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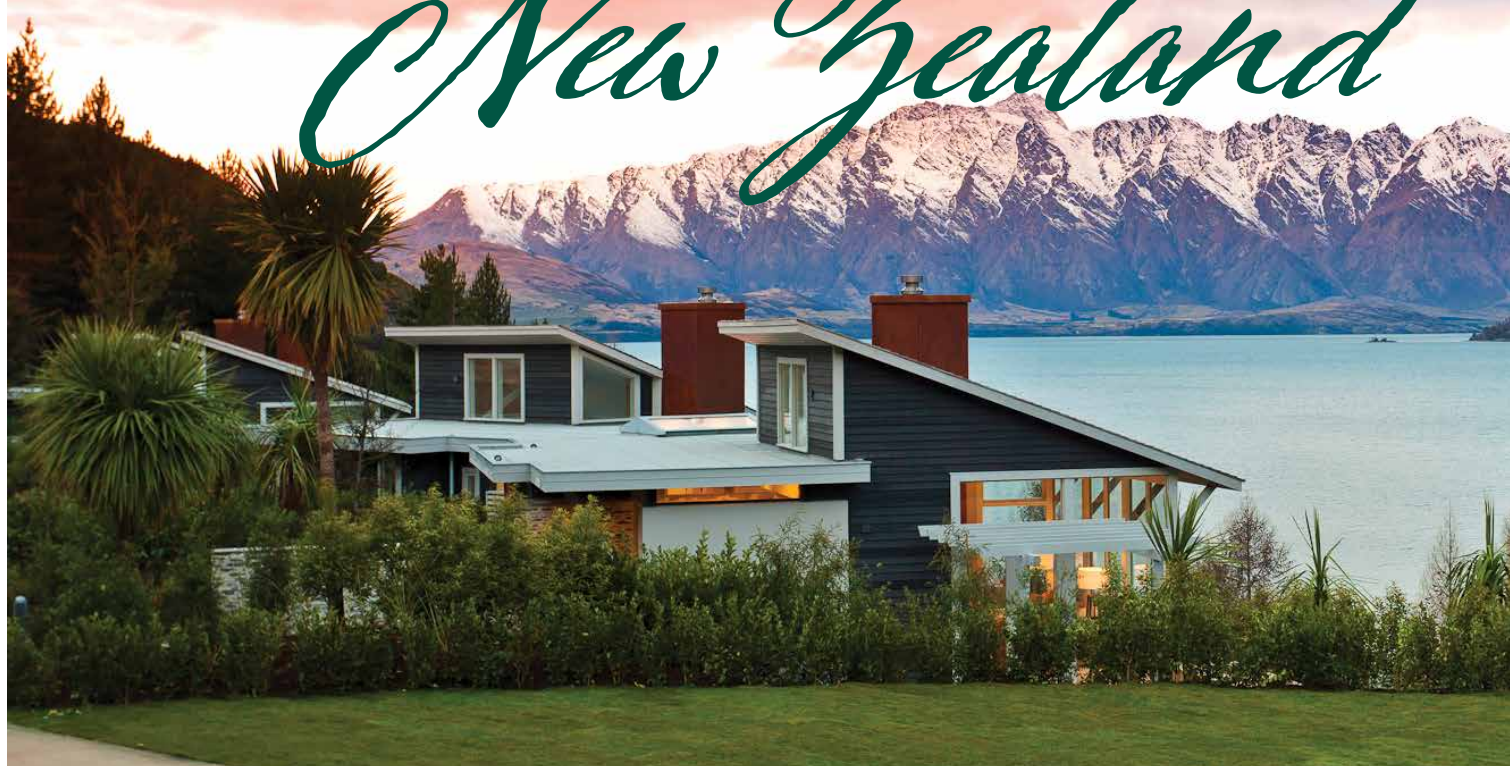
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Romantic Stops in

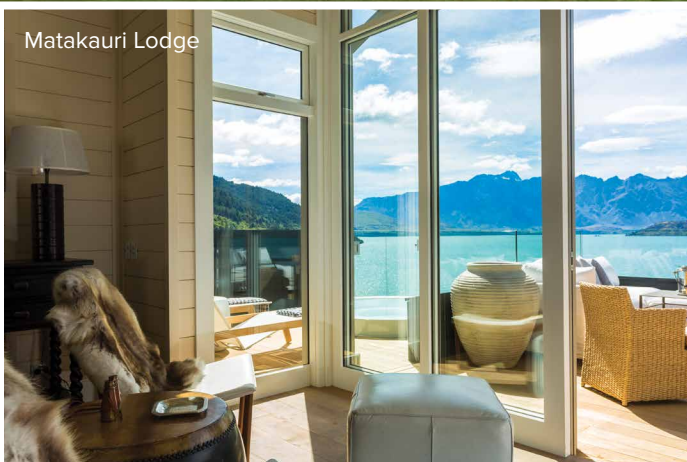
New Zealand



The Farm at Cape Kidnappers



Matakauri Lodge



The Farm at Cape Kidnappers

Photos courtesy of (top to bottom, left to right): Matakauri Lodge (1st & 3rd) & The Farm at Cape Kidnappers (2nd & 4th)



WORDS BY SUSAN MOYNIHAN

New Zealand is slightly larger than Oregon, but don't let its small size fool you. The narrow, two-island nation spans 990 miles in length with a landscape comprising of black sand beaches, dense rainforest, alpine slopes and geothermal pools – meaning there's a lot to see! The superb Air New Zealand makes it easy to get around, but you still need to plan wisely. I suggest three stops, with a minimum of three nights in each, for a trip that is exciting and relaxing. Here's one way to approach it.

Start In Northland

Located on the northern tip of North Island is the Bay of Islands, a subtropical region with 140 isles. The region is loved for all things water: beaching, kayaking, surfing and especially sailing. It's also New Zealand's warmest region and a great place to start your trip.

Where to Stay: The Lodge at Kauri Cliffs

This luxury lodge is set on a working ranch that abuts Matauri Bay. The 22 stand-alone cottages offer a preppy take on country life with in-room amenities like gas fireplaces, soaking tubs and ocean-view terraces. The oceanfront golf course draws players from around the world, including the PGA Challenge Tour. Dinner is a lively affair as guests gather to chat over cocktails on the veranda before indulging in a gourmet meal of seasonal fare, accompanied by a great selection of local wines.

Signature Experience

Kauri Cliffs has three on-site beaches. Enjoy a stroll and shelling at aptly named Pink Beach, or get some alone time at the tiny, cliff-shaded Takou. Waiaua is the resort's largest beach and a great spot for swimming, kayaking, snorkeling and beach picnics.

Great Day Trip

Charter a yacht and sail through the islands, taking in playful bottlenose dolphins and orcas along the way. Many charters depart from the quaint town of Russell, whose tidy downtown recalls its origins as a 19th-century whaling port.

Next: Hit Wine Country

New Zealand has multiple wine-growing regions, mostly centered in the middle of the country. Located on the southeast coast of North Island, Hawke's Bay is the oldest, with 72 wineries and counting. This coastal community has a mellow beach vibe and rolling landscape ideal

for hiking or biking. The town of Napier has the largest collection of Art Deco architecture outside of Miami's South Beach, adding to the charm.

Where to Stay: Farm at Cape Kidnappers

Nature meets luxury in the best possible way at this 22-suite lodge, which spans 6,000 acres of dramatic beachfront, coastal cliffs and a top-notch golf course with ocean views. Get an overview with a ride through the property, cruising up and down steep cliffs past resident herds of sheep and cattle. Back at the chic Craftsman-style lodge, suites come with plush king beds and soaking tubs with epic views. Dining is an event at the glass-walled atrium and the heated pool is an ideal spot to retreat after a day of activity.

Signature Experience

Cape Kidnappers is an active supporter of national efforts to repopulate the endangered kiwi bird. Join a tracker as they do their day job, walking the grounds to locate the geotagged birds that nest around the property. If you're lucky, the tracker will catch and hold one so you can get an up-close introduction to the fluffy bird before it's re-released back into its grassy den.

Great Day Trip

Biking and wine-tasting go hand-in-hand, and the flat topography and great bike trails make this the ideal place to pedal. Wineries vary in terms of style, from chic Black Barn (with stellar dining and a store that will make you wish you brought an extra suitcase) to Mission Estate, the region's oldest winery with an on-site museum devoted to wine making.

End In Queenstown

You can't go to New Zealand and miss Queenstown. This mountain town is the adventure capital of the country, the birthplace of bungy jumping and a popular ski resort in the winter. It's picture perfect, located on a lake surrounded by alpine mountains. It's also a lively, walkable town with great restaurants and nightlife, reflecting the melting pot of nationalities who live and play here.

Where to Stay: Matakauri

Super romantic and intimate, Matakauri is equal parts remote (set on the edge of Lake Wakatipu) and convenient (just a 10-minute taxi ride into town). The 12-room lodge offers stand-alone suites with private terraces, gas fireplaces and walls of windows.

Matakauri Lodge

The Lodge at Kauri Cliffs

Photo courtesy of: The Lodge at Kauri Cliffs

The lodge's meals-included pricing includes dinner on-site as well as the option to visit Rata in town, run by kiwi celeb chef, Josh Emmett.

Signature Experience

New Zealand puts an adventurous spin on every sport, even golf! Over the Top Helicopters will pick you up in a meadow and fly you over Lake Wakatipu to the top of a mountain ridge, where you'll land and hit golf balls off their private putting green. Champagne and snacks finish off the unforgettable venture.

Great Day Trip

Queenstown is a gateway to Milford Sound, the highlight of Fjordland National Park. There are multiple ways to see the region; our fave is to take a seaplane ride over the glacier, land on the sound and enjoy another perspective with a boat cruise into the canyon.

Have even more time? Check out destinationido.com/newzealand for more ideas on what to do on a dream New Zealand honeymoon. **ido!**



Matakauri Lodge



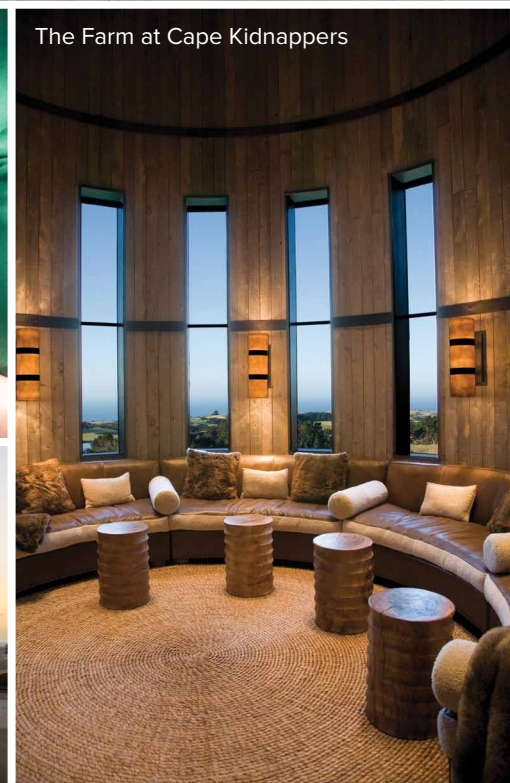
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