaxing. White sand and crystal clear sea. All inclusive. Arrangements.
Phone: 0800 825 940 or 09 208 869
Email: slipper@slipper.co.nz www.slipper.co.nz

Mount Maunganui
Calais Mount Resort
Lovers Apartment at the foot of the Mount
35 beautifully appointed units ranging from studios to 3 bedrooms, day, digital, secure underground parking & on-site restaurant & bar offering noon service. Each apartment with sunny outdoor area.
Menus to beaches and scenic walks.
Reservations: 0800 422 524 website: www.calais.co.nz

Rotorua
Alpin Motel
Treat yourself in a bank and relax with plunge pool, queen or king size beds, outdoor heated swimming pool, sauna and steamroom. Earn Flybys Points.
Special Rate \$90.00 double if you quote this advert. (includes breakfast)
FREEPHONE: 0800 100 414 FAX: 07 347 6995
Email: alpin@alpin.co.nz www.alpin.co.nz

Midway Motel
Relax in your own hot pool and sit on top of you. Stay 3 nights, get 1st night at 1/2 price on any stay longer than 3 nights.
PHONE: 07 347 7999
293 Tamara Street, Rotorua
Email: reservations@midwaymotel.co.nz
www.midwaymotel.co.nz

Heywood's Motor Lodge
Enjoy a relaxing stay at Heywood's Motor Lodge by swimming in our large heated swimming pool or spa. Stay 2 nights or more for only \$75.00 per night (includes breakfast) continental breakfast, kitchen units available. We are an easy stroll to shopping, restaurants and handy to bus services. (Offer includes Labour Weekend)
Book now quote guarantee. Phone: 0800 210 469
Email: reservations@heywood.co.nz website: www.heywood.co.nz

"Shoal Water" at Sandspit
45 Minutes North of Auckland
Situated on the waterfront with breath-taking views of the tidal movements & moored boats at Sandspit. Two or three bedrooms with complete private studios in a peaceful setting. Viewings, cafe, art gallery, beaches, fishing, visit Kawau Island or just relax.
\$120 per night for 2 people B&B - continental breakfast. (not suitable for children)
Phone: 09 422 9166
Email: shoalwater@vsn.co.nz www.shoalwater.co.nz

Taranaki - New Plymouth
Grand Central Hotel & Function Centre
Taranaki's only 4 Star Hotel. Located in the heart of New Plymouth City.
Fantastic Weekend and Holiday Packages.
City & sea views, En-Suite Spa, GCR Cafe and Bar, Gymnasium, Sky TV, Free parking.
Phone: 0800 674 726
www.grandcentralinternational.com

Taupo
Fourwinds Bed & Breakfast
Situated in a quiet suburban area with a view over Lake Taupo and the mountains, this B&B offers guests a quiet, relaxing holiday. Off street parking available, short walk to shops & restaurants. Transfers from airport or coach terminal. \$110 per night, includes cooked or continental breakfast.
PHONE: 0800 76 53 56 Email: b&b@fourwinds.co.nz

Tui Oaks Motor Inn - Absolute Lake Front
Picturesque views, Bar & Restaurant, Large Hot Pool & Spa Pool, Conference Rooms 40 PAX, Off Street Parking, Room Service, Sky TV, Tea & Coffee facilities, Kitchen Units.
From \$79.00 - 2/200/330 Apartments \$370-410
2 FOR 1 BUFFET DINNER - on ONION
PRIVATE FUNCTIONS - GROUP PRICES
0800 TUI OAKS website: www.tui.co.nz

Matakana
Just north of Auckland
Kick off your shoes and relax in style at 775 B & B
"No other ordinary Bed and Breakfast"
Spectacular views over Otuaheke Bay.
www.775.co.nz email: giles@775.co.nz
Tel: 09 422 9127

Waiheke
Onetangi Beach Apartments & Conference Centre
Right opposite Onetangi Beach boasting 25 self-contained courtyard and beachfront Ocean-view studios, one & two bedroom units, fully equipped spa & sauna.
Great for corporate conferences and/or getaways.
Enquire about our Special Package
Phone: 09 712 7951
Website: www.waiheke.co.nz

Wellington
The Richmond Guest House B&B
Situated just 5 mins walk to the city and 10 mins to the new Te Papa Museum of NZ. Clean, comfortable, friendly accommodation.
\$50 single ensuite, \$65 double or twin ensuite, \$80 triple.
100% discount if you quote this advert.
116 Brougham St, Wellington
Phone: 04 385 8529

Napier
For Your Holiday In Napier You Only Need One Address.
www.napieraccommodation.com

To advertise in the accommodation listings contact John Armitage
Phone: (09) 373 6018
Mobile: 021 622 882
john.armitage@nzherald.co.nz

Case notes



Treetops Estate and Lodge is at 351 Keaora Rd, RD1, Horohoro, Rotorua. Ph 07 333 2055, fax 07 333 2055, email info@treetops.co.nz. Book direct or through your travel agent.

Accommodation
Tariff from October to April next year includes breakfast (continental or Treetops Big Breakfast), pre-dinner cocktails and a four-course meal as well as selected activities.
Four luxury suites in the main lodge can be configured for one party with own living room and fireplace. From \$915 a person.
Eight cottages in New Zealand fossil stone and wool carpet. The library, day room and board room have different decors and stud heights and the games and trophy room makes a full-sized billiard table look positively tiny.
Tariff is lower between March and September.

Getting there
By car: From Rotorua take main Rotorua/Taupo road (Highway 5). Turn right at first main intersection (Highway 30) to Te Kuiti/Tokoroa. Proceed 10km and turn right into Apirana Rd. The road forks slightly after

1km. Take the gravel Keaora Rd 3.3km to the end. Drive down tree-lined driveway and press intercom buzzer at second set of gates.
By air: Approx 20km from Rotorua Airport, transfers can be arranged. Treetops has a helipad for those with a thousand dollars or so to spend for the ultimate arrival statement. Contact NZ Paradise Holidays for helicopter flight prices, ph 0800 104 304.

What to do
Hiking, jogging, nature walks, specially prepared picnics, guided or unguided trout fishing, bird watching, mountain biking, kayaking, archery, clay bird shoot-out, horse trekking, four-wheel driving.
Some charges may apply.

Access
Wheelchairs have easy access to the luxury suites which are in the same building as the lodge. Special bathroom facilities are not available.

Smoking
Not permitted in the villas. Allowed in the Great Room beside the fire or outside.

Fly to the UK or Europe from only \$1899*

Book and deposit your 10 day or longer 2003 Globus tour of Britain or Europe by 15 December 2002, and fly to UK or Europe from only \$1899* return

PLUS Receive up to \$400* per couple Earlybird discount off your Globus tour

Hurry - Limited Offer!
Tel 0508 108 844 or visit www.travelonline.co.nz

Special Conditions Apply
*Based on economy airfare on Thal International Airways from Auckland, Christchurch or Wellington in Jan, Feb, Mar, Oct or Nov 2003 *Globus Earlybird discount quoted applies to tours of 16 days or more *Offer subject to availability and seat capacity may be withdrawn at any time without prior notification. *Airport departure taxes and levies not included.

Travelonline.co.nz

HOLLYFORD TRACK

"the greatest mountains to sea guided walk in the world"

KIWI SPECIAL
See the best of your country at a special 'kiwi' price.

4-Day Tour UP TO 50% off
from *\$835pp only

*Available selected dates only. Price varies depending on departure date. (Special conditions apply)

Ph: 0800 832 226
Email: info@hollyfordtrack.co.nz
www.hollyfordtrack.co.nz

HOLLYFORD TRACK
Fiordland National Park - New Zealand

HURRY, dates filling FAST

CALL NOW!

Heading to the UK on a working holiday?

Need a UK bank account?
Need a job?

Contact us today and set yourself up before you leave home!

0800 22 43 22
www.1stcontact.co.uk/nz
nzoffice@1stcontact.co.uk

1st Contact
We've got it covered

Auckland • London • Melbourne • Cape Town

News Hotline

Ring our reporters on 0800 HERALD 0800 437 253

The New Zealand Herald
THERE'S A LOT MORE TO IT
©2002 NZ Herald