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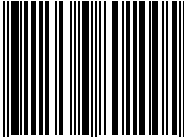
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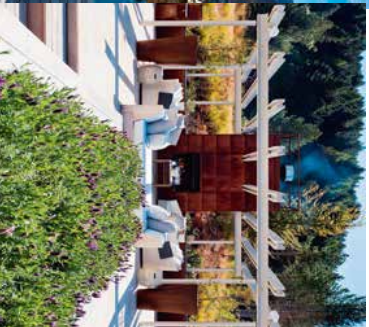
Lakeside luxe

New Zealand's Matakauri Lodge sets the luxury bar as high as the mountain range it looks out upon.
By Mark Sariban.

Looking out across Lake Wakatipu to the Remarkables mountain range from Matakauri Lodge, just outside Queenstown.



The infinity pool at Matakauri Lodge's spa and gym. **Right:** an outdoor fireplace outside the main lodge building. **Below:** a window-side day bed in one of the suites.



Waking up in a heavenly soft bed at Matakauri Lodge, it's easy to momentarily lose your bearings. From beyond the plantation shutters of the bedroom comes the unmistakable sound of waves making landfall. It sounds for all money like you're in a beach house, not in a suite at an ultra-luxurious lodge on New Zealand's South Island around 200 kilometres from the ocean. The waves are real, though: a constant wind pushes the glacial waters of Lake Wakatipu onto the pebbly shoreline in a steady rhythm.

The creation of the US-based Robertson family, who also own Kauri Cliffs and the Farm at Cape Kidnappers on North Island, Matakauri Lodge is a seven-minute drive from the heart of Queenstown but it could be in the middle of nowhere, with the lodge and guest suites all looking out across the vast lake to the forbiddingly steep slopes of Cecil Peak. Aside from the *Tiaki*-era tourist steamer silently trailing ink-black smoke as it passes in the middle distance several times a day, you have complete privacy.

There's a wall-mounted TV discreetly hidden behind a framed photograph in the living room, but you'd be mad to turn it on when you can recline on the day bed beneath picture windows and gaze at the 180-degree views of the Remarkables mountain range. (The huge bathtub in the expansive bathroom stands below another large window looking out across the lake – a spectacle you can quite literally soak in.)

It really is all about the view here: from a divine breakfast in the lodge dining room, the sun slowly lighting up the hills and the Owner's Cottage (home to Prince William and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge during their visit here in 2014) to the pre-dusk light show as low-lying clouds cast shadows across the mid-sections of the Remarkables while the peaks sparkle in bright sunshine.

The room rate includes breakfast, the mini bar, pre-dinner drinks and seasonal diners prepared by the resident chef, so it might be tempting to cosy up in your room during your stay, but there's plenty to do and see in the area – see opposite. There's also a short walk to nearby Wilson Bay and longer hikes around the lake, and the concierge can arrange all sorts of expeditions from river-rafting and canyoning to fly fishing and skiing, depending on the season. And for a bird's eye view of the spectacular scenery, South Island has in spades, the concierge can arrange for a helicopter to come pick you up from a nearby field – or “heli-paddock”, as locals like to say – to save you the drive to Queenstown airport. It's one of the many perks of staying here – Matakauri Lodge guests are also offered priority bookings at the best restaurants in town, such as Borswana Butchery and the well-rated Rara Dining. *Go to www.matakaurilodge.com. Air New Zealand flies direct to Queenstown from Sydney and Melbourne; www.airnewzealand.com.au.*

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A roller-coaster run at Coronet Peak

TAKE TO THE SKIES

Founded by Louisa “Choppy” Patterson more than 30 years ago, Matakauri partner Over the Top offers scenic flights as well as a “picnic on a Peak” package where you can be dropped off on a mountain for a picnic lunch in seclusion. Go to www.flynz.co.nz.



HIT THE WINE TRAIL

The Central Otago wine region is an easy day trip from Queenstown. A guide/chauffeur from Matakauri partner Black ZQN (www.blackzqn.com) can take you on tour to sample some excellent pinot noir, riesling and sauvignon blanc. Black's drivers are locals connected to the community, so you may well end up being introduced to the owner or the winemaker when you pop in to a vineyard cellar door.

EXPRESS SERVICE
The Coronet Peak ski field (www.nzski.com) is only 25 minutes from Queenstown. There are 280 hectares of terrain, including plenty of challenging runs, with the longest a touch under 2.5 kilometres long. Snowbiz offers Matakauri guests a ski concierge service, coming out to the lodge to fit boots and equipment before you hit the slopes. Go to www.snowbiz.co.nz.



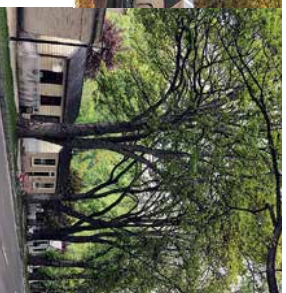
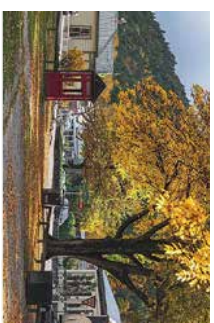
LOUIS VUITTON S/S 17

Further afield

Take advantage of Matakauri Lodge's partner offerings or simply strike out on your own to explore the Queenstown region.

FIRST RESORT

At Louis Vuitton's “mountain resort” store, which opened in the new Skyline building in October, you can inspect the house's fine leather goods seated at a long wooden table made from a piece of Kauri pine that's approximately 42,000 years old – if you can tear your eyes away from the views of the lake through the floor-to-ceiling windows, that is. 9–11 Marine Parade, Queenstown.



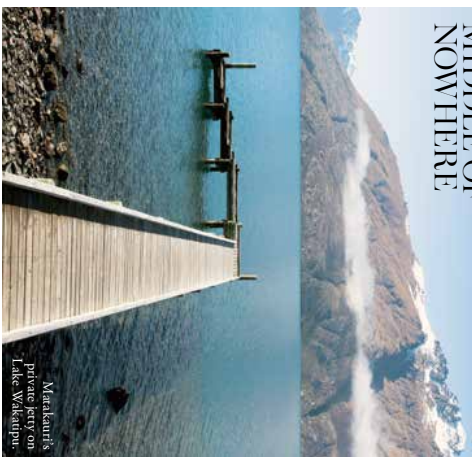
ARROWTOWN AFTERNOON

Picturesque Arrowtown (above) was established during the 1860s gold rush, with compact weatherboard cottages and civic buildings from that era still standing. Check out the Nadene Milne Gallery at 1 Buckingham Street before heading to Chop Shop Food Merchants at 44 Buckingham Street for lunch.



The tasting room at Central Otago's Pies & Wine.

THE LODGE IS MINUTES FROM QUEENSTOWN BUT IT COULD BE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE



Matakauri's private stay on Lake Wakatipu.