

SPECIAL TRAVEL FEATURE

MINDFOOD

A QUEENSTOWN AUTUMN JOURNEY



“Each season is markedly different – the summer, the autumn, the winter, the spring – they all have different shades of colours, hues and moods.”

– Christopher Keys, Gibbston Valley winery



“To just be within this spectacular landscape and breathe in all that absolute wonder is very special indeed.”

– Michael McHugh, MiNDFOOD



WAY UP ON THE MOUNTAIN
For the making of our Autumn guide to Queenstown we ventured to the top of The Remarkables for a photo shoot.

WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF QUEENSTOWN

The best thing of travelling throughout different parts of Queenstown is the journey itself. As we met different locals who took us to their corner of the world so we could photograph and interview them, it was the landscapes and unique locations that took over and gave us that extraordinary Queenstown feeling, that only this part of the world can offer. In some ways it's difficult to put into words the exact feeling you get when you spend time within this landscape, especially in autumn when red and golden foliage dominates the surrounding hills.

You cannot help but get swept up in the spectacular nature of it all. Sitting on top of The Remarkables at sunset, and back again for an early morning photo where we sat higher than the clouds, we looked down across valleys and lakes, watched planes land and take off at the airport and witnessed Queenstown itself twinkling below. Locals have a resilience and love for nature, and are quick to point out a mountain they have climbed, a bike race they have conquered or a great coffee or the latest lunch spot to try.

I drove along Lake Wakatipu, one of the country's most beautiful drives, to Glenorchy where Debbi Brainerd and a talented team of locals are creating a sustainable camp (page 25). It's an initiative that I am sure over time others will follow and try to replicate in other small towns across New Zealand. To step out and breathe in that fresh air and see what creative locals have built and added to the landscape is exciting.

Driving back into Queenstown I stopped and went for a swim in the lake, and as I stood and looked up at the surrounding mountain range I felt so calm and happy that I was present in that very moment. I had spent a day with truly passionate people with a vision and the drive to create something unique to share with others. It made me realise that the day I had driving through the countryside, meeting real characters along the way and sharing wonderful experiences was what life is really all about.

To just be within this spectacular landscape and breathe in all that absolute wonder is very special indeed. Sometimes to just stop and appreciate the day you have had and take time to reflect is all part of the journey itself. Queenstown for me is the entry point in reconnecting and being part of something much bigger than what I think or feel. It's a journey through a landscape that is forever changing, meeting the locals and listening to their stories about their lives, eating great food, drinking beautiful wine and just being. It is the best journey of all.

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Visiting athletes,
mountain bikers
and alpine
enthusiasts
praise her
ability to ease
tightened
muscles and aid
quicker recovery.

KATIE HAMILTON-KING

YOGA TEACHER

Helping people stretch and breathe into serenity is a way of life for this Ashtanga master.

In the still of the evening, by the calm waters of the lake, a woman practises yoga on the beach. Her serenity, as she arches and stretches and balances, matches her surroundings.

Katie Hamilton-King coordinates and teaches Ashtanga yoga sessions at Sherwood Community Hotel in Queenstown. More than simply a place to stay, the Sherwood offers a setting for both visitors and the town's community groups to gather, unwind and reconnect with self and nature.

Hamilton-King's mother, Christchurch yoga teacher Colleen Adamson, introduced her daughter to the practice. Later, living in Vanuatu with her husband and her three then-young children, Hamilton-King became aware of the Ashtanga form of yoga and began her own journey into teaching.

Ashtanga, she explains, is a flowing style of yoga that connects breath, movement and awareness to develop flexibility and strength in body and mind. For Hamilton-King, yoga is not about mastering poses but finding the way to her centre. The *asana* (physical movements of yoga) are combined with breath and mindfulness as a tool to get there.

Her classes aren't purely traditional. Visiting athletes, mountain bikers and even alpine enthusiasts praise the former half-marathon runner's ability to draw on her sporting background and combine it with yoga to help restore overworked lungs, ease tightened muscles and aid quicker recovery.

Hamilton-King also has a degree in social work, and she's taken up a form of that recently. "I decided to cut back my yoga teaching to two days a week just to give my body a bit of a break," she says. "So now I'm the postie in Arrowtown. I go all around the town on my electric bike, deliver the letters and chat to all the old ladies."



NATURALLY GROUNDED

Yoga teacher Katie Hamilton-King's peaceful pose matches her surroundings in Wilson Bay, Lake Wakatipu.



Fortunately, there was an angel just down the road. Esther had been working at Oddfellows Beauty Lodge.

ESTHER SWAN ARROWTOWN

Like many mothers, Martha Swan worried what her daughter Esther would do when she left school. Growing up in a small town like Arrowtown, there are not too many career opportunities, even for a teenager who'd graduated with more than her fair share of NCEA credits.

Fortunately, there was an angel just down the road. Esther had been working part-time at Oddfellows Beauty Lodge, a clinic and spa in the former Oddfellows Lodge.

Sam Gent, who owns Oddfellows and a sister clinic in Auckland, was impressed with Esther's work and offered her a role as a trainee nail technician as soon as she left high school. Three days a week Esther, who has Down syndrome, works at the salon, wearing her black dress with white wings and 'Oddfellows Angel' on the back, like the other staff. Recently she had a red carpet moment when Oddfellows was voted New Zealand's second-best clinic/spa at the Association of Beauty Professionals' annual awards.

Now mother and daughter are planning a bigger event: her 21st birthday party.

LOUISE & JUSTIN WRIGHT

ARCHITECTS

After building their first home, in Arrowtown, this talented couple started designing and planting a lush garden.

Louise and Justin Wright believe in building things from the ground up. Their award-winning architectural practice, Assembly Architects, was established in Wellington in 2005. They then set up a studio in Queenstown and for years travelled between the two cities. They would step off the plane, look at the mountains and think: Could we? Should we? Then, in 2012 they made the move to Arrowtown.

Theirs is a family of three children – often supplemented by cousins and whichever neighbourhood kids drop into the airy house they designed and built in the suburb of Butel Park. And then there's their garden. Conceived by Louise, created by Justin: walking on to the property brings a sense of wonder.

Her: "My mother's a gardener so I've always wanted to do stuff, but when we were living in Wellington, we were living in Mount Cook in the inner city, so we only had a courtyard. We had one planter with bamboo in it. This is our first house so this is the first time we've had the opportunity to really have a go at it."

Him: "When we moved to Arrowtown about five years ago, we rented a house around the corner from here that we designed for a client. We saw this land and bought it and built the house in three and a half months. There is a German method of ultra-low energy,

healthy building called 'passive house' – this isn't a passive house but it follows those principles. It has three times the level of insulation so it stays cool in summer and warm in the winter. It's all standard carpentry using prefabricated timber elements that normally get used by all the group housing companies – it's just that we've put them together with a bit of care and detail."

Her: "This area is heaven for gardeners because unlike some parts of New Zealand we actually have four seasons, and so we've set this up to be a four-seasons garden. Both sides have a structure. I always wanted the garden to be incredibly green through the summer and I've seen in other gardens that using one thing en masse can be effective."

Him: "The garden is all organic. It's growing in two layers of 350mm timber mulch, copying the forest floor. I learned about woodchip no-dig gardens, and that led into looking into permaculture. Under permaculture there's a whole bunch of organic ways of doing compost."

"We've got six chooks and we get six, sometimes seven, eggs a day. But they're at the heart of our composting. All of our compost goes through the chicken and is returned to the soil."

Her: "We started off with three little round iron planters – that was all the vegie patch we had. We used to have the chicken coop in the middle of the garden and wall-to-wall sunflowers. We thought, 'We want more veggies,' and just went for it. The planters have different things in them depending on the season. At the moment it's tomatoes and beans, but in spring we have tulips. The marigolds are planted among the vegetables to keep the butterflies away." assembly.co.nz

WET JACKET, LAKE HAYES

Only a Kiwi could have dreamed up the idea of Wet Jacket winery. Fortunately for wine lovers, the bloke who poured his heart into turning a historic woolshed at Lake Hayes into a cellar door for his boutique wines was Greg Hay. With his brother Rob, Hay was a pioneer in the Central Otago pinot noir fairytale at Chard Farm. Now he markets his six Wet Jacket varieties at Bendemeer Woolshed and Wet Jacket has become a wine, food and events destination – turn to page 21 to read more about its unique offering. wetjacket.nz



"This area is heaven for gardeners, because unlike some parts of New Zealand we actually have four seasons, and so we've set this up to be a four-seasons garden."

– Louise Wright

BOUNTIFUL ARROWTOWN

Architects Louise and Justin Wright in the garden of their new home, which has a vegetable patch and a chicken coop.

CELESTE BISSON-ROWE

CONSERVATIONIST

Queenstown turns out to be the perfect place for an adventurous spirit to stay.

Celeste Bisson-Rowe grew up on the leafy slopes of Mount Eden. But her real home is among the mountains and forests – the Peruvian Andes, Nepalese Himalayas and Canadian Rockies, and now the rocks, tussocks, peaks, valleys and bush around Queenstown.

The 28-year-old describes herself as “a keen outdoors woman”. With a CV listing her sports and skills as skiing, hiking, soccer, surfing, swimming, kayaking, mountain biking, rock climbing and trail running, “keen” might be an understatement.

She’s fortunate enough to be able to follow her passions year-round. “Queenstown never stops,” Bisson-Rowe says. “In the warmer months I love exploring by tramping new areas every weekend ... In the winter skiing and ski-touring is my passion. We have four great ski resorts in the Queenstown area and so much back country to explore.

“I love the mental challenge of completing a difficult physical mission – climbing to the top of a mountain or ski-touring to a hut or completing a powder-filled run.”

Bisson-Rowe has a degree in biodiversity management and is working for the Department of Conservation in Queenstown. “I’m working in the visitor centre, giving people advice for hiking in the area and talking to them about conservation.” Queenstown lets her try any adventure sport she wants, and gives her the opportunity to explore the natural environment. “The great thing is, it doesn’t take long to get into the back country. I can walk five hours from my house and be at the top of an incredible peak with no-one around.”

While she primarily moved south to pursue her sports, the conservation role was a major attraction. “It’s very rewarding working in an environment where I get to share my passion for the outdoors and conservation with people visiting Queenstown.”

“I love the mental challenge of completing a difficult physical mission – climbing to the top of a mountain or ski-touring to a hut.”

– Celeste Bisson-Rowe

PASSION FOR THE OUTDOORS

Celeste Bisson-Rowe, pictured on The Remarkables road just below the ski fields, was attracted to Queenstown for its wealth of sports and places to explore.

CHRISTOPHER KEYS

WINEMAKER

Wine is the gateway to understanding Gibbston Valley, says this pinot noir expert.

Kicking back with the first coffee of the morning in the tree-shaded garden of the Gibbston Valley winery, restaurant, cheesery and general store, Christopher Keys says he doesn't have a job.

It may sound an unusual confession for the man who's been making the winery's internationally acclaimed pinot noirs for more than a decade, but Keys explains: "This isn't a job – it's a life."

A life of passions: for wine, and helping people to appreciate and enjoy it; for photography; for the pleasures and opportunities that flow from living in the unique region of Queenstown.

"Wine down here is so fascinating; it's so compelling, because we're dealing with a grape variety that's hard to produce all around the world and yet it's found a home here. We're 35 years old now, but in the wine world that's very young, so there's the sense that the adventure, the journey, is still at a formative stage.

"Pinot is the magnifying glass through which the landscape is projected. More than that, I like that through the wine you get a real semblance of the energy of this place – the vibrancy, the life, the intensity, the colour."

He strives to make wine that reflects the area. "The nice thing about Gibbston Valley is there's wine and that comes first, but there's just so many different things. That applies to Queenstown, too. There's just so many different things to do.

"Each season is markedly different – the summer, the autumn, the winter, the spring – they all have different shades of colours, hues and moods.

"You get the feeling in Queenstown, it's not trying to impress you. There's a beauty, a staggering magnificence, but at times it's the most refined form of beauty, almost a cruel beauty. There's a hardness, too; a dryness and an aridity in the summer which I love; and the cold and the snow in winter."

gibbstonvalley.com



"The nice thing about Gibbston Valley is there's wine and that comes first, but there's just so many different things to do. That applies to Queenstown, too."

– Christopher Keys, Gibbston Valley winery

HOME AMONG THE VINE LEAVES

Christopher Keys has been making the Gibbston Valley winery's pinot noirs for more than a decade.



You can see the history as you drive into Arrowtown, pretty-as-a-postcard nestled beside Arrow River.



SETTLERS BAR & RESTAURANT
ARROWTOWN

You can see the history as you drive into Arrowtown, the pretty-as-a-postcard village nestled beside Arrow River.

Now you can taste it, too. Walk to the park at the town's western entrance and you'll learn how European and Asian settlers moved here during the 1860s gold rush. Each brought their food knowledge and that fusion is represented in the cuisine of the Settlers Bar & Restaurant.

Owner Jia Qi Song is from Hong Kong. His menu crosses the boundaries of Kiwi classics, like herb-crust lamb shank, and Asian-style raviolis with pork, water chestnuts, shiitake mushroom, orange gastrique and salsa verde.

A daytime café-bar and evening restaurant, it seats up to 120 indoors and, for people-watchers, on its terrace. settlersrestaurant.co.nz

JAY SHERWOOD

BREWER

Sherwood's local brew is served around Queenstown and made from ingredients foraged in the surrounding landscape.

Jay Sherwood is proving the best things come in small batches. He's head brewer – okay, the only brewer, unless you count his assistant, Molly the spaniel – at Arrowtown craft beer producer, Lake & Wood.

It's a tiny operation – one-third of a shed in what passes for the historic mining village's light industrial zone. Sherwood brews only 60 to 120 litres at a time, using big pots and pans, delivered in 20-litre kegs. It is, he laughs, "the little shed with the big tasting beer". The beers are crafted by hand using ingredients from the surrounding landscape.

"We're getting busier, making more beer, but it's still small production," Sherwood says. "Our goal is not to be massive or to distribute everywhere. It's just to brew beer for the community."

He started his hobby while studying at Arizona State University in the US. He then moved to Portland, Oregon – home of the craft beer renaissance. "I definitely caught the bug there," Sherwood says.

He underplays his culinary skills: he was executive chef at Amisfield

Bistro and his full-time job is head chef at Arrowtown's buzzing La Rumbra. There he met co-owner Sam Gruar.

"It was Sam who said, 'Dude, go for it, I will sell this beer in our restaurants. It's good and people will enjoy it.'"

Lake & Wood was formed. Sherwood and his partner Anna Kerslake gave the second halves of their names to create the brand. Gruar and his partner Penelope Johnson climbed aboard, along with Sherwood's friend and mentor Sam Gill, a craft brewer in San Francisco.

"It's worked out really well so far. We only sell our beer through a couple of very close and friendly bars and restaurants, no retail."

Small batches, big flavours. "Our regulars are a pale ale, a porter, a wheated pale ale and a pilsner. Then we do seasonal flavours. We've just done a cherry saison, which has turned into a cult favourite. It's a good drop and it's just a fun thing to do, using local produce, whatever comes to us."

"During the autumn we'll get some acorns and we'll roast them and make an acorn porter. It's fun because it's small-scale – instead of buying 40 kilos of acorns, you can go foraging and fill up a couple of bags and that's enough for the brew."

Drawing inspiration from the local environment and seasonal ingredients, Sherwood is full of new ideas. "We got these pinot barrels from Amisfield and we've brewed a couple of batches in them, and bottled them, and they'll be selling them at Amisfield for us."

lakeandwood.co.nz

SUNDAY BARBECUE

Jay Sherwood's barbecues have quickly become legendary in the Queenstown area. But they're a very different beast from the typical Kiwi steak and snarlers on the grill.

Most Sunday afternoons Sherwood hitches his custom-made smoking pit, aka the 'pitmaster', to his SUV and heads to the Wet Jacket winery at Lake Hayes. There, he serves Texas-style barbecued meat to an ever-growing crowd of appreciative picnickers.



"Our goal is not to be massive or to distribute everywhere. It's just to brew beer for the community."

– Jay Sherwood,
Lake & Wood



GARY LIVESEY

RESTAURATEUR

A diagnosis of multiple sclerosis inspired the start of one of Queenstown's most talked about new cafés.

Ln Gary Livesey's Twitter profile, he describes himself as a "constant smiler". Spend five minutes with him, and you'll realise the part-owner of The World Bar and its neighbour, Yonder – Queenstown's flavour of the month café-bar-restaurant – has earned the right to those smiles. But there have been more than a few tears along the way.

When he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) it was a 360-degree change for his diet and lifestyle – adjustments that would soon inform the ethos of Yonder. "We found that to eat a very healthy diet was quite alienating at times," he says. "The key to Queenstown is community; it's your friends and your community. Not a lot of people have family here, so you go out for dinner, or you go out for drinks, or you go for lunch. I struggled with that; trying to eat healthy when all my friends wanted to go to a famous steak place."

Livesey, his wife Emily and business partner Stephen Ward put their energies into a new concept – one that would stretch far beyond a conventional eatery. "We saw a big gap in the market for a place that's humble, accessible and welcomes versatility, and is hard to pigeonhole," Livesey says.

He would find that place right next-door to The World Bar, in a heritage-listed home built by stonemason James McNeill in 1885, extended and refurbished as a bar-restaurant 100 years later. "We built this place for the locals. Queenstown is geared for tourism, and if you build something for the locals, hopefully they will enjoy it and recommend it to the tourists. It was key to us that the locals could feel at home here straightaway; that they felt they had somewhere that was looking after them."

After five months, the locals are definitely going over to Yonder. It's the first name you'll hear when you ask if there's somewhere new and good in town. yonderqt.co.nz, theworldbar.co.nz



"The key to Queenstown is community; it's your friends and your community."

– Gary Livesey, Yonder and The World Bar

A GAP IN THE MARKET

Gary Livesey (opposite) saw potential for an eatery that was humble, healthy and accessible, and impressed the locals. From there, café-bar-restaurant Yonder was born, serving dishes like the gluten- and dairy-free salmon poké bowl (inset).



NICOLAS KARLSSON & MATIAS MAUTONE

ZAMORA

'Meat Preachers' Nicolas Karlsson and Matias Mautone (pictured below, left and right, respectively) set up Zamora seven years ago to spread the gospel of South American sausages and cured meats using recipes from Karlsson's Argentinian and Mautone's Uruguayan families.

They met while in Queenstown on a working holiday. "People think we are a butchery, but it's more than that," Mautone says. "We are smallgoods producers as well, we do catering, we do lunch," Karlsson continues.

The award-winning duo make 17 varieties of sausages, six salami and a range of cured meats. "At the beginning we got bullied by customers who said, 'How much are you charging for these sausages?' We said, 'Try the flavour and tell me if you need tomato sauce.' Eventually, after the third year, people trusted us," Karlsson says. "We have been in such demand in Queenstown we have been struggling to get outside." zamora.co.nz

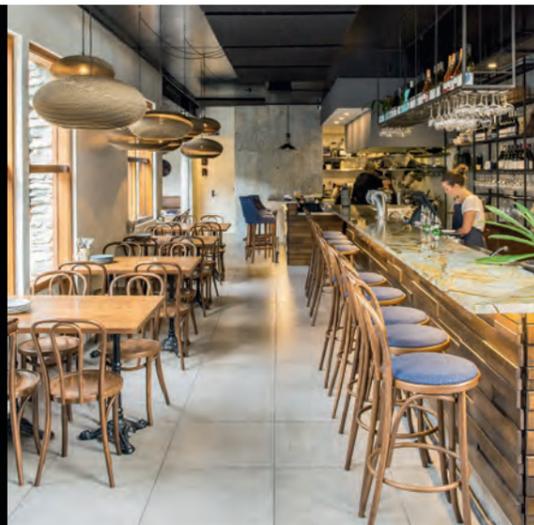
FAN-TAN, ARROWTOWN

When Saffron and Agave restaurants and The Blue Door bar were sold last year, it was hoped the Arrowtown hotspots would stay in local hands.

They did: the new owners of all three are Sir Michael Hill and his family, who live at Lake Hayes; Vicky and Dave Arnold of Flying Trestles Catering, who live in town; Vicky's father Nick Piper, who lives nearby; and John Watson of Queenstown.

Late last year Mexican-themed Agave morphed into Fan-Tan, taking its name from a gambling game, played with beans or pebbles, that was brought to the town in the 1860s by Chinese goldminers.

The cuisine is a fusion of European, New Zealand and Pacific food with flavours influenced from Asia, served as sharing plates. fantan.co.nz



"We thought, we need to bring sausages up to what they are in Europe or South America."

— Nicolas Karlsson, Zamora

DARREN LOVELL

FISHBONE

The produce this chef grows in his organic garden is served up at his award-winning restaurant.

"I'm the world's laziest gardener," chuckles Darren Lovell. Few who've seen the cornucopia growing on his suburban section, or tasted the produce on the menu at Fishbone, his award-winning kaimoana restaurant in central Queenstown, would agree.

The chef and his business partner, Mark Godden, bought Fishbone 12 years ago and are committed to serving only sustainable fish. If that made sense for the fish, Lovell quickly realised, it made sense for the herbs, vegetables and fruit, too.

"I started building a potager garden," he says. Nicknamed 'Fishbone Farm', it's an organic garden: no herbicides or pesticides. "I use pine oil for keeping weeds under control," Lovell says. Everything goes into the menu, aside from the flowers, which decorate the tables. "We're self-sufficient in all our autumn fruit, which we use on salads and desserts – pears, apples, quinces." He waves at plants that will become the dessert menu: blackberries, raspberries, loganberries. "We use [the berries] in our pavlova and other desserts."

Nine chooks fuss around their pen. "A lot of scraps come from the kitchen for the chickens, so we're recycling that, too." fishbonequeenstown.co.nz



"We're self-sufficient in all our autumn fruit, which we use on salads and desserts – pears, apples, quinces."

— Darren Lovell, Fishbone

FRESHLY PICKED
Produce Darren Lovell, chef and owner of Fishbone, grows in his garden influences his seasonal menu – even the flowers are used, to decorate the tables.



“Whether you want to taste the flavours of the region and savour local produce, or you’re after something virtuous with healthy eating top of mind, the food scene has you covered.”

– Michael McHugh, MiNDFOOD



COFFEE HIT
The bistro at Kinross in Gibbston Valley serves coffee from New Zealand’s Ozone.

TOP CAFÉS TO PUT ON YOUR HOLIDAY LIST

Local produce, breathtaking views and inviting interiors are what Queenstown dining is all about.



BREKKIE TIME
Arrowtown’s must-visit brunch spot The Chop Shop Food Merchants serves delicious dishes, such as Turkish eggs. facebook.com/thechopshopfoodmerchants



LANDMARK VIEW
The award-winning Bespoke Kitchen overlooks The Remarkables. Local produce and plenty of raw and vegan options. bespokekitchen.co.nz



10 OUT OF 10
Odelay has all a Queenstown café should have: Allpress coffee, its own produce, local free-range or organic supplies, and views of The Remarkables. odelay.co.nz



VINTAGE CHARM
The fare at Vudu Café + Larder is as beautiful as it is tasty. On Queenstown’s waterfront, the interior is warm and layered with a pared back vintage vibe. vudu.co.nz



REDS BAR
QT QUEENSTOWN

Try making Queenstown’s most expensive cocktail (\$69 at Reds Bar).

- 50ml Mumm Cordon Rouge
- Handful hazelnuts and walnuts, plus extra, toasted, to serve
- 2 tsp edible gold powder
- Vodka, to wet glass rim
- 45ml Rémy Martin XO
- 15ml Tempus Fugit Gran Classico Bitter
- 15ml Briottet Crème de Châtaigne (chestnut liqueur)
- Chopped apricots, to serve

Champagne Air

200ml Mumm Cordon Rouge
1 tsp soy lecithin powder

Pour champagne into a saucepan and cook until reduced and syrupy. Cool. To make champagne air, place champagne and lecithin in a container. Cover with plastic wrap, leaving an opening. Place stick blender through opening, only partially submerged in mixture, and blend. Use a mortar and pestle to crush nuts. Place in a dry container with gold powder. Seal and shake to coat nuts. Wet rim of goblet with vodka then dip rim into nut mixture. Shake cognac, bitters, liqueur and 15ml of the champagne reduction with ice. Double strain into goblet. Spoon on champagne air. Serve with extra nuts and apricots.

KINROSS, GIBBSTON VALLEY

Just 25 minutes’ drive from Queenstown you can escape to green surrounds and mountains in Gibbston Valley at Kinross Cottages. The luxuriously homely accommodation is self-catering and set on 40 acres of peace and quiet. You’ll enjoy breakfast in the General Store on the property (pictured). At the onsite cellar door taste incredible, internationally awarded Central Otago wines, the most southern wine making region in the world.

Seasonal produce from the Kinross herb and vegetable gardens, and heritage orchard are served up at the bistro. Here, you can enjoy food, drinks and coffee all year round. Each year Kinross holds five Winemaker Weekends. Surrounded by snow-capped mountains, the package includes wine tasting sessions and a ‘trust the chef’ evening with matching wines. Relax in the valley or head up to the mountains to ski the day away. For some ‘me’ time, there are wellness classes on offer among the vines. kinrosscottages.co.nz



LORENA GIALONARDO & ALEX GIMENEZ

PATAGONIA CHOCOLATES

The flourishing chocolatiers and coffee roasters now have five locations thanks to cosmopolitan Queenstown.

Living thousands of miles from their homeland, Lorena Giallonardo and Alex Gimenez missed their favourite taste of Argentina: its exquisite chocolate.

The couple established Patagonia Chocolates in 2005, opening a chocolate shop in Arrowtown. It was a success and within a year they opened a second store/café on the Queenstown waterfront, serving their signature hot chocolate.

With a focus on handcrafted production, the chocolatiers, ice-cream makers and coffee roasters now have five cafés in the region.

Their Queenstown production plant centralises ice-cream and chocolate making, and the Patagonia 'On the Go' caravan is a familiar sight at local events.

Success has been based on their own passion and a super-supportive local community. "They have always been willing to try new flavours," Giallonardo says. "This is a truly cosmopolitan place and the international visitors have been wonderful to us – people on holidays are happy to treat themselves." patagoniachocolates.co.nz



"Queenstown is a truly cosmopolitan place and visitors have been wonderful to us."

— Lorena Giallonardo, Patagonia Chocolates



WHITESTONE CHEESE, LAKE HAYES

In France, the rock star of the cheese world is the *affineur*, the 'raiser' of the cheese. The cheese is received from the producers, held in the shops, downstairs in the cave, until they are *à point* (perfectly ready to eat) after a day or more. This art is practised at Whitestone's cheese ageing room, inside The Woolshed at Wet Jacket winery in Lake Hayes.

Whitestone Cheese makes 25 artisan cheeses a few hours away in Oamaru, with no artificial additives, and milk from local cows. "We bring cheeses from the factory and we can mature the soft and semi-soft cheeses to perfect ripeness in controlled conditions," says founder and managing director Bob Berry. "Everything is cut fresh from the wheel daily. We don't sell packaged cheeses." And, he points out, as wine and cheese are a perfect match, Whitestone Cheese platters are an ideal accompaniment to the Wet Jacket wine range in the tasting room next door. whitestonecheese.com, wetjacket.nz

"I like to take all those foods I truly loved as a young kid growing up in New Zealand and present them in a modern way."

— Vaughan Mabee, Amisfield Bistro



AMISFIELD BISTRO, LAKE HAYES

At Amisfield Bistro, the backdrop is breathtaking with views towards Lake Hayes and Coronet Peak. Executive chef Vaughan Mabee and Peter Langlands, head forager, make the most of the Otago region's abundance of beautiful produce that can be found in the wild. A marine ecologist, Langlands "targets species that not a lot of people in New Zealand know about, and don't know are edible," says Mabee. "Those discoveries have added varieties of mushrooms, snowberries and mulberries, and a range of peppery cresses, to the menu." amisfield.co.nz

ON THE MENU

Amisfield Bistro's seasonal menu focuses on fresh, local produce and is served with matching wines from the cellar door onsite.

A wide-angle landscape photograph of a mountain range. In the foreground, a dirt trail winds up a grassy slope. Several hikers are visible: one in the lower left, two in the middle ground, and two near a small wooden hut on the right. The middle ground shows rolling hills with sparse vegetation. In the background, large, rugged mountains are partially covered in snow under a clear blue sky.

“Autumn is the perfect time to reconnect with Mother Nature, and escape the city life and deadlines. Everything feels so alive as you walk among the beauty of Queenstown.”

— Michael McHugh, MiNDFOOD

“Experience earth-friendly hospitality in the heart of the mountains, nestled near the base of the towering Richardson and Humboldt Mountains.”

– Debbi Brainerd, Camp Glenorchy



THE BRAINERDS

PHILANTHROPISTS

See how one couple are using their entrepreneurial skills to change the lives of a small village.

Glenorchy is at the “top of the lake” – yes, it is best known as the setting of Jane Campion’s TV drama. And to get there, you drive along the Wakatipu lakeshore from Queenstown – “the most beautiful 40-minute road trip in the world,” it’s been called.

The village began life as little more than a jetty for the steamers servicing massive mountain sheep stations. Its general store opened in the 1880s and has been selling ice-cream, cold drinks, hot chips and giving away visitor information since the 1950s, when holidaymakers began to venture into the area instigating a camping ground next door.

Apart from a few weeks around New Year, it’s still a sleepy spot – unless you know where to look. For this is the site of a remarkable, world-first venture: a technology-leading, eco-sensitive, sustainably built and community-based tourism, arts and events centre.

Based in the heart of the Richardson and Humboldt Mountains, a far-sighted project, led by American philanthropists Paul and Debbi Brainerd, is intended to eventually underwrite a revival of the quiet community, its school, healthcare and lifestyle.

In stage one, the rundown village shop has recently become Mrs Woolly’s General Store, selling upmarket arts and crafts, and artisan food and beverages to generate funds for the project.

To open mid-March, Camp Glenorchy is stage 2, complete with new cabins, cooking, dining, entertainment and events centres, bathrooms and toilets. All have been designed to reflect and celebrate the surrounding environment, and are constructed from sustainable or recycled materials to a rigorous international standard known as the Living Building Challenge (LBC).

This is the first visitor accommodation project in the world to have been built to meet the challenge’s code. And its ▶

DEBBI BRAINERD CAMP GLENORCHY

Co-founders of Camp Glenorchy and Mrs Woolly’s General Store, Debbi Brainerd and husband Paul have been visiting New Zealand for more than 20 years and built a home near Glenorchy, about 45 kilometres from Queenstown, six years ago.

Previously, Debbi founded IslandWood to provide hands-on environmental learning for children and their teachers at a 100-hectare campus on Bainbridge Island, near Seattle. “There’s something about New Zealand for us,” she says. “We feel a special connection to the people, to the culture, to the way of life, to the landscape. And now with this project we really are committed to seeing the success of it.”

Paul is credited with inventing desktop publishing in the US in 1984. In 1994 he founded The Brainerd Foundation, dedicated to protecting the environmental quality of the US Pacific Northwest. He is a founder of Social Venture Partners, which encourages professionals to give back time, money and expertise to their communities.

“We feel a special connection to the people, to the culture, to the landscape.”

– Debbi Brainerd, Camp Glenorchy



RUN-DOWN TO REVITALISED

The “most beautiful 40-minute road trip in the world” leads to the picturesque village of Glenorchy where Camp Glenorchy, an eco-sensitive, community-based tourism, arts and events centre, is close to completion. It includes accommodation and an upmarket arts and crafts store.



founders say Camp Glenorchy's visitors "will have a unique opportunity to experience how thoughtful design, healthy materials and sustainable practices can conserve resources, with the goal of inspiring them to pursue similar conservation approaches in their own homes and communities."

There are seven cabins, each able to sleep eight, and four bunk rooms. In the cabins, guests will use an in-room tablet to select and monitor their energy use – 160 monitors for heat, light, movement and other indicators are built into the structures and equipment. It may tell on you if you've spent more than seven minutes in the shower, as all guests will be able to monitor their energy use to see how their choices compare to others throughout the camp, as well as those who have stayed in their cabin before.

As they chill out in their holiday homes, guests can learn about passive solar generation for heating and lighting, ecologically sound wastewater treatment, composting toilets, organic food production and other aspects of living more lightly upon the land.

If they choose, they will be able to book in as an 'Eco-Warrior' – their living environment programmed for maximum efficiency and comfort.

GREENER THAN GREEN

Recycled and repurposed materials from other South Island buildings – some from buildings destroyed in the Christchurch earthquakes, others from abandoned barns and woolsheds – have been used throughout the complex. Insulation is also recycled.

Walls, floors and roofs are built from toxin-free materials to ensure health, comfort and quiet throughout the year.

Boasting New Zealand's first 'net zero energy' visitor accommodation, Camp Glenorchy will operate on 50 per cent less water and energy than most hospitality facilities.

What about the water? Recycled. The water passes through three constructed wetlands with native plants and is returned to safe drinking levels.

The use of healthy and sustainable building materials is another area in which the camp is ahead of the game. The project team is openly publishing a searchable Camp Glenorchy Materials Register online to show what's been used.



ECO-RESEARCH

Not only a holiday destination, Camp Glenorchy can also be seen as a giant research tool for healthy building and for refining the next generation of green technology. Data from the 160 monitors in the cabins will be collected, published online in a commitment to transparency, and shared with manufacturers to assess where, say lighting or showerhead design, might be improved.



DAN KELLY
METAL SCULPTOR

Dan Kelly has been a resident in Glenorchy for 25 years. Working in alpine tourism and as a sculptor, he became involved in the Camp Glenorchy project when the owners, Debbi and Paul Brainerd, paid him a visit at his cottage.

"Debbi and Paul were keen to introduce me to the project when they ... saw all the bespoke craft here, and saw other pieces of my work," he recalls. "So we came on board to help the project deliver a Kiwiana feel because there's so much introduced global technology here."

"As we learned more about the project we realised that Paul and Debbi were offering something unique and world class, and it would be great to help them out."

Kelly has helped plan and design the Scheelite Shelter, which is the main outdoor cooking and dining and gathering place. "We've used large ancient stones and recycled timber to make a fireplace that's 26 metres long, 5.5 metres high," he says. The barbecue is made from an old scheelite mining trolley.

"Wherever you go around the district you'll see the ruins of old settlers' homesteads and the only thing left standing is the fireplace," Kelly says. "That was the heart and soul of the house and there's where we took our cues for this [pictured top left]."

JEFFREY BALE
LANDSCAPE ARTIST

Jeffrey Bale has become known for his pebble mosaic work. "My work is heavily influenced by my travels," says the landscape artist. "There is a story behind every design. What inspires me the most is when art works in harmony with nature."

Bale's mosaics are found outside each cottage in Camp Glenorchy (his take on Vincent van Gogh's *The Starry Night* is a must-see), and in the paths around Mrs Woolly's General Store. "[Glenorchy] is a place known for its breathtaking scenery, located at the head of Lake Wakatipu, the longest lake in the country," he says.

His major artwork runs across the site and through its public buildings. It is an almost Google Maps-like representation of the braided streambeds of the Dart and Rees Rivers at the head of Lake Wakatipu, just a few kilometres from the campsite.



"I love gathering stones and imagining the stories attached to them in their geological journey, from the mountains to the rivers to the lake."

– Jeffrey Bale

"It's been a huge task," says Tricia Love, an Auckland-based sustainability consultant who has advised the Glenorchy crew on compliance with LBC since planning began back in 2015. "Our commitment to the LBC criteria and avoiding toxic materials has meant thousands of hours researching the content and manufacture of building materials and products to avoid the 'Red List' of worst in class chemicals and products."

In some cases, due to lack of options or building code requirements, non-compliant materials had to be used. In the spirit of transparency and education, the reason is given on the register.

"Sourcing this information is extremely time-consuming, which means projects like these are often put in the 'too-hard' basket," says Love. "We hope that by having made this investment and openly sharing this information, it will make it easier for others to use healthy, non-toxic materials in their own projects."

IT'S FOR THE COMMUNITY

It may seem surprising such a major project – some commentators have suggested a \$55 million investment – would happen here, at the gateway to Mount Aspiring National Park.

"Our ultimate goal is to put all the profits into a community trust. So when it starts to turn a profit, the idea is for this community trust to then be able to issue grants and to support anything from conservation projects to the elementary school across the street, to helping with some of the community healthcare initiatives down the road," says Paul, who has had longtime interests in green architecture and technology. "The idea is, we hope it will support a lot of community projects."

Debbi's great joy has been watching Camp Glenorchy take shape, seeing her vision become reality, and the people – particularly artists, who have been attracted to participate in the project.

"People are showing up who are creating magic there," she says. "I think that the craftspeople that you attract are the ones that in the end will create this lasting ... I call it 'soul' in the place. It feels like it's starting to get that." theheadwaters.co.nz/camp-glenorchy

KATE FLUKER

MOUNTAIN BIKER

This leading rider fell in love with Queenstown and mountain biking and hasn't left.

When you fall off the bike, the best thing you can do is get back on it. Just ask Kate Fluker.

New Zealand's leading female mountain biker was on track to compete at the Rio 2016 Summer Olympic Games when, in a lead-up race in France, she snapped her collarbone. Dream over. Instead of flying down to Rio, she flew home for surgery. If anything, it's made her even more determined to pedal to the top of her sport.

Fluker calls Queenstown home after moving here for a ski season back in 2009. "The big thing about Queenstown is that you can get out in the country so easily," she says. "It's the people around you as well. It's just the whole vibe of the town, it's what everybody does. They're active and it makes you want to get involved. It's just part and parcel of living here."

Fluker bought her first bike only a few years ago so she could get out and meet people after her move to Queenstown. "As the skis went away people brought out bikes," she explains. "We didn't know many people, so I got a bike to join the ladies' group rides to meet people."

There are plenty of cycling tracks on offer in Queenstown, including the 122-kilometre Queenstown Trail, which covers many picturesque locations, including Lake Wakatipu, Lake Hayes, Arrowtown and Gibbston.

Fluker praises the town's 'let's do this' attitude. "The Queenstown Trail trust and the Mountain Bike Club are really pro-active in getting trails all around the mountains," she says.

Eyes focused on the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympic Games, she is hoping to race in America and then return to Europe for the next World Cup series in April. "The community has been amazing – they helped me raise money and made it possible for me to travel and race in World Cup series," she says.

"The big thing about Queenstown is that you can get out in the country so easily. It's the people as well – they're active and it makes you want to get involved."

– Kate Fluker

BIKING THROUGH BEAUTY

Mountain biker Kate Fluker peddling along the epic Rude Rock trail in Coronet Peak.

“Queenstown is such an area of paradise to come and play in, and do what I love.”

– Kat Bulk



COMPETITIVE SPIRIT
Standing at confluence of the Shotover and Kawarau rivers, Kat Bulk lives for expedition-style races.

KAT BULK

MULTISPORT ATHLETE

At home among the rugged terrain, Queenstown is heaven for this intrepid athlete.

Kat Bulk’s first sport of choice was mountain running: the steeper and more rugged the trail, the better. Now the 31-year-old survey technician has her sights on becoming one of the world’s best female multisport athletes.

To get an idea of what she calls fun, the Godzone Adventure Race is what got her into multisport. It’s a non-stop, expedition-style team challenge that can last up to 10 days. It’s the biggest race of its kind in the world and was held in Queenstown last year. It calls for kayaking, canoeing, running, biking, orienteering and general survival skills. Competitors don’t know the next day’s route until the night before.

“I got into multisport about four and a half years ago,” she says. “I’d been running and doing ultra-running before that.”

For Bulk, Queenstown is the ultimate place to live and train. “I’m from Dunedin originally but I’ve lived all over the country,” she says. “We used to holiday in Queenstown all the time when I was a kid, and it’s somewhere that I’ve always thought would be amazing to live.

“A couple of years ago I got the opportunity to move here with my previous job. I just thought, ‘This would be such an area of paradise to come and play in, and do what I love.’”

Competition drives her. “My primary goal over the next few years is to get to the top of the podium of the Coast to Coast,” Bulk says. The iconic Coast to Coast event is 243 kilometres of biking, kayaking and running from Kumara Beach on the west coast, over the Southern Alps to New Brighton in Christchurch.

“I pretty much just work and train and sleep. But that’s okay – I don’t know what else I’d do with my time. On a work day I’ll do two or three [hours] and on a weekend I’m only doing six or eight a day this year.



CHRISTINE KELLY
MOUNTAIN HUT

Climbing up and jumping off mountains, kayaking down rivers, zooming up them in jet-boats, falling out of planes, flying up mountains to go skiing. It’s little wonder that Queenstown calls itself the adventure capital of the world.

If thrillseekers thought they’d run out of ways to pump their adrenalin in the area, Christine and Dan Kelly have news for them. Guests are invited to stay in their Mountain Hut, 1800 metres up the slopes of Mount Larkins in the Whakaari Conservation Area above Glenorchy.

It’s higher than Mitre Peak and almost as high as Mount Tongariro. It’s “an extreme alpine environment”, Dan says. Just the place for adventure enthusiasts to helicopter in, stay a night or more, and ski, climb or mountain bike in unparalleled surroundings.

The Kelly family is entering its fourth year of hosting visitors at the hut, which sleeps up to eight people, with gobsmacking views of Paradise Valley (*The Lord of the Rings* country), Diamond Lake, more valleys with their braided rivers and Lake Wakatipu far below.

Most Kiwi huts, including those on the world-renowned Great Walks, are at the bush line, about 1100 metres, Dan says. “We’re another 1000 metres above that, so we’re one of the highest commercial small huts serviced by helicopter in Australasia.”

The ingenious circular design, developed by Dan, was made for mountain conditions and includes a multi-function room, kitchen, six bunk beds and a mezzanine with room for two guests. “We take people right up to the summit of Mount Larkins, which is 2300 metres,” Christine says. “It’s a three-hour return climb,

depending on the person and their level of fitness.

“In summer it’s mainly hiking or overnight staying. We can take mountain bikers into the hills that high up and do different trails down.

“[In winter] we’ve got ski slopes that have every aspect – north, south, east, west – so we can choose to suit the day’s conditions.” mountainhut.nz

“Mountain Hut is one of the highest commercial small huts serviced by helicopter in Australasia.”

– Dan Kelly

FIND OUT MORE

*Discover even more about Queenstown at
queenstownnz.nz/journey.*

“Surrounded by mountains and set on Lake Wakatipu, the natural beauty and unique energy of the region create the perfect backdrop for a holiday full of adventure, discovery and rejuvenation.”
