

Home Comforts

From a traditional bach to a luxury villa, Lucy Harrison looks into New Zealand's newest style of accommodation which encourages visitors to take their time and enjoy the country from the comfort of their own 'home'.



The Bay of Islands



Gondwana bach, Ohakune



Hawkes Bay vines

When embarking on a trip to the other side of the world, it may be comforting to know that you can opt to spend some or all of your time in a fully self-contained, home-away-from-home, a place where you can unpack completely, choose your own pace, and really unwind.

New Zealand as a destination has recognised the need for top quality holiday homes, and springing up throughout the country we are now finding luxury villas, contemporary apartments, impressive country homes and private retreats, as well as a wide variety of simple family baches (the traditional Kiwi holiday home). Many of these are only used by Kiwi families themselves for just a few weeks of the year, yet they enjoy prime locations and all the facilities you could wish for on a relaxing break. These fully equipped properties are particularly popular with overseas visitors during the sunny Christmas period or for special occasions, letting you relax and enjoy a family celebration in your own space.

For most visitors to New Zealand the scenery is the major draw, and many of these villas and apartments enjoy unique settings offering a variety of different experiences. Secure in the knowledge that you can return 'home' at the end of each day you are then free to explore further afield.

In Queenstown we work with a new concierge service, whose collection includes some of the best rural villas and central apartments, along with properties in the neighbouring lakeside town of Wanaka and other scenic locations in Central Otago. There is little to beat stepping out onto your own private balcony to be greeted by the panorama of Lake Wakatipu, set against the majestic Remarkables mountain range.

New Zealand is also well known for its wines, and the best place to sample a crisp sauvignon blanc or full bodied pinot noir is amongst the vineyards where the grapes are grown. Throughout the major winegrowing areas we have found a variety of small apartments, character cottages, contemporary villas and luxury retreats. Whichever style of accommodation suits your requirements, a settled base will allow you to spend days exploring the region and gathering wines, cheeses and local produce to sample, which you can then enjoy on your own terrace or in front of your own open fire. A superb selection of elegant hosted or self-contained villas can be found nestled in the North Island wine-producing region of Hawkes Bay. All are very different in style, but all provide a superb quality of accommodation: even those with added luxuries such as swimming pools and tennis courts still retain the homely feel that makes a longer stay so rewarding.



Southerly, Queenstown



Queenstown

For the ultimate in luxury with a sea view there's little to match the five modern, individually designed villas which make up Eagle's Nest. This retreat has been discreetly developed atop its own private ridgeline overlooking the beautiful Bay of Islands and within minutes of historic Russell. Each villa is a work of modern architecture and features a private heated lap pool or spa. On hand is your own private chef, and for those wanting to explore in style a helicopter is available for charter.

Many people like the idea of staying in just a few locations, but for those planning on an extended stay there are plenty of options that don't come with a huge price tag. Often the most reasonable is a stay in a real Kiwi bach – the simple, traditional holiday homes which many families own, and to which they escape at any given opportunity. We can select a suitable size of property and location to meet your needs, and we arrange for you to be met by the bach manager who will show you around the house and can assist you in the planning of your time in the area.

It is extremely easy to tailor an itinerary around a longer stay in any of this type of accommodation, or to mix time in self-catering private holiday homes with the more traditional B&B or hotel stays. This gives you the ultimate in flexibility as well as a wider variety of experiences, allowing you to mix with your hosts and other guests at some points in your journey, and to be more private and independent at others.

Whatever your budget or preferred style of accommodation, a series of villa and bach stays around the country is a great way of exploring New Zealand at your own pace. Spending several days in a variety of key parts of the country will give you the opportunity to fully unpack, relax and enjoy the comforts of home, while still giving you the scope to explore everything New Zealand has to offer.

Lucy Harrison
New Zealand Specialist



Kohara Lodge, Queenstown



Treetops Pheasant House

FACT FILE

A three week trip to New Zealand including a week in bach-style accommodation starts from £3,800 per person, with the same trip but including a week in a luxury villa starting from £4,350 per person, including flights. For more information about how any of these properties can be incorporated into a tailor-made New Zealand trip please call our specialists on 01993 838 820.



www.audleytravel.com/newzealand