

# verve

MAY '26

Auckland's  
lifestyle  
magazine.



We charge into May with Toyota and a look at electric and hybrid vehicles, and also get our skis on for a trip to the iconic Tongariro National Park.

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## FROM THE EDITOR



### ROLL WITH IT

At the time of writing, oil prices had surged past US\$120 a barrel amid escalating tensions in the Middle East. By the time you read this, the situation may well have shifted again – such is the unpredictability of the current global landscape. What is certain, according to the International Energy Agency, is that the fossil fuel industry has changed forever.

Environmental arguments aside, if any good does come from this Middle East conflict it is that it has served as a worldwide wakeup call to take renewable energy more seriously. Aotearoa New Zealand is considered one of the best countries to own an electric vehicle and recent research from Consumer NZ shows that an overwhelming 96% of EV owners would buy another.

So, electric and hybrid vehicles take centre stage in this issue, alongside a few 'range anxiety' road trip ideas. Elsewhere, we travel through

Vietnam, explore the slopes and trails of Tongariro National Park, and have an inspirational chat with academyEX founder and futurist Frances Valentine. Jess Waddell also returns with a mouthwatering review of one of the most talked-about restaurants in town, Te Kaahu.

On a personal note, I've taken a small step by investing in an electric cargo bike that has been nicknamed 'the car killer' for good reason. It has the ability to be accessorised with all manner of seating configurations for both child and adult passengers and carry loads of up to 200kg. The loads I'm currently carrying sure seem to put a smile on all those we pass!

Anyway, enjoy the issue – it's electric. Jamie

Upfront

# verve

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#### Published by V24 Limited

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#### Cover photo

Toyota RAV4

ISSN 2253-1300 (print)

ISSN 2253-1319 (online)

Verve is published monthly (except in January) and has an estimated readership of 60,000. It is a free lifestyle magazine delivered to cafes and businesses throughout Auckland.

For distribution details or to sign up for your free monthly digital copy please visit our website [vervemagazine.co.nz](http://vervemagazine.co.nz).

Verve is printed by Blue Star, 8 Collard Place, Henderson, Auckland. It is distributed by Verve, ERC Contracting and Mailchimp.

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# ELEGANCE MEETS ELECTRIFICATION

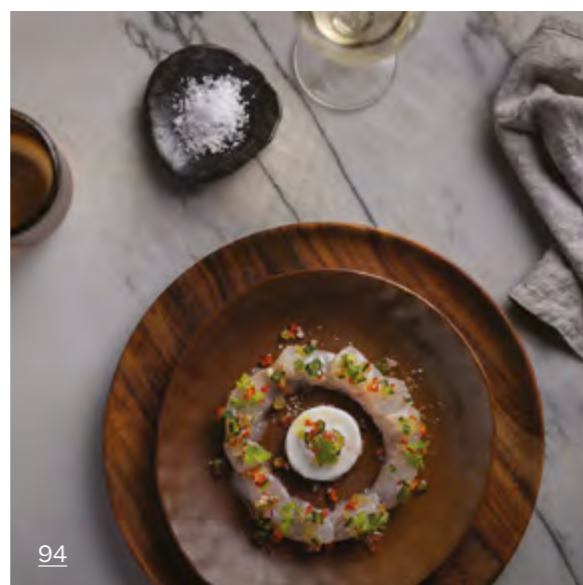
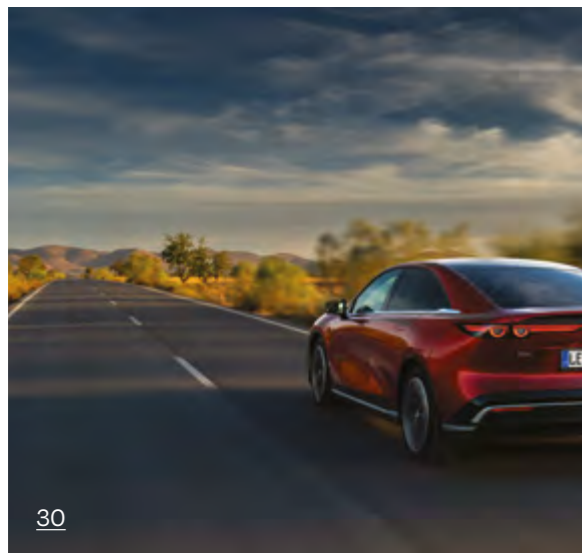
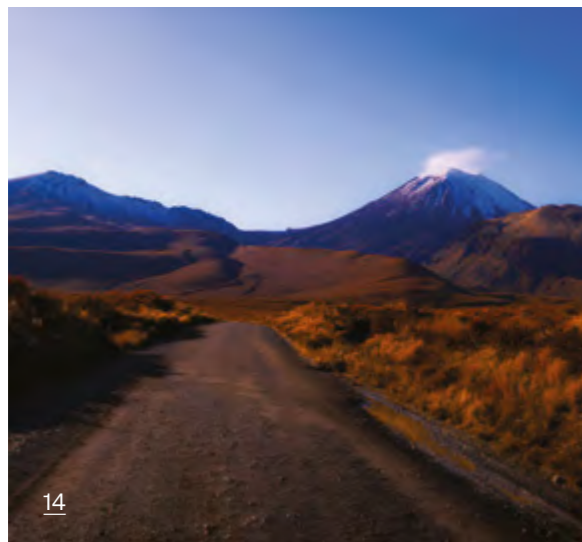


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## COMING 2026



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Let's  
Go  
Places

# This is our time



You can tell a lot about a place by how quickly the banter starts. At Waterford Retirement Village in Hobsonville Point, it's immediate. We pull five chairs up by the bar and, within minutes, talk turns to smoko stories on the Harbour Bridge, pool rivalries, Sunday bowls, and whether a tool workshop might spark even more camaraderie.

Pete kicks off, matter of fact. "We were in the same house for 36 years out south beside a golf course. It was very private, which we loved, until we retired. The privacy became isolation. And I was sick of cleaning gutters. Pine needles, fences, driveways, repeat." He smiles. "We looked at two or three places in this block, then walked into the one we've got now and said, "this is us."

Maintenance is the game changer here. The endless list of chores - gutters, fences, weeding, light bulbs - is gone, and with it the nagging mental load. "We don't change a light bulb," one of the lads says. "That's Murray's domain," he adds, nodding to the village maintenance man. "You get a release from responsibilities," Graham says. "You're not spending your weekends catching up on the garden. You've got time back."

Not that these four are sitting still. "The only problem with being retired is it's too damn busy," Doug laughs. "I don't know where I found time to go to work."

The majority of the guys admit they were skeptical at first. "We weren't looking at a retirement village," Pete says. "We wanted lock and leave. Apartments we saw elsewhere were narrow and pokey. Then we came here."

Graham had his own turning point. "I used to walk the dog around the village and pop in for a chat," he says. "One day it just clicked - this was the kind of place we could actually see ourselves in." The move came easily after that. "We thought we'd miss our house and garden. It took about a week to settle. We haven't missed it at all."

When the talk turns to money, it's not about what's being left behind but how they're making the most of what they have now. There's laughter around the table as someone jokes about "joining the ski club - spending the kids' inheritance." It's said with a grin, but the sentiment runs deeper. These days are about living fully and enjoying what they've worked hard for. And the kids? They're right behind them. "They tell us, go for it," one of the lads says. "They've got their own lives now. This is our time."

What did surprise me was how definite they were about timing. "Don't leave it too late," John says. "You've got to move on in life." Graham nods. "Memories are important," he adds, "but you've still got to live your life."

There's a shared thread that runs through them - a kind of Kiwi ingenuity from another era, when you just got on with the job. It shows up in work stories that would make a health and safety manager faint. Pete remembers the days on big jobs. "I used to work under the Harbour Bridge putting sprinkler systems through the painter's walkways. Cold, windy, no cherry picker high enough, so we got a Lofty in from Canada. You look back now and think, we were fearless. But you just did it." These days, he says, getting on the roof to clear gutters is a hard no. "Your reactions aren't what they were."

If Waterford is the setting, the real engine is the people and the rituals they share. "Pool on Thursday gets busy," they grin. "There's a lot of blokes." Bowls has grown on them, even the ones who didn't play before. "When you get here, you think, it's all there." You don't need any gear. You just get the key. The bowls are provided."

Intervillage rivalry gets a special mention. "Proper rivalry," someone says with satisfaction. When it comes to community, the blokes are all in. "It happens naturally," Doug says. "This place isn't too big, so you see people. When they arrive, they're out to make friends. There's a good atmosphere." And for those who prefer quiet, there's room for that too. "Some people like to keep to themselves," John says. "We don't even know them. That's fine."

We finish where we started, talking about the rhythm of life at Waterford. The bar and lounge are often alive with easy conversation, the hiss of the coffee machine and the sound of a pool game in the background. It's relaxed and familiar, like a favourite local where everyone knows your name. Outside, paths wind toward the wharf and the breeze lifts off the water. "Try the walkway," Graham says. "It's beautiful." It's that mix of comfort, connection, and calm that makes Waterford feel less like a village and more like home.

Work's overrated, they tell me. Time is the point. "This is our time," Doug says again, steady and sure. In this place, with these people, it shows.



Scan the code to explore Waterford Village



"For residents 70 years or above."

# Shadow of History



Perched in the heart of Tongariro National Park, the grand old Chateau Tongariro welcomed its first guests way back in 1929 – and remains one of New Zealand's most iconic buildings.



PHOTOGRAPHY: MAE BLACK

The story of the now-dormant chateau begins with an act of generosity, when, in 1887, Tūwharetoa chief Horonuku Te Heu Heu Tūkino gifted his people's land to all New Zealanders, with the intention that the sacred peaks of Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro be protected for all time.

By 1923, the Tongariro National Park Board was exploring ways to draw visitors to the newly formed park, and in 1925 the government offered to lease land and lend up to £40,000 to any company willing to build and operate a hotel on the site. That same year, a new road was also carved to Mt Ruapehu (before then,

reaching Whakapapa meant fording rivers, navigating untamed terrain on foot or horseback).

Designed by Timaru-based architect Herbert Hall, the foundation stone was laid in early 1929, with a workforce of over 80 – many recruited from Waikunene Prison – completing construction by 1 August that year.

Standing as the largest and most impressive building in the area, it cuts a striking figure against the dramatic mountain backdrop – a sight so evocative of European influence that the name 'Chateau' has always felt the most apt. However, despite its French-influenced

moniker, the chateau is actually built in the American Colonial Revival style – a variant of Inter-War Georgian Revival. Its most striking feature, the balconied portico at the main entrance, reflects clear American influences while its reinforced concrete construction gives a modern edge to otherwise classic Georgian lines.

Many also remark on the hotel's resemblance to the Overlook Hotel from *The Shining*, so it's only fitting that the chateau is said to have a supernatural element within its superstar looks. Spooky tales date back to its use as a women's asylum following the temporary closure of the Porirua Lunatic Asylum due to the 1942 Wairarapa earthquake. Staff have told of stories of a nurse named Charlotte, who was said to have died in one of the rooms. It is believed that Charlotte continues to make her presence felt in the hotel, particularly in one of the rooms which was said to be her favourite. There have even been reports of mysterious instances of fires stuttering in their fireplaces, and curtains moving as if blown by a strong breeze, despite no breeze being felt.

The hotel later served as a rest and recuperation centre for air force personnel returning from the second world war, and, in 1945, was evacuated during Mt Ruapehu's eruptions. It reopened in 1948 following renovations, ready once again to welcome visitors to the park, and soon established itself as one of Aotearoa New Zealand's best-known resort hotels and a base for the developing ski industry.

Standing as the largest and most impressive building in the area, it cuts a striking figure against the dramatic mountain backdrop.

At its height, Chateau Tongariro offered guests a games room with billiards, sauna, indoor plunge pool and a fitness centre. A couple of restaurants and a bar sat alongside an in-house cinema showing a variety of films daily.

The chateau was closed in February 2023 after a seismic assessment deemed it very high risk, with the Department of Conservation later revealing that "significant investment" would be required to reopen it as a hotel. Since its closure, general maintenance alone has cost taxpayers around \$2 million per year. While open, the chateau is said to have generated around \$10 million to the local economy annually. Public concern over its future has been vocal – in 2025, a petition of 15,000 signatures was presented to Rangitikei MP Suze Redmayn to save the icon.

Earlier this year, the government announced that it was seeking proposals from experienced operators to reawaken and operate the region's sleeping beauty.

"The chateau is a landmark many New Zealanders have visited for holidays to school trips and international visitors experiencing Tongariro for the first time," says Conservation Minister Tama Potaka. "We are looking for proposals that balance commercial viability with conservation values, respect for tangata whenua aspirations, and the unique character of Tongariro National Park."

# Tongariro National Park

Tongariro National Park holds dual Unesco World Heritage status, recognised both for its profound cultural meaning and its raw natural grandeur.

The land was gifted to the British Crown by Māori in 1887, and seven years later became New Zealand's first national park. Today it draws around a million visitors a year, lured by world-class hiking and skiing in one of the country's most accessible wilderness areas.

The park anchors the southern end of the Taupō Volcanic Zone, itself part of the Pacific Ring of Fire - the vast chain of volcanic activity that arcs from the tip of South America up to North America, across the Bering Strait, through Japan, and down to Aotearoa. The first lava flows here appeared some 270,000 years ago, and eruptions continued regularly for the next 200,000 years.

Three great peaks preside over this smouldering landscape: Tongariro, Ruapehu, and Ngāuruhoe - the latter immortalised as Mount Doom in the *Lord of the Rings* films. Ngāti Tūwharetoa tell of a time when the North Island's mountains stood clustered together, locked in rivalry for the affections of Pihanga, a peak rising between Lakes Rotoaira and Taupō. Tongariro, the Warrior Mountain, prevailed, sending the others into retreat. Among the vanquished was Mount Taranaki, exiled to the west coast, his flight carving out the course of the Whanganui River. These peaks are not merely mountains but serve as guardians of the land.

Tongariro and Ngāuruhoe are best experienced on the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, a full-day hike widely considered as among the best day walks on Earth. Ruapehu rewards the more committed walker with a crater lake summit that takes at least five hours return, while in winter its slopes become the North Island's finest ski area.



PHOTOGRAPHY: LAURA SMETSERS

### TONGARIRO ALPINE CROSSING

The 20.4km Tongariro Alpine Crossing is a constantly shifting procession of volcanic craters, luminous lakes, and sweeping alpine views. The trek can be walked in either direction, but most hikers start at the Mangatepopo car park and finish at Ketetahi, off State Highway 46. Allow seven to eight hours for the crossing, which begins at 1,120m and follows a well-marked, well-maintained trail throughout. There are steep sections in both directions, but anyone with a reasonable level of fitness should find it manageable – and there's no shortage of places to stop, catch your breath, and take in the scenery.

The first hour is relatively gentle, tracing the Mangatepopo Stream past the fizzing Soda Springs before the track climbs steeply into the valley and across the saddle between Tongariro and Ngāuruhoe. Beyond the saddle, the trail passes through Tongariro's rust-coloured South Crater before rising again to Red Crater, the highest point on the crossing at 1,886m.

After a short, steep descent, the trail levels out toward the mesmerising Emerald Lakes, pooled in vivid turquoise against the dark volcanic earth. Continuing past Blue Lake and onto Tongariro's northern flank, the path becomes well-formed once more, zigzagging downhill through open tussock before ducking into the welcome shade of native bush.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ZHI YUEN YAP

Adrift Tongariro + Alpine Chalets  
[adriftnz.co.nz](http://adriftnz.co.nz)

Experience the Tongariro Alpine Crossing this winter with Adrift Tongariro. Join a guided hike through dramatic alpine landscapes, then unwind with a two-night stay for two adults at Alpine Chalets, a warm, comfortable base on the edge of the park.

53 Carroll Street, Waimarino (National Park Village)  
 Instagram: [adrifftongariro](https://www.instagram.com/adrifftongariro)  
[bookings@adriftnz.co.nz](mailto:bookings@adriftnz.co.nz)



Tongariro Suites  
[tongarirosuites.co.nz](http://tongarirosuites.co.nz)

One of the Ruapehu Region's highest-rated properties, set in a hectare of native landscaped gardens with views towards Mt Ruapehu, these four contemporary suites feature generous living areas, full bathrooms, and free-standing baths. It's perfect for unwinding after the Tongariro Alpine Crossing or a day on the slopes. Enjoy the guest lounge with wood-burning fire, cedar hot tub, barbecue deck, and daily continental breakfast.

27 Hutiwai Road, Horopito  
 Midway between Ohakune and National Park Village  
 Instagram: [tongarirosuitesnz](https://www.instagram.com/tongarirosuitesnz)



Mountain Heights Lodge  
[mountainheights.co.nz](http://mountainheights.co.nz)

Nestled on the edge of Tongariro National Park, Mountain Heights Lodge offers relaxed alpine charm with B&B rooms and self-contained units. Unwind in the spa pool, explore volcanic landscapes, and embrace year-round adventure – from ski fields to iconic hikes and cycle tracks.

4576 SH4, Waimarino  
 Facebook: [mtheightslodge](https://www.facebook.com/mtheightslodge)  
[mountainheights@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mountainheights@xtra.co.nz)

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**MOUNT RUAPEHU**

At 2,797m, Ruapehu is New Zealand's tallest volcano and the highest point on the North Island, its broad mass giving rise to several smaller subsidiary peaks. The mountain is a landscape unto itself, cloaked in steaming fumaroles, mineral springs, lava fields, volcanic desert, and glacial valleys, and home to the only glaciers on North Island.

In winter, Ruapehu transforms into the North Island's premier ski destination, with vertical descents and terrain suited to every level of skier. The season typically runs from late June through mid-October, occasionally stretching into November when conditions allow.



PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMIE DESPLACES

**WHAKAPAPA**

Built in the 1920s to serve skiers and outdoor enthusiasts, Whakapapa Village retains that purpose today. Sitting at the foot of Ruapehu, it's the only permanent settlement within Tongariro National Park and the launching point for many of its best hikes.

Spreading across Ruapehu's northwest slopes, Whakapapa is New Zealand's largest ski area, covering 550ha of varied terrain. Happy Valley provides gentle, confidence-building slopes for beginners, while steep chutes, powder gullies, and backcountry trails keep advanced skiers well occupied. On a clear day, the runs are carved with Ngāuruhoe's snow-capped cone - Mount Doom itself - looming on the horizon.

**TŪROA**

Spread across Ruapehu's southwest slopes, Tūroa offers the longest vertical descent of any ski area in New Zealand - 720m from top to bottom. Its signature lift, the High Noon Express chairlift, carries riders to 2,300m, the highest lifted point in the country. For experienced skiers and snowboarders, the mountain serves up an impressive variety of terrain, including natural half-pipes and chutes. Beginners and intermediates are well looked after in the Alpine Meadow area, where wide, sweeping runs keep things fun without being overwhelming.

**TUKINO**

Tucked away on the eastern slopes of Ruapehu, Tūkino is a club-operated ski field with a character all its own. Sheltered from the prevailing westerly winds, its 170ha and 300m-plus of vertical drop are free of the crowds that descend on larger resorts. Access is off the Desert Road between Waiouru and Turangi, and a 4WD is required to get there. Open to the public and visitors alike, Tūkino is a place where all are welcome - whether you're carving turns, learning the ropes, or simply playing in the snow. When it's time to warm up, the Tūkino Café and its log fire are waiting.

**WAIMARINO/  
NATIONAL PARK VILLAGE**

Sitting at 825m, Waimarino/National Park Village holds the distinction of being Aotearoa New Zealand's highest township - and the views of the surrounding volcanic peaks more than justify the altitude.

**TŪRANGI**

In a region already renowned for its trout fishing, Tūrangi stands out as the undisputed angling capital. The relaxed town at the southern tip of Lake Taupō was purpose-built in the 1960s to house workers and families of the Tongariro hydroelectric power station, and today it serves as a northern gateway to Tongariro National Park. The Tongariro River, is a magnet for rafters and cyclists, while nearby Mount Pihanga and the secluded Lake Rotopounamu reward those after a pleasant half-day walk. Nearby Braxmere Lodge is a gem.



PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF VISIT RUAPEHU



PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMIE DESPLACES

**OHAKUNE**

Ohakune is the southern gateway to Tongariro National Park and easily its most charming. In winter it hums with energy, its chalets and bars filling with skiers using it as a base for Tūroa up the mountain. Come summer, the town shifts gears into a relaxed hub for hikers and cyclists exploring the park. Keep an eye out for the oversized carrot roadside on SH 49 – a cheerful nod to the region's farming roots.



La Pizzeria Ohakune  
lapizzeria.co.nz

La Pizzeria has been a local favourite in Ohakune for years. Whether you've just come down from Tūroa, spent the day exploring Tongariro National Park, or you're a local stopping in for your usual, they serve fresh, quality pizza in a relaxed and welcoming setting. In winter, the doors are open to skiers and snowboarders looking for something warm and satisfying. In summer, it's a casual stop for hikers, cyclists and road-trippers. Good food, friendly service, no fuss.

6 Thames Street, Ohakune  
instagram: lapizzeriaohakune



Rata Boutique Apartments  
rataohakune.co.nz

Set in the heart of Ohakune, Rata Boutique Apartments offer beautifully appointed, contemporary accommodation with designer touches, private courtyards and hot tubs – an indulgent base for exploring Mt Ruapehu, Tongariro National Park, and the region's year-round adventures.

23 Clyde Street, Ohakune  
instagram: rata.ohakune  
info@rataohakune.co.nz



Escape to Ohakune this winter and experience the best of mountain life, from snow sports to soaking under the stars.

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\*Standard T&C's apply; dates subject to availability. Offer Valid for the Winter Ski Season 2026 Sunday to Thursday only.

ohakunehottubs.co.nz  
tcb.nz | kingsohakune.co.nz | franksohakune.com



## No8 Restaurant & Bar

Nestled at the foot of Mount Ruapehu in the vibrant town of Ohakune, No8 Restaurant & Bar is a warm and welcoming dining destination that captures the true spirit of local hospitality. Proudly owned and operated by locals Teresa and Willow, No8 is a whānau-run establishment where community, connection, and great food come together.

Blending modern New Zealand flavours with classic favourites, the restaurant offers a relaxed yet stylish setting perfect for both locals and visitors alike. With a focus on quality local ingredients, friendly service, and a laid-back atmosphere, No8 has quickly become a go-to spot to unwind, share a meal, and experience the best of Ohakune's hospitality scene.

55 Clyde Street, Ohakune  
 Instagram: [no8\\_ohakune](#)  
[bookings@no8ohakune.co.nz](mailto:bookings@no8ohakune.co.nz)



## The Quarters

More than just a place to stay – The Quarters is a boutique accommodation collective designed for couples, groups, and shared adventures in the heart of the Tongariro region.

Set on the banks of the legendary Tongariro River, between the volcanic landscapes of Tongariro National Park and the lakeside charm of Taupō, The Quarters places you perfectly between adventure and escape.

Spend one day hiking alpine trails, skiing at Whakapapa, riding the Sky Waka Gondola, mountain biking forest tracks, or casting a line into world-famous trout waters, then the next exploring Taupō's vibrant cafés, boutiques, lakefront dining, and geothermal attractions.

With beautifully designed studios, apartments, a cottage, and full homes which feature cosy fireplaces for winter evenings, The Quarters is a warm, stylish base for couples, families, groups, and unforgettable shared adventures.

15 Taupahi Road, Tūrangi  
[thequarters.nz](http://thequarters.nz)



[mystays.co.nz](http://mystays.co.nz)

# Your Taupō Getaway

There's something especially appealing about a Taupō escape as the cooler months roll in – crisp mornings, long lakeside lunches, cosy evenings, and the kind of homes that make you want to stay in just as much as head out.

That's where MyStays comes in.

With more than 110 holiday homes across Taupō and Kinloch, MyStays offers a thoughtfully curated collection of stays for every kind of getaway – from cosy retreats for two to spacious homes for family weekends, girls' escapes, and group gatherings. Each home is beautifully presented, professionally prepared, and designed for comfort, ease, and connection.

Think crackling indoor fires, spa pools under the stars, generous entertaining areas, well-equipped kitchens, and outdoor spaces made for long lunches or summer evenings. Whether you're



booking a winter reset or planning ahead for warmer days, there's a MyStays home to suit the occasion.

For weekends away, milestone gatherings, or a spontaneous change of scene, MyStays has Taupō and Kinloch taken care of – all year round. Book direct at [mystays.co.nz](http://mystays.co.nz)

Lake Taupō occupies an ancient volcanic caldera with its waters stretching across an area comparable to Singapore.



#### TAUPŌ

Lake Taupō occupies an ancient volcanic caldera with its waters stretching across an area comparable to Singapore. The caldera formed some 27,000 years ago, but it was dramatically reshaped by an eruption in AD 186 so violent that both Roman and Chinese observers recorded strange colorations in the sky. Today, the lake it left behind is the largest freshwater body in Australasia, giving rise to several rivers - chief among them the Waikato, New Zealand's longest and most powerful.

A short distance north of Taupō town, which huddles in the lake's northeast corner, the Waikato thunders through a narrow gorge to become Huka Falls, one of the most visited natural spectacles in the country.

Among Taupō's most compelling attractions are the Maori Rock Carvings at Mine Bay, about 11km southwest of town. Chiseled into a 14m cliff face, the carvings pay tribute to the legendary navigator Ngatoro-i-rangi, believed to be among the first people to settle these sacred lands. Reachable only by boat, they offer a fine reason to get out onto the lake itself - with the peaks of Tongariro National Park rising dramatically over the southern shore. Taupō sits roughly an hour from the park, making it a convenient base for exploring it.

Closer to town, the geothermal park Craters of the Moon delivers an otherworldly landscape of steaming fumaroles and bubbling vents. For those after a rush, the area delivers on multiple fronts: skydiving, jet boating, and a couple of Great Rides all feature on the menu. Fly fishing is another drawcard - the lake and its surrounding rivers are widely regarded as some of the finest trout fishing waters in the world.

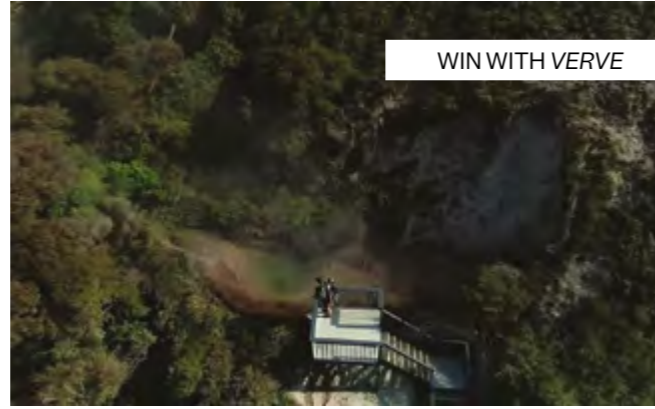
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Braxmere Lodge, Tokaanu  
[braxmere.co.nz](http://braxmere.co.nz)

Braxmere Lodge offers 10 self-contained lakeside apartments on the southern shores of Lake Taupō, minutes from Tūrangi. With a private boat ramp, direct lake access, and stunning views, it sits perfectly between world-class trout fishing on the Tongariro River, Tongariro National Park, Whakapapa Ski Field, and Tokaanu Hot Pools. An ideal year-round base for nature and adventure.

88 Waihi Road, Tokaanu  
 Facebook: [braxmere](#)



Craters of the Moon  
[cratersofthemoon.co.nz](http://cratersofthemoon.co.nz)

Craters of the Moon is one of New Zealand's oldest and most fascinating geothermal walks. Within the Taupō volcanic zone, this stunning environment features steaming fumaroles, mud pools, unique plant life and dramatic craters. Explore this one-hour walk along safe boardwalks and viewing platforms to experience a constantly changing natural environment.

**WIN** a free family pass by visiting [cratersofthemoon.co.nz](http://cratersofthemoon.co.nz) and entering your details.

171 Karapiti Road, Wairakei, Taupō  
 Facebook: [craters of the moon](#)



Hilton Lake Taupō  
[hilton.com/laketaupo](http://hilton.com/laketaupo)

Escape to Hilton Lake Taupō this winter with our newly renovated rooms, designed for comfort and warmth. Enjoy our Puppy Playcation package with your furry companion, and savour seasonal dining at Bistro Lago. Located within easy driving distance to Whakapapa Ski Area, it's the perfect base to unwind after a day on the slopes.

80-100 Napier Road, Taupō  
 Instagram: [hiltonlaketaupo](#)



Jimmy Coops Lakehouse  
[jimmycoops.co.nz](http://jimmycoops.co.nz)

Perched right on the Taupō lakefront, Jimmy Coops Lakehouse is the home of Lakeman Brewing's taproom. Here, they pour award-winning craft beers alongside a genuine paddock-to-plate burger experience. The beef is sourced directly from their own farm — the same place the brewery calls home — just 15 minutes down the road. It doesn't get fresher than that.

10 Roberts Street, Taupō  
 Instagram: [jimmycoopslakehouse](#)



L'Arte Cafe & Gallery  
[larte.co.nz](http://larte.co.nz)

L'Arté Café and Gallery is a must-visit destination when exploring Taupō. The kitchen team prepares fresh food on-site daily, offering a delicious selection of cabinet fare, handmade wholemeal bread, cakes, and slices. Set within a beautifully established garden filled with art, L'Arté features a truly unique gallery space, including an oversized outdoor mosaic "living room". All ceramic flowers and designs are hand-built in the L'Arté studio, making each piece one of a kind. These exclusive creations are available only at L'Arté Gallery or on our website.

255 Mapara Road, Acacia Bay, Taupō  
 Instagram: [larte\\_cafe\\_gallery](#)



Taupō's Floatplane  
[tauposfloatplane.co.nz](http://tauposfloatplane.co.nz)

Taupō's Floatplane offers a range of flightseeing tours over Tongariro National Park, as well as the Volcanic Plateau, Lake Taupō, White Island/Whakaari, and the many sparkling lakes of Rotorua. Enjoy breathtaking vistas in a high-wing Cessna 206 Floatplane as well as the magical sensation of taking off from and landing on water. Don't miss your opportunity to enjoy this unique flying experience!

Redoubt Street, Taupō  
 Facebook: [tauposfloatplane](#)



The Cozy Corner  
[thecozycorner.co.nz](http://thecozycorner.co.nz)

A favourite with locals, this award-winning cafe has a menu focused on whole, unprocessed ingredients with vibrant flavours and exceptional coffee. As a business committed to sustainability and community, The Cozy Corner offers plenty of dietary options and is fully licensed.

Suncourt Plaza, 19 Tamamutu Street, Taupō  
 Instagram: [@thecozycornertaupo](#)



The Retreat  
[theretreat.co.nz](http://theretreat.co.nz)

Escape to The Retreat this winter! A relaxed, lakeside haven on the shores of Lake Taupō, set among expansive park-like grounds with beautiful views, the comfortable chalets offer space to unwind. It's perfect for couples, solo travellers, families, and groups. Heated indoor pool and spas available. Pets welcome.

Book with code **VERVE26** and save 20% on stays from May–August 2026.

31 Rutherford Lane, Taupō  
 Instagram: [the\\_retreat\\_taupo](#)

# Charging Into the Future

Recent events in the Middle East have sent shockwaves through global energy markets – and straight into EV showrooms.



IMAGE: MAZDA 6e

First-quarter 2026 data from the US shows used EV sales are up 12% year-on-year and 17% on the previous quarter. In the UK, March delivered a record 86,120 electric car sales, while EV leasing specialist Octopus Electric Vehicles reported a 36% spike in inquiries since the conflict began.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, more than 1,000 EVs were registered in the week that ended on 22 March – nearly double the previous week – making it the country's biggest week for electric vehicle registrations since the end of 2023. Also in March, it was announced that New Zealand's electric vehicle public charger numbers are set to more than double, thanks to a \$52.7 million government co-funding deal with ChargeNet and Meridian.

“Many New Zealanders have thought about getting an EV, even before the fuel challenges we're currently facing,” says Transport Minister Chris Bishop. “But research shows that the lack of public chargers is holding many back from making the switch to an EV.”

The 2,574 new charge points include 1,374 DC fast chargers and 1,200 AC chargers.

“About half the new chargers will be spread across Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, the Wellington region, Christchurch, and Dunedin,” continues the transport minister, “with the other half throughout the regions, so drivers outside the main centres will benefit too.”

Energy & Climate Change Minister Simon Watts says that owning an EV in New Zealand already makes strong financial sense: “Electricity is cheaper than petrol and almost entirely generated from renewable sources like wind, geothermal, solar, and hydro.”

So, what should people consider when making the switch to an EV?

*continued over page*

“A better charging network means more New Zealanders can take advantage of it, and that's good for household budgets and our emissions profile alike.”

“There are several questions to start with: What sort of vehicle type suits your needs best? How far do you drive daily? Do you often travel long distances? Is overnight charging possible at your home? In some cases a plug-in hybrid may be a better first-step,” says Paul Sherley, product and communications manager for Mazda, who are set to release the 6e later this year (an all-electric sedan with a range of 560km that promises to “remove any hint of range anxiety!”).

When considering the costs of an EV, Paul emphasises that people need to consider that it's not as simple as a straight-up comparison with fuel. “Charging an EV at home is much cheaper than petrol, though you must pay Road User Charges (RUC). Daily running costs for EVs are lower, and maintenance expenses are reduced, but they still require upkeep. EVs are typically heavier than petrol cars due to the battery pack, so tyre wear can often be greater.”

As for the common fear of battery degradation, Paul says that this is one of the industry's biggest areas of focus.

“The battery module is central to EVs and remains the main area of development, with ongoing improvements in energy density and chemistry offering longer ranges and faster charging,” he adds. “All electrified vehicles include robust high voltage battery warranties, guaranteeing 70% capacity after eight years or 160,000km. Studies show these batteries frequently degrade more slowly than anticipated, so they will still function well beyond the warranty period.”

For someone sitting on the fence, what's the honest advice - is now a the perfect time to make the switch?

“Electrified vehicles, including plug-in hybrids and fully electric models, offer multiple advantages,” says Paul. “It's important to select one that suits your needs, factoring in price, charging options, and daily costs. Many people find using an electrified vehicle straightforward and are positive about making the switch.”

Climate Change Minister Simon Watts says that Kiwis are already making the shift as a cost-of-living choice: “Anecdotal evidence suggests even greater interest over the past couple of weeks as conflict in the Middle East has seen fuel prices increase. At a time when global fuel markets are volatile, that matters.”

“A better charging network means more New Zealanders can take advantage of it, and that's good for household budgets and our emissions profile alike. EVs produce at least 60 percent fewer lifecycle emissions than petrol vehicles.”

# Electric Escapes

Whether you're chasing wild west coast surf, geothermal steam rising across volcanic ridgelines, or a sun-soaked coastal road trip, here are a selection of anxiety-free routes from Auckland in an electric vehicle.

PHOTOGRAPHY: URAN WANG



### THERMAL EXPLORER Auckland to Rotorua to Taupō

Though most associate The Thermal Explorer Highway with the stretch of road between Rotorua and Taupō, where SH5 winds past heaps of geothermal parks such as Wai-O-Tapu, it actually begins along the SH1 in Auckland (and reaches all the way to Napier). Descending towards Taupō, plumes of steam often drift across the highway as the volcanic ridgelines Tongariro National Park command the horizon beyond. But well before then consider calling in at the likes of Hamilton Gardens or Hobbiton. There's a strong charging network along the route.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUERGEN WALLSTABE, HUKA FALLS



PHOTOGRAPHY: THORE HERTRAMPF, SURFERS AT MANU BAY, RAGLAN

### AUCKLAND TO RAGLAN

A carefree couple of hours from Auckland (and 50km west of Hamilton), easy-going Raglan is a black-sanded surf town famed the (surf) world over. Aside from the legendary waves – including one of the longest left-hand breaks on the planet – Raglan has plenty to offer by way of boho boutiques, craft stores and sun-drenched bars and eateries that

line the main drag, all run by a creative, fiercely independent community that gives the town its unhurried, come-as-you-are character. Hamilton also sits squarely on one of New Zealand's best-supported EV corridors, making the run from Auckland a stress-free charge-and-go.



#### COROMANDEL LOOP

Aotearoa's sunniest road trips is also among its most e-vehicle-friendliest! For around 400km, SH25 loops around a crooked coastline which is pōhutukawa-lined on the west with surf-pounded white and pink sands on its east. Humble former gold-mining towns and hip surf villages are scattered along the route, serving as gateways to awesome sights like Cathedral Cove, Hot Water Beach, and Whenuakura Island, a sunken ancient volcano off Whangamatā that you can kayak in to.

PHOTOGRAPHY: IMAGO DENS, CATHEDRAL COVE, TE WHANGANUI-A-HEI



PHOTOGRAPHY: MILES HOLDEN, WAITĀKERE RANGES, AUCKLAND - ŌMANAWANUI WALKING TRACK  
TOURISM NEW ZEALAND

#### WEST COAST ESCAPE

A refreshment stop at the village of Titirangi is essential before – and/or after! – Scenic Drive winds deep into 16,000ha of ancient rainforest that is the legendary Waitākere Ranges, less than an hour from Auckland. Pause at Arataki Visitor Centre for sweeping views and intricate Māori

carvings, then explore black-sanded gems like Piha, Muriwai, and more.

Iconic local attractions and adventures take the shape of the gannet colony at Muriwai (best viewed August to March), the magnificent Mercer Bay Loop trail, and Kitekite Falls.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ZEN STRATUS, WEST COAST AUCKLAND



PHOTOGRAPHY: DANITA DELIMONT, BOTTLENOSE DOLPHINS AT BAY OF ISLANDS

#### AUCKLAND TO BAY OF ISLANDS

The drive from Auckland to the Bay of Islands runs roughly 3.5 hours non-stop along SH1, but the Twin Coast Discovery Highway turns it into something worth savouring. Head up the Hibiscus Coast for Orewa's long golden beach, the farmers' market village of Matakana, the cliff-backed sands of Mangawhai,

and the glowworm-filled Waipu Caves before rejoining SH1 into Whāngārei. From there, the Tutukaka Coast leads east to the Poor Knights Islands, regarded as one of the world's top dive sites. Then it's north again until the Bay of Islands opens up ahead, all glittering water and unhurried charm.

For a full map of NZ's charging station, head to [journeys.nzta.govt.nz/ev-chargers](https://journeys.nzta.govt.nz/ev-chargers)



PHOTOGRAPHY: MILES HOLDEN, POOR KNIGHTS ISLANDS, NORTHLAND  
TOURISM NEW ZEALAND

Toyota RAV4:

# The World's Most Popular Car

WORDS  
TIM WARREN



This sixth-generation marks 30 years of evolution for a nameplate that captured hearts as a funky, compact cruiser.

The vehicle has matured into a sophisticated family machine. It follows the path of a person. It grows from a playful youth into a capable, large-scale leader. The RAV4 holds the crown as the most purchased vehicle on the planet, a status that comes from a focus on practicality.

During the recent New Zealand RAV4 launch, the Chief Engineer and Project Manager from Japan underscored the importance of this model. These men built their careers on a love for cars. There's a lot of discussion today about electrification, and it's an important conversation, especially with fuel supply and price concerns. After introducing the world to the Prius, 95% of Toyota New Zealand's passenger vehicle sales are now hybrid.

The result of never-ending development and continuous improvement, the RAV4 represents three decades of progress. The latest design adopts a handsome aesthetic. Toyota offers distinct personalities through its trim levels. The Core model features a diamond grille that radiates elegance. The Adventure trim provides a tougher snout and a wider stance for those with an outdoorsy spirit. The GR Sport emphasises an athletic look.

Each variant possesses a robust presence on the road. What started as a cute 'teenager friendly' icon with a rebellious spirit is now all grown up – a refined, family-friendly, midsized SUV that's admired by all.

Step inside to find a cabin rooted in Toyota practicality. The layout rewards those who enjoy physical controls – they sit where the hand expects them. Wipers, indicators, and stalks operate with precision. For the driver, seats with lumbar support provide comfort during long stints behind the wheel. The feature list is as long as my arm: upgraded JBL hi-fi systems fill the space with rich sound, airbags and ISOFIX points ensure safety for the smallest passengers. The dimensions provide ample headroom and generous load space. Touches like the optional ventilated seats elevate the experience.

Technology serves the driver without overwhelming. The built-in navigation system offers a complete solution and navigates while the wireless phone connections sync to play favourite tunes and offer a charge. Safety features include lane detection and adaptive cruise control. The car monitors driver attention

and the in-built video recorder archives incident footage to provide a safety record. While global safety regulations require default warning chimes, the engineers allow drivers to customise these settings. This iteration has been designed with evolving safety standards in mind, building on Toyota's strong track record in vehicle safety.

What's new to the RAV4 is Toyota's first vehicle in New Zealand to offer Connected Services, adding features such as SOS emergency call, automatic collision notification and remote vehicle access via the myToyota Connect app.

The range caters to every lifestyle through a variety of options, each with a 2.5L engine combined with hybrid (HEV) or plug-in hybrid (PHEV) systems, front-wheel drive or all-wheel drive, and different trims. Each choice delivers good power – from 143kw to the top-tier powertrain at 221kW! This punch belies its family-car looks but still manages to deliver fuel economy. The vehicle glides on highways and handles gravel roads with ease and body roll with grace. This allows the driver to navigate any terrain with confidence. The choice between front-wheel drive fleet models and all-wheel drive adventures ensures a RAV4 exists for every driveway.

With a solid chassis, natural road holding is good, while traction control systems are all present, it drives with balance and confidence. During testing, I drove through a rough patch that was beyond the limits of most vehicles. But the RAV4 was unflustered. It just gathered its thoughts and drove out of the precarious position without any special setting. It handles medium-sized ditches and steep angles with predictable safety.

The RAV4 is the world's most popular vehicle for good reason. It does everything well. It is literally today's default car – the standard by which all others face comparison. After 30 years, Toyota delivers a refined product that defies fault. It works every time. It does not fuss, and this latest version underlines its position as the industry benchmark.

2026 DENZA B5 Leopard

# Silent Strength

WORDS —  
JEFF KENNEDY



The DENZA B5 Leopard is a plug-in hybrid SUV with premium features all wrapped around a seriously capable and brilliantly engineered off-road package.

If you're buying in this market, you must evaluate the DENZA B5, the luxury brand from BYD, the world's largest manufacturer of electric vehicles.

First impressions of this well-presented machine were very positive. Big alloy wheels, a strongly bodied form, and handsome height above the innovative DiSus-P Intelligent Hydraulic Body Control System extends a compelling, attractive presence. Build quality is excellent, too.

Inside awaits a spacious, well-appointed cabin packed to the gunwales with technology, comfort, and design elements that surprise and delight. All seating is upholstered in Nappa leather, affording ventilation and heating functions throughout, and offering a variety of in-seat massage modes in the front.

For the driver, a large touchscreen complements the informative digital dashboard, and twin wireless phone-charging stations are provided. Set into the centre console is a glorious bank of chunky physical switches, gleaming jewels that could have been lifted from the cockpit of a futuristic airliner... they look amazing when lit up in the dark! The centre jewel is ruby-red, responsible for starting and stopping vehicle systems. Deeper within the central console is a cold-and-hot-box capable of keeping ice-creams frozen or sausage-rolls deliciously warm.

Topping off the in-cabin experience is a magnificent sound system crafted especially for DENZA by the leading French audiophile brand Devialet. Throughout our trial period, connectivity and performance with smartphones and radio sources was an intuitive, responsive, seamless, and faultless experience.

Driving the B5 reveals its smooth and sprightly nature. Whether moving about the city streets, travelling on the highway, or crawling in rush-hour traffic, a super-smooth and comfortable

ride is assured. "It feels like we're gliding!" was the family consensus from a Sunday-morning run out to the always-lovely Kumeū market.

Serious off-road capability does require some heft, and the B5 is a substantial vehicle. Despite that heft, the twin electric motors powered by the outstanding BYD Blade battery system create a vigorous performance: the B5 can accelerate from zero to 100km/h in just 4.8 seconds.

That class-leading Blade battery system has a capacity of 31.8kWh, and took only 14:07 minutes to load a 45% top-up at a fast-charge station for just \$15.69... and remember that the B5 can travel up to 90km in EV-only mode.

There's a lot going on in the world, and whether you're coming at this from a cost-saving, geopolitical, climate-change or lifestyle-block perspective, the DENZA B5 Leopard is a smooth, practical, and capable answer. If you're considering making the switch, this deserves some serious consideration... we just want one!





Imagine  
Beyond



ZEEKR

ZEEKRLIFE.COM

# Zeekr 7X: A Fine Ride

WORDS —  
TIM WARREN



**The Zeekr 7X is a mid-sized SUV with an all-electric powertrain.**

The exterior of the car shows familiar lines of an incredibly competitive segment, yet there are a few touches to make it distinctive. A black swatch denotes the front grille, wrapping it in a Zorro-style mask while a handsome, subtle Zeekr branding subsists on the rear door. Understated? Yes. Attractive? Indeed.

The interior presents an immediate sense of quality, with a choice of colourways. Subtle pale shades dominate the cabin. Nappa leather finishes most surfaces leading to a smile-inducing plushness, while the seats of this top-specification version also sport ventilation and heating. The driver also enjoys a massage function that provides much enjoyed lumbar support.

Rear passengers find comfort with generous legroom and even reclining seats of their own while window shades block the sun and protect privacy. The driver's headrest houses an integrated speaker to deliver navigation directions and phone calls directly. This design preserves the privacy of the conversation and leaves the cabin in silence for the rest of the group. A panoramic moonroof floods the interior with natural light, complemented by subtle mood lighting.

Storage options abound. The centre armrest opens from both sides to reveal a deep bin. A hidden storage unit sits under the elbow of the driver. The curved console cover houses the drink holders. Door storage units hide items from view. Extra USB slots appear in many locations to keep devices full of power. Even the trunk shows thought in its design. The car features a function to lower the rear suspension for easy access to the load space.

Auto-opening doors respond to the click of a button. The driver has a comprehensive heads-up display and the wheel and control stalks show careful thought. The comprehensive camera suite gives a clear view of the surroundings. Conveniently the

braking warning alerts the driver if the car in front stops with haste – and seven airbags protect the occupants. Dual 50w wireless chargers power phones without the need for cables.

For the family, the 7X offers unique modes. Pet mode keeps your little darling safe in the car. Camping mode prepares the cabin for rest. One of the entertaining features is being able to play the entertainment system on outside speakers.

As you would expect, an app handles vehicle control and over-the-air updates ensure that it's always got the best systems at hand.

The performance version utilises dual motors to deliver 475 kilowatts. This all-wheel-drive setup propels the car to 100km/hr in a breathtaking 3.8 seconds. The 800V high voltage battery system charges with pace. A charge from 10-80% takes as little as 13 minutes on a capable charger.

On my test drive the car displayed an indicated range of 450km in mixed conditions. And I took it via urban, highway, country and a few backroads. Suspension height adjustment provides extra clearance for rough paths or a lower stance for the road.

On the open road, the car glides in silence. Large Continental tyres on 21-inch rims hold the road. The handling reminds the driver this is a quality family-focused SUV.

The Zeekr 7X offers a powerful ride and a cabin full of luxury. The vehicle suits the road trip and the daily commute. This is an SUV that combines the knowledge of a global giant with the local support of a trusted name. The Zeekr 7X represents a quality choice for the New Zealand driver.

*Zeekr 7X starting price is \$69,990.*

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# Thoughtful Wool

The idea for Of Hers came during maternity leave, when founders Georgie and Rachael found themselves rethinking what women actually need from their wardrobes.

Pieces that move seamlessly through real life - from school runs to work to travel - without compromise became the starting point for a brand built on natural fibres, considered design, and everyday wearability.

### Tell us a little about your background.

We came to Of Hers from different parts of the world, but with a shared love of fashion shaped by the women around us - and knitwear in our blood from the beginning. Georgie grew up on a sheep farm in Canterbury, while Rachael grew up in Ireland, surrounded by heritage knitwear and mills.

We later met as buyers at Ballantynes, sourcing brands across New Zealand, Australia and Europe. Over time, we kept circling the same gap: beautifully made pieces were often out of reach, while more accessible options didn't last. The middle ground - quality fibres, thoughtful design, and fair pricing - barely existed.

### What sets Of Hers apart?

It's the combination: natural fibres, considered design, and accessibility without compromising quality. It's also designed by women, for women - with a feminine sensibility that runs through every piece.

### What makes one piece of knitwear better than another?

It starts with the fibre. Longer, finer fibres create softer yarns that pill less and wear better over time. We work with A grade cashmere and 100% extra fine merino because that foundation changes how a garment lives in your wardrobe. Then there's the knit - the tension, structure and construction. A well-made knit holds its shape, drapes properly, and doesn't stretch out. Finally, the finishing: hand-linked seams, carefully set necklines, and subtle detailing. These are the things you don't always see, but feel every time you wear it.

### Why is fibre provenance so important?

Because it underpins everything. Our cashmere comes from Inner Mongolia, known for producing some of the finest fibres globally, while our merino is currently sourced from Australia, with the aim of moving toward fully traceable New Zealand merino.



We work directly with our manufacturers and to recognised standards such as OEKO-TEX® and Responsible Wool Standard. It's slower but we're committed to making thoughtful decisions as we grow.

### Can you walk us through a piece where the yarn led the design?

The Wide Sleeve Julia Cardigan is a perfect example. We started with a cashmere-merino blend and initially designed something more traditional, but as we sampled, the yarn pushed us toward a double-layer construction. That gave the piece weight, structure and softness - which led naturally to the wider sleeve and relaxed silhouette. It became far more versatile than we first imagined.

### You describe sustainability as a journey. What are you still working on?

End-of-life is the biggest one. We're exploring repair and take-back options so garments can be mended or recycled, and we're working toward deeper traceability across our supply chain.

There are still challenges - packaging, freight, and the realities of being a New Zealand brand sourcing globally.

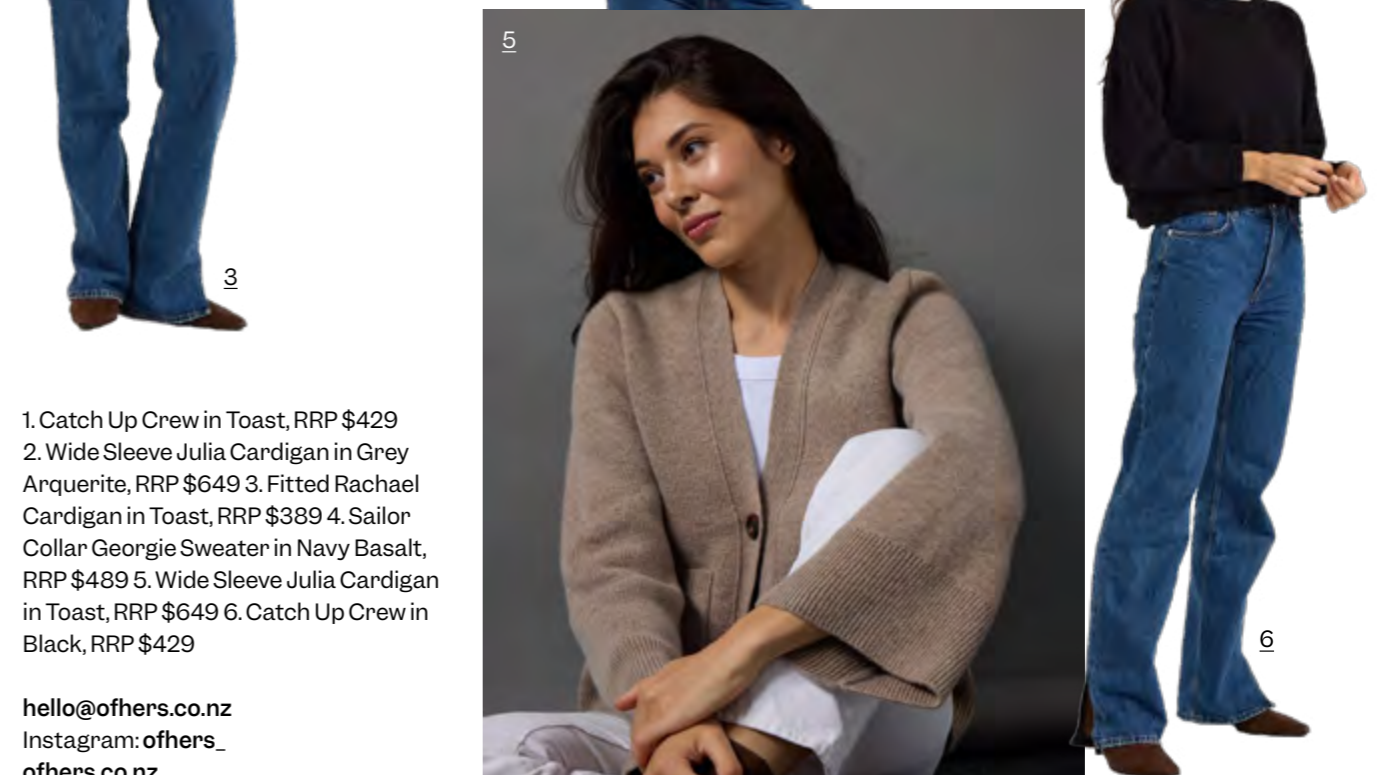
### What are your hopes for the brand?

That women genuinely love what they own - pieces that become part of everyday life. We're growing carefully, focused on community first, then thoughtful expansion.

# Of Hers



NEW CHAPTER COLLECTION



- 1. Catch Up Crew in Toast, RRP \$429
- 2. Wide Sleeve Julia Cardigan in Grey Arquerite, RRP \$649
- 3. Fitted Rachael Cardigan in Toast, RRP \$389
- 4. Sailor Collar Georgie Sweater in Navy Basalt, RRP \$489
- 5. Wide Sleeve Julia Cardigan in Toast, RRP \$649
- 6. Catch Up Crew in Black, RRP \$429

hello@ofhers.co.nz  
Instagram: ofhers\_ofhers.co.nz

# Wool and the Gang

How knitwear became cool again.

For some of us, knitwear evokes uncomfortable memories of itchy, misshapen cardigans in garish hues and patterns knitted by one's nan or elderly aunt. It is a giant leap therefore to appreciate just how cool those same woollies, and all associated needlecraft, have now become.

## Modern knitwear

In some ways it is just the inevitable movement of time, as that which was once au fait becomes so again, but there is also another phenomenon which has helped propel this ancient art form to fashion's front row: social media. Now boasting a breadth of needle-wielding influencers, the Instagram and its ilk have become the ideal place for knitters to show off their yarns. Whether cutesy crochet bikinis or gorgeous, grannyish cardigans, wool enthusiasts such as New Zealand native Nicole Leybourne (@theknitter) and USA-based Kara Eng (@karas.knit.eng), not only have thousands of followers (46k and 172k respectively) they also have thriving online marketplaces where they sell their highly coveted patterns across the globe. Not surprisingly, this online trend has

begun to seep into modern culture with knitwear having a few massive moments like the cream, cable knit sweater worn by Chris Evans in thriller flick *Knives Out* (who knew cable knit could be so sexy?); and diver Tom Daley's magnificent Team GB cardigan which he was seen knitting poolside at the Tokyo 2020 games.

## Knitting inspiration for the nation

This brings us round to the big question of why people knit. For someone like Daley, knitting seemed to not only be a way to pass time, but also a therapeutic distraction while waiting to compete at the highest level of competition in the world.

It comes as no surprise then that a huge boost in sales was seen across sewing machines, knitting kits and crochet books during pandemic, while many of us around the globe sat anxiously at home.

After all, if one is going to nervously twiddle their thumbs for weeks on end, one might as well acquire a beautiful scarf and beanie set at the end of it.

Knitting is community, as the plethora of online forums will attest. It is unity, and comes with free online patterns widely available to download.

## Purling that makes perfect sense

Beyond all the cultural ephemera, however, is the fact that knitting is just good sense. With the perils of fast fashion becoming more apparent by the day - poor working conditions in factories, water-dependant crops such as cotton and the general largesse of waste necessary to manufacture thousands of low-quality logo t-shirts - making clothes yourself is an appealing antidote.

Made with care, made with time, and made with love: you can modify the pattern exactly to your size and colour preferences, save money, and nurture a real sense of pride and accomplishment at the end of it.

Who cares if your new jumper is a little wonky, or a little baggy, or took six months to make? It's yours, and there is not another one like it in the world!



LoveCashmere  
[lovecashmere.co.nz](http://lovecashmere.co.nz)

LoveCashmere celebrates the quiet comfort of 100% pure cashmere, creating timeless pieces for New Zealand's cooler days, coastal winds, and alpine escapes. Our pure cashmere travel wrap is beautifully soft, lightweight, and endlessly versatile – ideal for flights, winter weekends, ski trips, and relaxed evenings at home. Draped over coats, knits, or dresses, it brings refined warmth and everyday elegance to the moments you want to feel comfortably, beautifully wrapped.

Instagram: [lovecashmerenz](https://www.instagram.com/lovecashmerenz)

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Corporation

# Undo the Summer

## Sun, surf... and spots? Let's fix that – your skin recovery plan!

A New Zealand summer leaves its mark. Long days, bare skin, salt water and sunshine are part of who we are – but by May, the mirror often shows the evidence of months in the sun. Pigment that wasn't there in October, redness that lingers, skin that feels a little less even and a little less luminous.

For the nurses at Clinic 42 and 4O2, this is known terrain. Post-summer skin isn't about 'damage control' in the dramatic sense – it's about understanding what UV exposure does beneath the surface and responding with precision rather than panic.

### WHY UV SHOWS UP LATER

Ultraviolet radiation doesn't stop affecting the skin when summer ends. UV exposure stimulates melanocytes (pigment-producing cells) and blood vessels, while also triggering low-grade inflammation that can sit quietly beneath the surface for weeks or months. The result? Pigmentation, diffuse redness and uneven tone that often appear well after the tan fades.

UV also disrupts collagen signalling, contributing to textural changes such as fine lines, crepiness and loss of firmness. Treating these concerns requires an understanding of both surface and structural skin changes – something the Clinic 42 and 4O2 nurses prioritise in every assessment.

### CLARITY FIRST, THEN QUALITY

One of the cornerstones of our clinics post-summer reset is light-based therapy, particularly IPL (intense pulsed light) delivered via the Venus Versa Pro platform. IPL uses specific wavelengths to target excess pigment and vascular redness, allowing the body's natural processes to gradually clear these concerns. When performed thoughtfully, it can improve overall clarity without disrupting the skin barrier.

Importantly, IPL is not a blanket solution. Skin type, depth of pigment, and vascular sensitivity all influence whether – and how – it's used. This is where a medical-led approach is central: treatments are selected based on clinical assessment, not trends.

Once clarity is addressed, attention can shift to skin quality – specifically collagen support. TriBella is a multi-modal



treatment performed on the Venus Versa Pro, which combines IPL, radiofrequency skin tightening and nano-fractional resurfacing in a single protocol. Together, these energies work at different depths to support firmness, texture and overall skin resilience.

Additionally, Dermalpen 4 microneedling treatment creates controlled micro-injuries, stimulating the skin's natural repair cascade, encouraging new collagen and elastin formation and helping refine texture over time. Rather than chasing a quick fix, the goal is cumulative improvement – skin that functions better, not just looks brighter for a few weeks.

### TREATMENT BY DESIGN

The philosophy is simple but exacting: there is no one-size-fits-all solution in skin health. With more than 40 years of combined clinical experience, our team understands how seasonal exposure, lifestyle, and intrinsic ageing intersect – and how to respond without over-treating.

A post-summer plan may involve staged treatments, strategic spacing, or periods of consolidation where the skin is supported rather than stimulated. This restraint is intentional. Good outcomes are built on skill, not speed.

### THE TAKEAWAY

A true glow-back isn't about erasing summer – it's about recalibrating after it. With evidence-based technologies like IPL, TriDerma and Dermalpen and guided by clinical judgment rather than trends, we approach May as a refinement phase – where calm, clarity and skin health take priority.

Because the best results aren't rushed. They're built.

*If you would like to start your Skin Recovery Plan with Clinic 42 Epsom [clinic42.co.nz](http://clinic42.co.nz) or Clinic 4O2 Takanini [clinic4o2.co.nz](http://clinic4o2.co.nz), book a complimentary nurse consult online.*

# Book Your Autumn Appointment

Autumn invites a slower pace, thoughtful moments, and a renewed focus on wellbeing.

As the season changes, it's the perfect time to refresh your smile and treat dental care as an act of self-care.



At re-dental, every treatment is guided by precision, artistry, and calm expertise. From subtle aesthetic enhancements to routine care, each experience is designed to feel personal, effortless, and uniquely you.

Book a consultation today and discover options for tailored treatment plans to suit you.

Book online at [re-dental.co.nz](http://re-dental.co.nz)  
09 600 1739 | [info@re-dental.co.nz](mailto:info@re-dental.co.nz)



## NORDIC KIWI – NORDIC WALKING

Nordic Walking is a fitness activity which uses specifically designed poles to enhance and intensify the natural way of walking. It's essential to learn the correct technique, as the well-performed Nordic Walking action incorporates the upper body, improves posture and engages 90% of muscles, giving a 'total body workout'.

[nordicwalking.co.nz](http://nordicwalking.co.nz)



## LA PELLE SKIN CLINIC

La Pelle is a premier Auckland skin clinic dedicated to advanced regenerative aesthetics and body contouring. They now proudly introduce Aqualyx®, a leading non-surgical, fat-dissolving treatment brand new to New Zealand. This remarkable solution permanently destroys stubborn fat cells in localised pockets, like the double chin, abdomen and thighs. Patients love how it contours difficult bulges (think bra line and love handles) without surgery, revealing smoother, more sculpted results.

[lapelle.co.nz](http://lapelle.co.nz)

# Beauty Picks

This month's beauty edit is all about skin-first innovation with a playful twist, from candy-coated stylers to colour-correcting primers.

**essano  
Future Skin  
Bio-Retinoid Serum**  
A gentle retinol serum with a clinically backed blend of bio-retinoid & Granactive Retinoid™ which visibly smooths fine lines & refines skin texture.



**Lifestream  
Beauty Biotics**  
A precision blend of targeted pre- and probiotics, hyaluronic acid, and antioxidant-rich NZ blackcurrant that supports collagen, hydration, and resilient skin. Science-led luxury for a visibly refined complexion.

**Givenchy  
Prisme Libre Skin & Color  
Serum Primer**  
Instant radiance and dullness correction. All-day glow, 24-hour hydration, and 12-hour plump. Colour correction and blur that keeps getting better over time.



**Elizabeth Arden  
Retinol + HPR  
Ceramide Rapid Skin  
Renewing Eye Cream**  
Powerful yet gentle retinoid technology for the delicate eye area. Instantly improves crow's feet, dark circles, and puffiness.



**Wildheke  
Body Lotion & Body Wash**  
A set for tired, sensitive skin. Magnesium lotion cools and silky-hydrates. Gentle body wash cleanses without stripping. Both powered by New Zealand botanicals.



**Aēsop  
Resolute Facial  
Concentrate**  
A potent Retinoid-enriched oil-serum to expedite surface renewal, smooth and strengthen the skin.



**ghd  
Chronos Styler  
in Sunkissed Peach**  
Indulge your sweet side with candy-coated summer styling from ghd's new jelly collection. Five mouth-watering shades, heat-resistant case included—from beach waves to blowouts, your hair goals await.



**Fenty Beauty  
Trace'D Out Lip Liner**  
Creamy, true-cast colours with no ash or drag. Universally flatters and lasts eight hours, in the brand new shade Rose Amber.



**Linden Leaves  
Rose Radiance Oil**  
The latest addition to the range, this luxurious facial oil blends seven botanicals and Bakuchiol to nurture skin with radiant, sensorial results.



## Too Processed to Be True: The Rise of Ultra-Processed Foods

**New Zealand has among the highest global rates of bowel cancer, increasingly diagnosed at younger ages. I am often asked as a Gastroenterologist about the cause of this.**

More evidence has come to light about ultra-processed foods, made from refined ingredients, additives, and very little whole or real food. Our ancestors were never exposed to this, and the human gut has not evolved to handle it. This includes emulsifiers, artificial sweeteners, flavour enhancers, and stabilisers, added to improve taste, texture, and shelf life rather than nutrition.

Your gut is home to trillions of bacteria called the microbiome, crucial for digestion, immunity, weight, and mood. High ultra-processed food intake disrupts this ecosystem, causing inflammation, bloating, fatigue, variable bowels, and even polyps or cancer.

A large long-term study followed nearly 30,000 nurses for 25 years (mean age 45), tracking diet and Colonoscopy results. Ultra-processed foods made up 35% of intake, and those with the highest consumption had 45% more precancerous polyps

than those with the least, reinforcing the link between diet and health outcomes.

It's not about eliminating processed foods but prioritising filling whole foods, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, and lean meat. A simple rule: if a product has a long ingredient list with unfamiliar names or can sit out for days and still look good, it's likely ultra-processed. Real, minimally processed foods like fruits, vegetables, or cooked leftovers tend to spoil.

At Waitemata Endoscopy, we aim to make taking a proactive approach to your gut health easy and can offer most standard Colonoscopy and Gastroscopy appointments within seven working days of receiving a referral to our group of experienced Specialists\*

To view Dr Schauer's talk about gut health visit:  
[waitemataendoscopy.co.nz/conditions](http://waitemataendoscopy.co.nz/conditions)

*Dr Cameron Schauer  
Gastroenterologist and Interventional Endoscopist  
at Waitemata Endoscopy*

**WE**  
are dedicated to exceptional patient care

With increased capacity, Waitemata Endoscopy offers greater access to a group of experienced Gastroenterologists and Surgeons, dedicated to providing quality and compassionate care.

**Appointments are available within 7 working days for a Colonoscopy or Gastroscopy by matching you with the availability of our Specialists\***

Talk to your GP about a referral to the Waitemata Endoscopy Group, or you can self-refer via:

[www.waitemataendoscopy.co.nz/book](http://www.waitemataendoscopy.co.nz/book)

Or call us on (09) 925 4449

// 53 Lincoln Rd, Henderson  
// 212 Wairau Rd, Wairau Valley

**Dr Cameron Schauer**  
Gastroenterologist & Endoscopist  
a joint venture with Southern Cross Healthcare

Scan the QR code to view Dr Schauer's video on Gut Health

# Bathed in Beauty

These blissful spaces prove that bathrooms don't have to be a bore. See them as an extension of your personal style and create a bathroom with serious chemistry.



**WHITE HAUTE**

This bathroom elevates traditional elements such as the classic combination of white and brass, vanity mirrors as well as old-school basins by combining them with show-stopping features that include: custom-designed XXL round mirrors; contemporary hexagonal tiles; and bare bulbs hung from cord cables positioned on the wall with bespoke brass support.



**ROUGHED UP**

Unique details, layered textures and a rich, warm palette give this space its inviting character. Vibrant plants with reflective, waxy leaves and the highshen copper ball-and-claw tub provide a smooth, glossy contrast to the rustic textures. Furniture, accessories and fittings bring a touch of nostalgia and individuality, the end result being the antithesis of showroom sterility.





JEWEL ROOM

The North African influence remains a magic formula for statement bathrooms. The main event is, of course, floor-to-ceiling tessellated Zellige tiles in lapis blue with their subtle variations in texture and colour. A simple timber-framed glass door, brass light and shower fittings and a dramatic marble basin set low to the ground ensures the finished look is classic and contemporary.



RUSTIC RETREAT

Framed by a grid of glass, this bathroom draws the landscape in, turning every soak into a moment of quiet escape. A freestanding tub anchors the space, its sculptural form softened by natural textures and muted tones. Timber, stone, and linen create warmth, while filtered light adds a gentle, ever-changing mood to this serene, grounded sanctuary.





PRETTY IN PINK

Don't shy away from all-over colour in a small bathroom or washroom. As well as enlivening the space, colourful walls will deflect attention from any design shortfalls. Pink, a shade that has crossed the line from accent colour to full-on classic, is a fun, lively and fresh choice.



SHADES OF GREY

Old meets contemporary meets futuristic in this striking bathroom. Glossy subway tiles and a painted concrete floor look unexpectedly fresh in combination with vintage-style pressed ceiling panels (who needs wallpaper!) that lend texture and pattern. The interplay of old and new is taken to the next level here.





**INDUSTRIAL LUXE**

In an open-plan bedroom, the bathroom zone has been defined by a raised concrete platform. The industrial-style glass and steel shower cube is a showstopper, the restrained glamour of the space enhanced by elegant details such as tessellated Zellige tiles, an oak bathroom vanity, a shell chandelier, a large framed mirror and decorative ladder used for towels rather than hooks



**BAROQUE AND ROLL**

What at first seems to be a traditional bathroom space reveals itself to have a modern edge thanks to contemporary drop-pendant lighting, a beautiful gold side table with a delicate profile and a deep Victorian-style ball-and-claw-foot bathtub that has been updated with a coat of glossy graphite-hued paint. The carved framed mirror – an antique shop find – is a dramatic focal piece.





**MONOCHROME COOL**

A study in contrast, this bathroom pairs deep charcoal tones with crisp white for a look that feels both graphic and grounded. Clean-lined fixtures and a streamlined vanity keep the aesthetic sharp, while patterned tiles add visual rhythm. Soft touches – timber, textiles, and greenery – bring warmth and balance, ensuring the space feels considered, contemporary, and effortlessly liveable.



**BACK TO BASICS**

If ever there was the perfect marriage of restrained industrial cool and freeform organic spirit then this bathroom is it. Every element is perfectly curated for functionality as well as aesthetic balance: from the precise lines of the bespoke black galvanised steel shelves set against creamy white, artfully imperfect Zellige tiles to a collection of apothecary bottles.





PHOTOGRAPHY: CLAY BANKS

resene.co.nz

# Bathroom Trends

Today's bathrooms are evolving into calm, luxurious retreats, blending natural textures with smart, streamlined design.

One of the strongest trends is a move towards nature-inspired palettes. Crisp whites, warm creams and earthy greens create a soothing base, while shades like forest green or deep navy add sophistication. Timber-look tiles, marble finishes and indoor plants further enhance this organic feel, bringing warmth and life into the space.

At the same time, high-tech minimalism is reshaping how bathrooms function.

Clean lines, walk-in showers and concealed storage keep spaces uncluttered, while smart features, such as programmable showers, built-in speakers and mirrored televisions all add a layer of everyday indulgence. The focus is on simplicity in appearance, paired with advanced functionality behind the scenes.

Glass and transparency are gaining traction, too, with frosted partitions and glass splashbacks helping to maximise light while maintaining privacy. Soft blue and green tones in tiles and glass features contribute to a tranquil, spa-like atmosphere.

Finally, paint and pattern offer an easy way to personalise. Textured whites, soft greys, geometrics and patterned tiles add interest, while durable, mould, mildew, and importantly steam resisting paints from the Resene Kitchen and Bathroom range ensure longevity. The overall look is refined yet inviting, designed for both relaxation and practical living.

*Resene ColorShops and the Resene website offer a comprehensive array of options, visit [resene.co.nz](http://resene.co.nz)*

## Good Brief!

Architecture design is the brief.

WORDS —  
PAUL LEUSCHKE

For me, the client's brief is all important and is critical in obtaining a good result.

Architects are only as good as the client allows. A thoughtful and honest client brief will get us closer to your desired house.

The budget is part of the brief but not the main item. It helps to determine house size, finishes and construction methodology. But let's face it, the budget is never big enough for the wish list. What is important is what the client wants out of the house, how they want to live in it.

When we ask clients what they want they can only tell us what they know or have experienced. What they have experienced is usually living in an existing house and they have had to adapt to that house and its oddities. With a new house, it can be adapted to your desired lifestyle.

My job is to challenge the client's brief where necessary and offer alternatives.

For example, changing from a series of rooms to open plan can make the house feel bigger while having a smaller footprint.

When a client is uncertain of what they want, I ask them what they don't want. One client said he didn't want the same house as his friends. He said at dinner parties when he came out of the bathroom, he doesn't know whose house he is in as they all looked the same.

A great brief.

The brief usually starts with the big-ticket items such as number of bedrooms, bathrooms, living areas, together with their lifestyle. Are they entertainers? Do they have a hobby? Are they relaxed or formal?

As the brief develops it's the size of the bedrooms, the number of ensuites, the ceiling heights, etc.

One of my client's parents and extended family stayed with them often. The brief was for a generous guest suite but to be located as far away as possible from the main family living areas. The nuclear family wanted privacy.

The brief gets influenced by the children who want a swimming pool. Followed by extended family, "you must have a scullery", followed by friends. Friends may not suggest anything, but you may

notice for the first time, their houses. Then there is social media, magazines and TV programmes.

Finally, the client will consider what the next owner might want and that one I shut down quickly. We aren't designing for the next owner, we are designing for you.

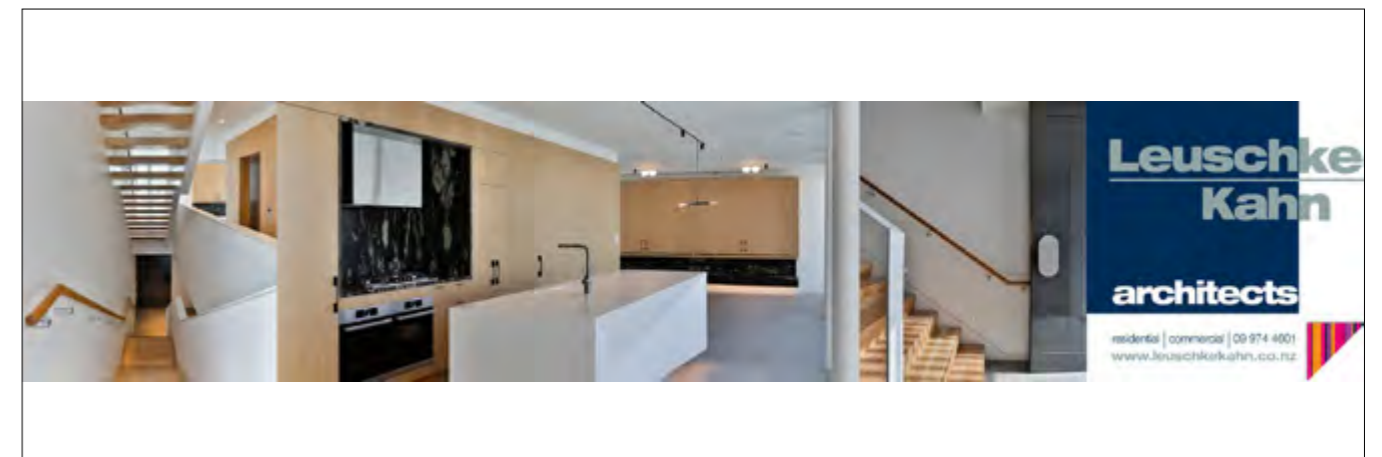
The one influence on the brief to ignore is your neighbours. They always want to have their say, which is don't change anything.

I enjoy clients bringing me images of things they like. It usually isn't obvious what they like in the image but after discussion it could be a feeling, a colour, an object. All helpful.

If you are going through the joy and pain of a new house or alteration, a good brief will get you closer to the house you wanted or didn't know you wanted and the budget allowed.

A good brief makes the house yours.

[paul@leuschkekahn.co.nz](mailto:paul@leuschkekahn.co.nz)  
021 894 895  
[leuschkekahn.co.nz](http://leuschkekahn.co.nz)



# Design of May

## Refined Living

### Arezzo Lamp with Olive Velvet Shade

The Arezzo Lamp with Olive Velvet Shade combines sculptural form with rich texture. A refined lighting piece that adds warmth, depth, and understated elegance to any space. [refinedliving.nz](http://refinedliving.nz)



## Kovacs Design Furniture

### Mika Chair

The Mika chair features sculpted solid beech timber legs, a thoughtfully engineered inner back structure, and generous cushioning. Its balanced silhouette blends curves and angles. [kovacs.co.nz](http://kovacs.co.nz)



## Source Mondial

### Whistler Rug

Inspired by the Great Master of Modern Art, this piece captures Whistler's signature atmospheric tones through the lustrous sheen of pure silk and premium wool. Hand-knotted with a high-low pile in an unparalleled, luxurious and sophisticated finish. [sourcemondial.co.nz](http://sourcemondial.co.nz)



## Wilson & Dorset

### The Stone Set

Inspired by New Zealand riverstones, these three firm, stackable sheepskin cushions mold to the body for floor seating, headrests, or modular play. [wilsondorset.com](http://wilsondorset.com)



## Design Italia

### Bellagio Swivel Lounge Chair in Perseide Olive Green

Italian craftsmanship meets everyday comfort in this swivel lounge chair. Olive green fabric, sand stitching, and a black swivel base create refined luxury for any interior. [designitalia.co.nz](http://designitalia.co.nz)



## Jardin

### Picolino Console Table

Light on its feet yet structurally strong, this compact, minimalist table fits entryways or behind sofas, adding storage and a refined colour pop to small spaces. [jardin.co.nz](http://jardin.co.nz)



## L.A. Imports

### Solid Wood Multi Use Table

Heartwood tabletop paired with a Shou Sugi Ban-inspired base, a striking fusion of natural warmth and Japanese technique. [laimports.co.nz](http://laimports.co.nz)

## Source Mondial

### JORI Daydreamer Armchair

Lightweight and comfortable, this swiveling armchair moves easily, offering dynamic seating and acting as a true passe-partout, blending seamlessly into any high-end interior. [sourcemondial.co.nz/jori](http://sourcemondial.co.nz/jori)



## LyZadie

### FLOW Dining Table

Handcrafted in rescued river rimu from the South Island, this table features a brass pattern inlet and polished brass legs. A location marker shows the wood's origin. Made to order in Christchurch. [lyzadiedesignstudio.com](http://lyzadiedesignstudio.com)

## Wilson & Dorset

### The Shaggy Bean Bag

Devotees call this bean bag life-changing: eight sheepskins, non-slip hide base, and 320L of microbeans for supportive, moldable comfort. Easily moved around the home. [wilsondorset.com](http://wilsondorset.com)



## Trenzseater

### Sebastian Sofa in Eucalyptus Veneer

This sofa features high-gloss eucalyptus veneer and sumptuous Loki natural upholstery. Pair with the matching chair to create the ultimate seating area. [trenzseater.com](http://trenzseater.com)



## LyZadie

### LIQUIDEMBRACE Rug

Born from a poem and sketch, Liquid Embrace is handcrafted in New Zealand premium pure wool. Soft, resilient, and made for generations. [lyzadiedesignstudio.com](http://lyzadiedesignstudio.com)



## Mr Ralph

### Bubble Saucer Pendant

The Bubble Family features stunning mid-century classics. Designed using crisp white resin, they are a breeze to clean. [mrralph.co.nz](http://mrralph.co.nz)

## Refined Living

### Lorenzo Side Table in Brass

A handcrafted aluminium piece with a vintage brass finish and hollow form, offering versatile use as a side table, stool, or sculptural accent. [refinedliving.nz](http://refinedliving.nz)



## Design of May

Continued...



## Refined Living

### Cadiz Occasional Chair

The Cadiz Occasional Chair blends classic form with contemporary style, featuring a sculpted silhouette, tailored upholstery, and refined comfort—an elegant statement piece for any modern interior. [refinedliving.nz](http://refinedliving.nz)

## LyZadie

### DANCEOFGEOMETRY Console Table

This side table, which can also feature as a console, pairs handcrafted stones by Amie Redpath with metal parts by Q Metal Designs. Artisan geometry for any space. [lyzadiedesignstudio.com](http://lyzadiedesignstudio.com)



## Wilson & Dorset

### The Quarto

Sheepskin is the ultimate home multitasker. Every fleece has its own built-in dirt and moisture protection, making it as practical as it is beautiful for everyday use. Four premium skins expertly sewn together for a rug that makes a real statement.

[wilsondorset.com](http://wilsondorset.com)

Mr. Ralph  
Beautiful Lighting

## SHINE A LIGHT

I founded Mr Ralph Lighting in 2013 out of a lifelong love for lighting, and a personal frustration: When renovating my own cottage in Cambridge I simply couldn't find beautiful, affordable lighting.

Since then, we have established a fabulous team, a distribution centre in Paeroa and a flagship studio based in Gordonton, Waikato.

Along with strong relationships with New Zealand lighting designers like iO Maker and David Trubridge, we design and manufacture our own Mr Ralph core range of products, this is my true passion, designing products that are enduring and of a high quality at realistic pricing.

Customer service is also a passion of mine; we have built a brand where customers are at the heart of every decision. We are based in provincial New Zealand purposefully, the best people live and work for us in Paeroa



and the Waikato, and we can leverage off reasonable rents and easy transport links.

Our business is a mix of retail and trade/commercial and we have Nic our dedicated trade specialist who can help with large or small projects. We are also now shipping to Australia, with our website optimised to give Aussie customers the right AUD pricing and shipping is included.

Recently our amazing photographer Mel spent time with me at home, capturing some new products out in the wild, hopefully helping to inspire that by layering wall and pendant lighting together you get that feeling of warmth and home.



So you can contact us via phone or email, we have amazing lighting consultants who provide a free service, offering practical and cohesive lighting ideas, just send us plans or photos of your project, OR you can visit us in our Gordonton Studio and really feel the impact of 400sqm of lighting inspiration, free parking and only around one hour from Auckland and Tauranga. Can't wait to be Lighting Friends.



1032 Gordonton Road, Gordonton  
0800 67 72574  
[info@mrralph.co.nz](mailto:info@mrralph.co.nz)  
[mrralph.co.nz](http://mrralph.co.nz)



## Bespoke comfort with \$1,000 off

Redefine your living space this May with \$1,000 off every sofa at Corso Interiors.

Discover our collection of exquisite New Zealand designed sofas, crafted with integrity and designed to last. From bespoke designs tailored to your space to our curated floorstock, enjoy \$1,000 off the retail price. A rare opportunity to bring home enduring comfort and thoughtful design at exceptional value.

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barfoot.co.nz

## Claudia Wright

Barfoot & Thompson Remuera realtor Claudia Wright grew up in a family of real estate agents in Wellington where she learnt all facets of the industry from staging through to selling.

Hear from one of Claudia's satisfied clients below.

*"Martelli Buyers worked with Claudia to secure an investment property in Remuera for our offshore client. Claudia was exceptionally professional and delightful to work with. She helped us with every step of due diligence and whenever an issue came up she was proactive to find a solution. The result was a great property secured for our client and a very positive experience for Martelli Buyers working with Claudia. We would recommend her to any vendor seeking a hard working, solutions focussed professional."*

You can email Claudia at [c.wright@barfoot.co.nz](mailto:c.wright@barfoot.co.nz) or call 022 040 2942 to find out more.

## Convert your cross-lease property to freehold with good title

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## HOME RENOVATIONS

# Roller-coaster or stroll in the park?

Some people love rollercoasters. The climb. The brief stomach-dropping sensation of being completely out of control. The screaming. The moment at the bottom checking you've still got your wallet.

Those people would love certain renovation contractors.

It starts with a thrillingly low quote. Then, week two brings the exciting "we found something unexpected". Week five introduces a stomach-dropping sensation when they mention a discontinued material, which means price adjustments. Week eight is when the optimistic schedule hits reality at 220km/h. And the great finale arrives: an invoice that's somehow both a surprise and, in retrospect, entirely predictable. They're again at the bottom, checking they still have their wallet.

Exhilarating. If that's your thing.

Viv and Rupert are not rollercoaster enthusiasts. Even less so if it risks their prized heritage property: a rare 1920s homestead on the border of Cornwall Park that needed restoring.

*"Ashley's scoping was as impeccable as Daniel's paintwork. The Wall Treats methodology ensured there were no surprises, as we've experienced with other heritage properties." - VIV*



Heritage projects needn't bring surprises mid-ride if timber is handled as the honoured material it is. Lead light left exactly as it should be, and joinery given the material literacy those details have always deserved.

A completely uneventful restoration is the very best kind.

WALLTREATS  
Master Painters



## WIN WITH WALL TREATS

# Give Your Walls a Treat

Ashley & Daniel at Wall Treats are looking for three special heritage or character properties to protect and enhance through either full interior or exterior painting.

You receive a preferential rate in exchange for featuring your home and sharing your experience in a case study.\*

## How to Enter

Email [admin@walltreats.co.nz](mailto:admin@walltreats.co.nz) with a picture of your home, full name, and phone number by 31 May 2026.\*

\*T&C's apply. Entries close 31 May 2026.



# BUILDING BEAUTIFUL SPACES

PHOTOGRAPHY: SOPHIE HEYWORTH

**Dan Heyworth, the director of pioneering design and construction group Box & Co., talks to Verve about the evolution of the business, shifting demand, and what's next.**

### **What was the thinking behind splitting the business into Box Studio and Box Build?**

We hate turning away work simply because we can't build in certain locations, like the South Island. At the same time, we were getting more enquiries from designers and architects to build for their clients, so it felt like a natural evolution. It allows us to use the 15 years of experience of our building team across a wider range of projects, including those from other designers. Likewise, Box Studio can take on design work that may or may not be built by Box Build.

### **How does allowing clients to "choose their own journey" change or improve their experience?**

There are a lot of decisions involved in building a new home, including choosing the right team. Some clients know from day one they want a full design-and-build experience, especially those who've built before and



DAN HEYWORTH

“Giving clients that flexibility lets them engage in a way that suits their confidence and experience.”

understand the pitfalls. Others prefer to see how the process unfolds and how the team works together before committing. Giving clients that flexibility lets them engage in a way that suits their confidence and experience.

### **Where are you seeing the most demand right now?**

At the moment, it's mainly renovations and extensions. Larger new builds are harder to come by, as people are less willing to take on significant financial commitments compared to the period prior to 2021.

### **What are the biggest challenges in renovation projects?**

Renovations are much harder to price with certainty. Labour on a new build might sit around 15% but on a renovation it can be up to 30%, depending on complexity. Often you don't fully understand what you're dealing with until you open up walls and cladding. That uncertainty is the key risk, so we must be upfront with clients about the level of contingency required. It's a balancing act - you don't want to scare clients off, but you also don't want to be overly optimistic about how smoothly things will go.

### **Rosanna Anderson joins as design manager – what is she bringing to the team?**

It's great having Rosanna on board. She's originally from the Bay of Plenty and brings years of experience across the full design process, from concept through to consent drawings. In true Box spirit, she's also renovating her own place on Waiheke Island and doing a lot of the work herself. Our company has always been defined by its people as much as its projects, and her energy and perspective fit naturally within the team.



### **How do you see Box using AI?**

It's an interesting time, both economically and technologically. We have a significant body of knowledge across completed homes, plans and costings, and the opportunity is to leverage that more effectively. AI presents a wide range of possibilities, and we're actively exploring how to use it in ways that genuinely benefit our clients. Ultimately, it's about combining useful technology with great people to deliver on our vision of designing and building spaces that enrich lives.

### **Looking ahead, how do you see Box evolving over the next 5–10 years?**

We're creative builders at heart, so we'll continue to grow into areas that complement what we already do. We've expanded into smaller, more affordable homes with our Artis product, and into concrete pool building with Frontier Pools. Future additions could include areas like landscape design and build, which naturally overlap with our work. Most of our growth has come from opportunity and meeting the right people, and that will likely continue - as long as what we do reflects our values as a tight-knit team creating environments that are thoughtful, beautiful and enduring.

Find out more at [box.co.nz](https://www.box.co.nz)

# Very Vietnam

WORDS —  
STEVE HUỠNH

Deeply rooted in history and rich in scenery, Vietnam has long captivated travellers of all stripes...

## HÀ LONG BAY

Unesco World Heritage Site *Hà Long Bay* is one of Vietnam's most mesmerising landscapes, where thousands of limestone islands tower above the emerald-green water. Immersed in legend, many islands carry their own myths and boast hidden caves, quiet shores, and sunlit beaches. Artists have long been drawn to its ever-changing scenery and imposing forms, while its raw and untamed atmosphere even caught the eye of director Jordan Vogt-Roberts, who chose the bay as a filming location for *Kong: Skull Island* – a reboot of the King Kong franchise.



SƠN ĐOÒNG CAVE

You can find the largest cave on Earth in *Quảng Bình* province, first discovered in 1990 and only fully explored and measured in 2009. Recognised by the Guinness World Records, this natural wonder is an otherworldly environment where vast caverns, surreal formations, and mist-laden air create a fantastical atmosphere, all shaped over thousands of years.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDREW SVK



ĐÀ NẴNG

Whether you're chasing sunshine or eager to dive into the richness of Vietnamese cuisine, *Đà Nẵng* delivers on every front. Set along Vietnam's central coast, the city sits near the former historic imperial capital, *Huế*. It is also home to the iconic architectural marvel Golden Bridge, seemingly suspended in the sky by two giant, moss-covered stone hands. From vibrant local markets and pristine beaches to a strong culinary scene and rich cultural heritage, *Đà Nẵng* provides a seamless blend of comfort, discovery, and authentic Vietnamese experiences.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JET DELA CRUZ

## SAPA

Tucked into the misty highlands of northern Vietnam, Sapa is graced with a rare climate that nurtures an extraordinary range of high-altitude medicinal plants like wild ginseng, teas, and the rare green turmeric. The region is home to Mount Fansipan, also known as the 'Roof of Indochina', which rises to 3,147m, making Sapa an irresistible destination for hikers, too.

PHOTOGRAPHY: DOAN TUAN



PHOTOGRAPHY: ADOBE IMAGES; ABOVE: HOI AN AT TWILIGHT

# Stitches in Time



The romantic Hoi An, a Unesco World Heritage Site nestled on a tributary of the Thu Bon River in Central Vietnam, enchants visitors with its evocative lantern-lit streets and perfectly preserved historic architecture.

Once a thriving small-scale trading port, the town exchanged goods with merchants from across Asia and beyond. Such cosmopolitan connections left a deep imprint on the town, as indigenous Vietnamese traditions blended first with Chinese and Japanese influences, and then European ones to produce an urban culture found nowhere else.

Today the old town preserves a cohesive complex of more than 1,100 timber-framed buildings. Open markets, ferry quays, pagodas, and family homes sit side by side.

And while most will first think of the likes of London's Savile Row, or the Via del Corso in Rome when it comes to bespoke clothing, it is Hoi An that is the tailoring capital of the world.

That reputation was born from Hoi An being a vital stop on the Maritime Silk Road, the great sea route linking Asia and the Mediterranean. From the 16th through to the 19th centuries, merchants from China, Japan, and Europe converged here, bringing with them a wealth of fabrics, patterns, and techniques that local artisans absorbed and made their own.

That heritage lives on in the 200 or so tailor shops that today line the old streets. Skilled artisans can transform fabric into a tailored suit, ball gown, or a winter coat in anything from a few hours to a few days. Whether visiting Vietnam on a shoestring, or a luxurious trip of a lifetime, an appointment with one of the port's highly skilled tailors is an absolute must do.

# French Fusion



From 1887 until the Geneva Accord of 1954, Vietnam formed part of French Indochina, a colonial territory that also encompassed Laos and Cambodia.

Today, the imprint of that period remains deeply embedded in the country's culture - and nowhere more so than in its food.

"Baguettes and pâté ... The French had such a profound impact on the Vietnamese way of life yet I've never stopped to really consider the culinary legacy they left behind," writes Vietnamese-Australian chef, food writer and restaurateur Luke Nguyen in his culinary tome, *Indochine*, "or how much influence it has had on my own and other Vietnamese families' cooking techniques."

Bread has never been embraced elsewhere in Asia as it has here, where millions begin their day with a *bánh mì*. While the baguette was introduced by the French, it evolved using rice flour, resulting in a lighter, airier texture that's unique to Vietnam.

Then there is *phở* - arguably the country's most famous dish and whose name is widely believed to derive from the French broth *pot-au-feu*.

Madame Van, chef of Le Beaulieu at the Sofitel Metropole in Hanoi, explains how beef entered the Vietnamese mainstream: "Before the French came to Vietnam, the Vietnamese people hardly ever ate beef or buffalo? ... We considered these animals as working animals..."

The influence is particularly strong in southern Vietnam, where French occupation lasted longest. There, baguettes are a natural

accompaniment to dishes such as *ragu gà* (chicken stew), *bò kho* (beef stew) and *bánh mì ốp la* (omelette roll), while *bánh xèo* offers a sizzling Vietnamese take on the French crêpe.

Coffee tells a similar story. Introduced as *café au lait*, it flourished in Vietnam's climate and evolved into a distinct local ritual: brewed slowly through a drip filter, mixed with sweetened condensed milk and often poured over ice. Today, Vietnam is the world's second-largest coffee exporter after Brazil.



# GỎI CUỐN

# Fresh Summer Rolls

**MAKES:** 15 rolls  
**SERVES:** 4-5  
**PREP TIME:** 45 minutes  
**COOKING TIME:** 30 minutes

In Vietnamese markets, you'll find bundles of *rau thom* (aromatic mixed herbs), which are an essential element of Vietnamese dining where fresh herbs accompany most meals. While finding all these herbs might be challenging outside Vietnam, their combination is crucial for these rolls. Each herb plays its part in building the layers of flavour that make this dish complete.

## INGREDIENTS:

1 tablespoon fish sauce  
 1 teaspoon salt  
 350g pork belly (side)  
 310g (about 15) prawns  
 150g aromatic mixed herbs (*rau thom* - fish mint, mint, perilla, Vietnamese basil, coriander, Vietnamese balm, spearmint)  
 15 rice paper sheets  
 15 lettuce leaves  
 75g bean sprouts  
 375g fresh thin rice noodles, at room temperature  
 30g Chinese chives (*lá hẹ*)  
 Dipping sauce for summer rolls or sweet and sour fish sauce, to serve



Edited recipe extract from  
*Vietnam: The Cookbook*  
 by Anaïs Ca Dao van Manen,  
 published by Phaidon. \$80.

## METHOD:

Combine 900ml (3¾ cups) of water with the fish sauce and salt in a large pot, then add the pork belly (side). Bring to a simmer, then cook until tender, about 20 minutes. Let cool completely.

Slice the pork belly thinly, against the grain (*see note*), then set aside.

Bring a pot of water to the boil. Cook the prawns in the boiling water until pink, about 7 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare a bowl of iced water. When cooked, transfer the prawns to the iced water to stop them cooking any further.

Peel and devein the prawns, then slice each prawn in half length-ways. Pat dry with paper towels.

Sort the herbs into individual piles and prepare a bowl of room temperature water.

To assemble each roll, dip the rice paper briefly in the water, then place on a clean surface. When the paper becomes pliable (about 30 seconds), layer next to each other, from the bottom of the paper to the top in the following order: 1 lettuce leaf, 5 bean sprouts, 10-15 aromatic herb leaves, about 25g of the rice noodles, sliced pork belly and 2 shrimp halves, pink side down. To roll, fold the bottom edge over the filling, fold in the sides, add 2 Chinese chives, then tightly roll upwards. Place seam side down on a serving platter. Repeat for the remaining rolls.

Dip your fresh summer rolls with your chosen dipping sauce.

**NOTE:** To find the direction of the grain in meat, look for the parallel lines of muscle fibre running through the meat - these lines are the 'grain'. You can see them more clearly on some cuts than others. Think of it like wood grain or the fibres in celery. Cutting against the grain, will make your meat much easier to bite.

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** PHAM BICH PHUONG



GỎI XOÀI KHÔ CÁ SẶC

# Mango and Dried Fish Salad

SERVES: 4-6

PREP TIME: 30 minutes

COOKING TIME: 10 minutes

This salad combines the tangy flavour of green mango with the savoury taste of dried snakeskin gourami fish (*Trichopodus pectoralis*). This dish originates from the southern region near the Mekong Delta and *Cà Mau*, showcasing popular local ingredients. The fish used is typically a freshwater species that has been salted and sun-dried for preservation. Outside of Vietnam, it can be found in Asian supermarkets.

## INGREDIENTS:

1 young mango, peeled (620g after peeling)  
 Boiling water, for soaking  
 255g dried salted snakeskin gourami (*khô cá sặc*)  
 or any other dried fish  
 60ml (¼ cup) plus 2 tablespoons neutral oil  
 10g shallot, coarsely chopped  
 35g garlic, coarsely chopped  
 425g cucumber  
 335g poached pork belly, sliced  
 1 quantity tamarind dipping sauce  
 25g Vietnamese basil (*húng quế*), leaves picked  
 20g Vietnamese coriander (*rau răm*), leaves picked  
 2 bird's eye chillies, thinly sliced, optional

## METHOD:

Shred the mango using a grater. Soak in a bowl of iced water to maintain its crispness.

Pour boiling water over the dried fish to clean it. Drain thoroughly.

Heat the 60ml (¼ cup) of oil in a pan over a medium heat. Fry the fish for 4–5 minutes until golden. Remove the fish from the pan, let it cool, then shred into pieces.

In a separate pan, heat the remaining oil. Fry the shallot and garlic in the oil for 5–6 minutes until golden. Drain on paper towels.

Using a julienne peeler, peel the cucumber lengthways, alternating peeled and unpeeled sections so the cucumber looks like it has 'zebra stripes'. Discard the peel and slice the cucumber into rounds.

Drain the mango well. In a large bowl, combine the shredded mango, cucumber slices, poached pork belly (side), shredded fried fish, half the tamarind dipping sauce, the herbs and the chillies, if using.

Transfer the salad to a serving platter and top with the fried shallots and garlic.

Serve immediately with the remaining tamarind dipping sauce on the side.



Edited recipe extract from  
*Vietnam: The Cookbook*  
 by Anaïs Ca Dao van Manen,  
 published by Phaidon. \$80.

PHOTOGRAPHY: PHAM BICH PHUONG



SƯỜN KHO THƠM

# Braised Pork Ribs with Pineapple

**SERVES:** 3-4  
**PREP TIME:** 20 minutes  
**COOKING TIME:** 55 minutes

This dish needs a pineapple that's ripe but still firm, balancing sweetness with acidity to create the sauce's sweet and sour profile. In Vietnam, back ribs are cut into smaller, chopstick-friendly pieces that can be eaten easily from bone to bowl.

## INGREDIENTS:

290g pineapple (½ pineapple), peeled  
 1 tablespoon neutral oil  
 25g shallots, chopped  
 20g garlic, chopped  
 500g baby back ribs, cut into 4cm chunks  
 1 tablespoon fish sauce  
 10g (2 teaspoons) chilli and lemongrass oil  
 1 tablespoon sugar  
 ½ teaspoon salt  
 60g onion, sliced

## To finish

½ long buffalo chilli, deseeded  
 20g spring onions, cut into 4cm lengths  
 ½ teaspoon black pepper to garnish

## METHOD:

Halve the pineapple vertically, remove the core, and slice it into triangles.

In a pan, heat the oil over a medium heat, then add the shallots and garlic and stir-fry for about 3 minutes until they start turning golden. Add the baby back ribs and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add the fish sauce, chilli and lemongrass oil, sugar and salt, stirring everything together. Pour in 80ml (⅓ cup) of water, cover the pan and let it simmer for 30 minutes.

Add the pineapple slices to the pan and continue cooking for an additional 20 minutes. Add the onion and cook for another 30-60 seconds, then remove from the heat.

Add the deseeded chilli and the spring onions, sprinkle with the black pepper and serve.



Edited recipe extract from  
*Vietnam: The Cookbook*  
 by Anaïs Ca Dao van Manen,  
 published by Phaidon. \$80.

PHOTOGRAPHY: PHAM BICH PHUONG





PHOTOGRAPHY: SUPPLIED

# Te Kaahu Takes Flight

WORDS —  
JESS WADDELL



PHOTO: NANCY PIRINI, EXECUTIVE CHEF

**As you drive towards the Auckland Airport terminals you feel like you might be about to go on an adventure. And while you might not be getting on a plane, you are certainly in for an incredible culinary journey.**

Te Kaahu is on level nine of the Te Arikini Pullman Auckland Airport, and the lift opens to a space that feels unexpectedly expansive. It's bright, open, refined, and the restaurant itself carries a calm kind of elegance.

Overhead, lights stretch out and trail across the ceiling in organic patterns. After learning that Te Kaahu was named after the majestic hawk of Aotearoa I found myself wondering if those shapes and patterns were like the hawk's flight

paths, tracing invisible currents through the sky. Something I used to watch a lot as a child living rurally.

At the helm is Executive Chef Nancye Pirini whose menu celebrates the culinary traditions of Te Ao Maori kai while embracing a modern, refined approach. There is a clear sense of the dishes carrying a story, not only of the land and sea, but also personal memory. That becomes even more apparent when you meet Nancye.



We began with a contemporary take on ika mata. It arrived as delicate slices of fresh kingfish paired with coconut panna cotta, capsicum chilli salsa and a bright citrus dressing. It's light and refreshing, a great starter, balancing acidity and creaminess in all the right ways.

Alongside this came the fried bread. Nancye told us that the fermented starter, or 'bug' - often used for traditional Māori Rewena bread - is the same bug passed through her family, carrying with it a sense of continuity and care. Growing up in New Zealand, fried bread is something many of us have eaten, but this is really something else. Pillow-soft and steaming as you pull it apart, it's served with kina butter that melts almost instantly into the warm crumb. One bite quickly turns into another, each a little more generous with the butter than the last.

For one of our mains we ordered the roasted cauliflower. Perhaps not typically a dish you'd lead with, but it was recommended by the staff and absolutely worth it. A perfectly cooked cauliflower steak that sits over a velvety chickpea purée, layered with green herb and caper salsa, toasted kale, lemon chickpeas, pickled cranberries and nuts and seeds. I thought the textures carried this dish just as much as the flavours did. Smooth, crispy, tangy, creamy and rich.

The Mt Cook salmon was a little more of a classic dish, but no less considered. Cooked beautifully, it was paired with celeriac puree, broccolini, pickled fennel and a yuzu hollandaise style sauce. A well-balanced dish that lets the produce do the talking.

There have been a few dishes this year that have been convincing me just how delicious a vegetable can be, and the side of kumara at Te Kaahu is one of those. Hangi Master kumara with Kaimai Range honey, salted sour cream and chilli hangi crumbs. Maybe it's the caramelised edges, or the softness within. Or maybe it's the balance of sweet, savoury and cool. This dish is so comforting, it goes far beyond flavour almost tapping into something emotional.

The lemon tart for dessert was a welcome shift. After a meal that leans into richness and depth, it was sharp and citrusy layered with mandarin, a touch of honey and a citrus snap.

The service throughout the evening felt warm and genuine. Our waitress, Sheryl, made us feel at ease, while Geoffroy and Tony added to the experience with their knowledge of the menu and wine list. Their recommendations were more than just descriptions, offering stories of the local winemakers and producers that



deepened the connection between what was on the plate and where it came from.

This is also really what defines Te Kaahu. There is a strong sense of place, not just in ingredients but also the people behind it. The restaurant speaks to Aotearoa.

For those arriving in New Zealand and staying at the Pullman, it's an introduction to our country that goes beyond convenient dining. And for anyone else it's a reminder that sometimes a memorable journey doesn't need a boarding pass.

To book or to find out more information visit [tekaahu.nz](http://tekaahu.nz)



# Still the Leading Lady

Joan-Mary Longcroft has long been a familiar presence in Remuera, and those who know her would agree she certainly leaves an impression.

At 98, she remains every bit the woman she has always been: impeccably presented, quick-witted and deeply engaged with the world around her.

A woman of discernment, Joan-Mary has always made her choices carefully. Her decision to move to 7 Saint Vincent in Remuera 11 years ago was a natural one, allowing her to remain in the heart of the community she has lived in and loved for decades.

She recently transitioned into the new care home – something she has taken in her stride with her signature optimism. “The staff are excellent and coming from a family of deep thinkers, I find I’m in very good company here.”

Her care suite is elegant and calm, with a balcony overlooking a carefully tended garden. It’s a space that reflects her standards and sensibilities.

She still reads the newspapers daily, keeping her closely attuned to business, politics and global affairs – subjects she continues to discuss with ease and authority.

There is, still, a touch of theatre. Ask the right question and she will recite lines from plays she performed in her youth – word-perfect, with the sparkle and laugh she has always carried with her.

Life in a care setting brings its realities, but Joan-Mary meets them in her own way – practically, and with humour. She still gathers friends for fish and chips and still has strong views on how things should be done (“chips absolutely must be double fried...”)

Staying in Remuera mattered – it’s where much of her life has unfolded, where her connections run deep. Perhaps most importantly, she is surrounded by like-minded people who still enjoy a great conversation.

For more information about 7 Saint Vincent, call Nicky Rijns on 09 524 1420.

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# Transformative



PHOTOGRAPHY | VIDEOGRAPHY & GRAPHIC DESIGN: DIRK JUTZAS

Founder of academyEX, Frances Valentine, spends a lot of time in rooms where the future is being discussed – from boardrooms to lecture theatres, and regularly, in the United States, where she’s on the Board of Trustees for the University of Silicon Valley.

“Between you and whatever you want to do, it’s just knowledge. That’s the only thing that stops you.”

A Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for her services to education and technology, Frances has built a career not just observing change but helping others get ahead of it. So, when she returned to speak to the film industry recently – a room she had last addressed a decade earlier – she did something unusual. She pulled out her original presentation.

“We put them side by side,” she says. “What I predicted 10 years ago, and where we are now, they were pretty much aligned. The only thing we underestimated was the speed.”

For Frances, that acceleration defines the current moment. Technologies once expected to take decades to embed have arrived almost overnight – and, crucially, without much resistance.

“With AI adoption, there was no friction,” she says. “You didn’t have to buy anything. You already had a laptop or a phone, you opened a browser, and suddenly, ChatGPT, there it was!”

Unlike previous waves of innovation – from record players to smartphones – artificial intelligence hasn’t required a behavioural leap. It has simply folded itself into our everyday, digitalised life. But while much of the global conversation remains fixated on AI itself, Frances is already looking beyond it. “It’s not AI we should be talking about anymore,” she says. “It’s like electricity – it’s already here. The real question is: what does it mean?”

That question sits at the centre of her life’s work. Over nearly three decades, and through programmes that have reached tens of thousands of students, the futurist has focused on one core idea: transformation.

“For me, knowledge is the biggest transformer of all,” she says. “Between you and whatever you want to do, it’s just knowledge. That’s the only thing that stops you.”

It’s a deceptively simple idea, but one with growing urgency, particularly as Aotearoa New Zealand faces a rapidly shifting demographic reality. “We are ageing very quickly,” she explains. “Right now, we have about four people working for every person in retirement. That’s heading towards two to one.”

At that point, the economic model underpinning the country begins to strain – and so, with the likelihood of having to work for longer into what would previously have been considered retirement age means that the idea of learning as something confined to youth no longer holds.

“We’ve treated education as something you finish in your early 20s,” she says. “But the world is now moving at supersonic speed. If you’re not continuing to learn, then you will fall behind. It really is that simple.”

This thinking underpins her latest venture, Love Heart, an educational programme focused on social learning for those over 60 – a group she sees as both underserved and critical to the country’s future.

“You imagine being 60 and choosing not to engage with this world,” she says. “Then living to 90. That’s a long time to feel disconnected. If you’re not part of the conversation, you risk being left behind by it.”

That sense of disconnection, she argues, is happening at a national level.

*continued over page*

“Humans are incredibly productive. The question is not whether there will be jobs, it’s whether people are prepared for them.”

“I don’t think New Zealand knows what it wants to be in this new era,” she says. “And that’s a problem.”

Historically, the country has defined itself through clear, decisive positioning – the nuclear-free movement being a standout example. But in the face of today’s technological and geopolitical shifts, Frances argues that such clarity is missing.

“We can’t compete in the global AI race,” she says. “We don’t have the capital, the scale, or the data. So, the question becomes – what can we be?”

Her answer is both pragmatic and ambitious: New Zealand as a global protector of data. “We’re a highly trusted country,” she says. “What if we became the place where the world stores its most important data – cultural, health, historical? Safe, secure, and independent.”

It’s an idea she likens to global seed banks – repositories designed to safeguard the building blocks of life. In a digital age, she sees data as no different. “Every country is going to need somewhere safe to store what matters,” she continues. “And why could that not be us?”

Whether or not that specific vision takes hold, the underlying point is harder to ignore. Without a deliberate strategy, New Zealand risks defaulting to decisions made elsewhere: “If we don’t choose, we’ll end up relying on whatever systems the US or China put in place. And that’s not really a strategy.”

It’s the kind of decision-making, she argues, that demands a new generation of leaders fluent in both technology and governance, people who can sit at boardroom tables and ask the right questions about AI, data, and risk. The challenge, however, is that these are not easy conversations to have, politically, economically, or socially: “People don’t like talking about change. It creates uncertainty. But avoiding it does not make it go away.”

Across industries, roles are not disappearing so much as evolving, reshaped by tools and technologies that demand new capabilities. “The jobs are still there,” she says. “They’re just

different. And if you’re not adapting, then yes, you should be nervous.”

At the same time, she is quick to push back against more dystopian narratives. She is confident that this new era can serve humanity well, providing it is properly managed.

“Humans are incredibly productive. The question is not whether there will be jobs, it’s whether people are prepared for them.”

It’s a question that drives much of academyEX’s work with senior leaders and executives, equipping them not just to use new tools, but to lead organisations through the shifts those tools create. That preparation begins with engagement: “Spend less time scrolling and more time understanding. Nobody likes being surprised by change.”

Still, for someone so deeply embedded in emerging technology, France’s own life offers an intriguing counterbalance. Living off-grid, with solar power and homegrown produce, she occupies a space between two worlds, one defined by rapid acceleration, the other by deliberate simplicity. “On one hand, I’m right in the middle of technology,” she says. “On the other, I deeply value a simpler way of living.”

Such balance, between progress and preservation, sits at the heart of her perspective. Transformation, she suggests, is no longer something abstract or optional. It is constant, and increasingly, personal.

“We’re living through the fastest period of change humans have ever experienced. The only real question is whether you’re willing to change with it. The future isn’t something that happens to you. It’s something you prepare for.”

*academyEX is New Zealand’s only private postgraduate institute for mid-career professionals. Its postgraduate degrees and short courses are designed for executives and leaders preparing to govern in an AI-shaped world. Learn more at [academyex.com](https://academyex.com)*



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# Our Furry Friends

From the infectious joy of the wagging of a tail to the soothing rumble of a purr, pets have an extraordinary ability to enrich our lives in extraordinary ways...

## HOUNDS & HUMANS

Dogs share the longest domestication story of any animal – one that stretches back more than 12,000 years. Originally descended from wolves, early dogs were prized for their practical skills – hunting, herding, and guarding, and companionship soon followed. A Palaeolithic tomb discovered in Northern Israel reveals a touching story of a human buried with a puppy, their hand resting on the animal's shoulder, a powerful symbol of the bond between people and dogs. As humans gradually shifted from nomadic life to settled farming around 10,000 years ago, the role of dogs in daily life continued to evolve.

## FELINE FRIENDS

A groundbreaking study published by Science magazine suggests cat domestication stretches back nearly as far as that of the dog, well beyond the previously estimated 9,500. Scientists found that all domestic cats descend from the same ancestor, *Felis silvestris*, originating in the Fertile Crescent region of the Middle East. Ancient civilisations, particularly Egyptians, revered cats deeply – adorning them with jewellery and even mummifying them. Yet despite millennia of companionship, cat genome expert Wes Warren notes that "cats, unlike dogs, are really only semi-domesticated". Cats were especially important as humans turned to farming – a mutually beneficial arrangement where cats controlled rodent populations in return for food and shelter.

## WELLBEING BOOSTERS

Pets offer powerful wellbeing benefits – and according to Southern Cross, 87% of Kiwis will vouch for it! Not only do dog owners enjoy improved fitness through daily walks, but those walks also offer an opportunity to socialise with other dog walkers. Cuddling a pet releases oxytocin, easing stress and anxiety, while a daily care routine also provides purpose and structure. And with 89% viewing pets as great companions, they provide a sense of being needed, which can make a big difference for people living alone or going through difficult times.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF UNSPLASH

## CHILD'S PLAY

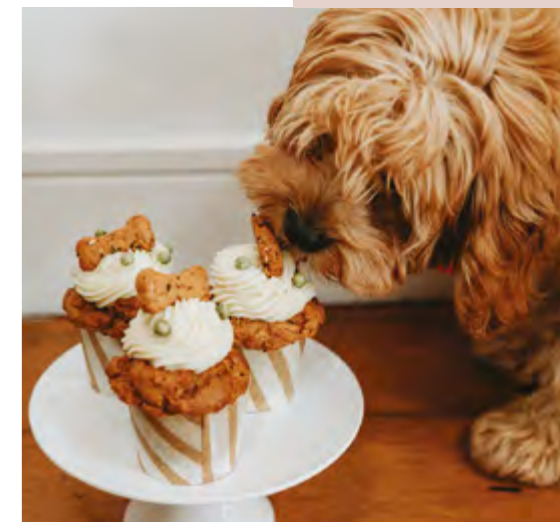
Pets bring joy and laughter to children while sparking natural conversation. Observing animal behaviour encourages kids to identify feelings and actions, nurturing empathy and social skills. Sharing stories about time with a pet also builds speaking and listening abilities – qualities that help children connect better with others. "Pets give parents a golden opportunity to have more quality time with children and start new conversations that add to their little one's vocabulary while teaching them tasks of pet care and simply having fun," says child psychologist Claire Halsey tells the BBC.



## CAKE & CO

Cake & Co is a Ponsonby-based cake brand known for bespoke creations, not just for humans. Their latest dog-friendly range includes cakes, cupcakes and cookies for fur babies, perfect for birthday celebrations! Find them [@cakeandcoz](#)

**WIN** a Cake & Co signature 6" single-layer Bacon & Carrot cake, finished with Agria mashed potato icing along with four cupcakes and a three-pack of biscuits. Redeemable within 12 months of the draw. To enter visit [vervemagazine.co.nz](#), click **WIN** then follow the directions.



# Best in Breed

The story of competitive dog showing begins in 1859 in Newcastle, England, where 50 setters and pointers competed at an annual cattle show – the winners taking home rifles from the Bench Show Chairman's own gun factory.



PHOTOGRAPHY: MARCO GROSSO

Though competitive dog showing has since spread around the world, the internationally recognised premier even remains in England, at Crufts in the city of Birmingham.

The man behind Crufts, Charles Cruft, found his path into the dog world almost by accident. Leaving college in 1876 with little interest in his family's jewellery business, he took a job with James Spratt, a London-based seller of dog cakes. Ambitious and personable, Cruft quickly rose from office boy to travelling salesman, mixing with large estates and sporting kennels. By 1878, his reputation had reached Europe, and French dog breeders invited him to organise the canine section of the Paris Exhibition.

Back in England, Cruft took on management of the Allied Terrier Club Show in Westminster in 1886, and by 1891 had booked the Royal Agricultural Hall in Islington for the very first Crufts show.

The show continued to grow in stature, and following Charles's death, his widow Emma handed control to The Kennel Club in 1948. That year's event, held at London Olympia, drew nearly double the number of breeds seen at the original 1891 show, and a couple of years later, Crufts reached living rooms across Britain when the BBC televised it for the first time.

By 1991 - the show's centenary - Crufts had outgrown its London venues and relocated to the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, expanding to four days and welcoming more than 100,000 visitors. The move reflected not just the show's scale, but its growing global audience.

Organised by The Kennel Club, the annual event attracts around 25,000 dogs, 160,000 human visitors and is watched by 4.5 million viewers on TV.

## FURRY FACTS & FIGURES

From just 35 breeds at the first Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in 1887, the American Kennel Club now recognises over 200 breeds today.

Dogs are the world's most popular pet, found in a third of all households globally.

Dogs are thought to be as smart as two-year-old children (and, some might say, easier to train!). The average pooch can learn 100 words, though the record is more than 1,000 (a border collie, of course).

Dogs sweat only through their paws - releasing an oily, chemical-rich perspiration detectable only by other dogs - and cool themselves down by panting.

Just like humans, most dogs have a dominant paw - and you can figure out which one it is simply by watching which leg they step off with first when they start to walk.

# Murder, Mayhem and the Mediterranean

Eclectic books to enjoy.

WORDS — KAREN MCMILLAN, bestselling author  
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**HAZE**  
Sam Elliott

Constable Dahlia Turner is checking properties to ensure residents have evacuated as wildfires threaten their coastal Australian town, when she comes across the unimaginable – two of her close friends murdered and their son missing. With a sinister cult suspected of arson, Dahlia is on a race against time to find the missing boy as the fires burn, while her past collides brutally with the present. Atmospheric, twisty and gut-wrenching.

Macmillan, RRP \$38



**THE OTHER CATHERINE**  
Lauren Keenan

Lauren Keenan returns to the terrain she writes so well: the lives of women caught in the undertow of history. This is a sweeping novel that threads together two worlds and timelines. In 1793, eighteen-year-old Catherine is on a convict ship bound for New South Wales. A century later in Aotearoa, we meet Keita, a Māori matriarch, after the devastation of her whānau. A previous NZ Booklovers Award winner.

Penguin, RRP \$38



**THE BLOOD SAYS OTHERWISE**  
Ruben Miller

This book is utterly fascinating, blending crime and memoir. Ruben Miller has spent more than two decades as a forensic scientist, visiting crime scenes and gathering evidence. There are murders, gang violence and cold cases. Miller takes the reader behind the police tape, showing how small details matter, written with honesty and dark humour. He also shares the impact his work has had on his own life.

HarperCollins, RRP \$40



**MEDESQUE**  
Georgina Hayden

With 110 recipes inspired by the coastlines of Italy, Spain, the Baltic, and beyond, this gorgeous hardback cookbook offers easy yet flavourful dishes that celebrate the best of Mediterranean cuisine, along with photography that will transport you to sun-kissed days. Joyful, comforting food with liberal use of olive oil and fresh ingredients. The author worked with Jamie Oliver for 12 years before writing her own cookbooks.

Bloomsbury, RRP \$60



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# About Town

What's hot and happening around  
Tāmaki Makaurau...

**TIM BATT**  
Award-winning comedian Tim Batt returns with *Eternal Optimist* – a sharp, funny hour exploring NZ politics, fatherhood, and staying hopeful when the world feels like it's burning.  
[comedyfestival.co.nz](http://comedyfestival.co.nz)



IMAGE: STRANGE UNIVERSE WINTER, MEI SEMONES

**STRANGE UNIVERSE WINTER**  
*Strange Universe: Winter 2026* is a multi-night festival weaving through Auckland's best venues from May to June, featuring Stereolab, Dry Cleaning, Cate Le Bon, Cass McCombs, Acid Mothers Temple, The Veils, Kelly Moran, Mei Semones, and The Circling Sun w/ Yolanda F Fagan.  
[banishedmusic.com](http://banishedmusic.com)



IMAGE: PINK SHIRT DAY TOTE, COTTON ON

**PINK SHIRT DAY**  
On Friday 15 May, wear pink to stand up to bullying and celebrate diversity for Pink Shirt Day 2026. This year's official tee – designed by NZ artist Bonnie Brown – is available at Cotton On stores nationwide. 100% of net proceeds help fund the Mental Health Foundation's vital programmes that lift wellbeing.  
[pinkshirtday.org.nz](http://pinkshirtday.org.nz)



IMAGE: PLAYFIGHT

**PHIL ROSENTHAL**  
Award-winning creator of *Somebody Feed Phil* and *Everybody Loves Raymond*, Phil Rosenthal brings his hilarious and heartfelt stories to Auckland's for a moderated conversation and audience Q&A.  
17 May  
Bruce Mason Theatre  
[livenation.co.nz](http://livenation.co.nz)

**DEFTONES**  
Multi-platinum Grammy-winning alternative rock icons Deftones make their long-awaited return to Aotearoa for a one-night show in Auckland. Joined by special guests Interpol and Ecce Vandal, this marks the band's first New Zealand headline performance in nearly a decade.  
13 May  
Spark Arena  
[livenation.co.nz](http://livenation.co.nz)

**MATT CORBY**  
One of Australia's most soulful voices, Matt Corby returns to Aotearoa for his Tragic Magic Tour, supporting his highly anticipated fourth studio album. His last Auckland show sold out instantly – don't sleep on tickets.  
29 May  
Auckland Town Hall  
[ticketmaster.co.nz](http://ticketmaster.co.nz)

**PLAYFIGHT**  
Julia Grogan's award-winning Edinburgh Festival smash hit *Playfight* is a fast, raw, and unfiltered look at three 15-year-old girls navigating sex, shame, and friendship – asking what happens when no one teaches you how to look after yourself.  
14-30 May  
Silo Theatre  
[silotheatre.co.nz](http://silotheatre.co.nz)

**MELANIE BRACEWELL**  
Melanie Bracewell is back with a brand-new hour about returning to unfinished things later in life. With rave reviews and multiple awards under her belt, don't miss this must-see show.  
22 May  
SkyCity Theatre  
[comedyfestival.co.nz](http://comedyfestival.co.nz)



IMAGE: DEFTONES

hellsgate.co.nz

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# MAY Box Office



IMAGE: STAR WARS: THE MANDALORIAN AND GROGU

## MOTHER MARY

14 May

Anne Hathaway and Michaela Coel star in this psychological drama directed by David Lowery. On the eve of her comeback concert, iconic pop star Mother Mary retreats to the English countryside to reunite with her estranged best friend and costume designer – where long-buried wounds around fame, creativity, and resentment rise to the surface.

## CATERPILLAR

14 May

*Caterpillar* follows three women living separate lives under one leaky roof. Sixteen-year-old Cassie is all bravado as she searches for belonging. Her mother Maxine is a formidable single parent and filmmaker on the brink of a long-awaited breakthrough, and holding everything together is Huia, Cassie's grandmother whose life has been defined by quiet service to family and a private obsession with raising monarch caterpillars.

## STAR WARS: THE MANDALORIAN AND GROGU

21 May

The evil Empire has fallen, and Imperial warlords remain scattered throughout the galaxy. As the fledgling New Republic works to protect everything the Rebellion fought for, they have enlisted the help of legendary Mandalorian bounty hunter Din Djarin (Pedro Pascal) and his young apprentice Grogu. Directed by Jon Favreau.

## MOSS & FREUD

28 May

Set in London in 2002, *Moss & Freud* follows Kate Moss at the height of her fame as she agrees to sit for the notoriously private Lucian Freud. Over months of sittings in his studio, the encounter becomes far more than a portrait commission, evolving into a deep creative exchange that challenged both artist and muse. The resulting painting – completed while Moss was pregnant – would later sell for nearly £4 million.



IMAGE: MOSS & FREUD

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# Art of May

CURATED BY —  
LUCY KENNEDY

## MELANIE ROGER GALLERY

### *Dark Matter*

Simon Attwooll, Harry Culy, Simon Endres, Kirsten Roberts

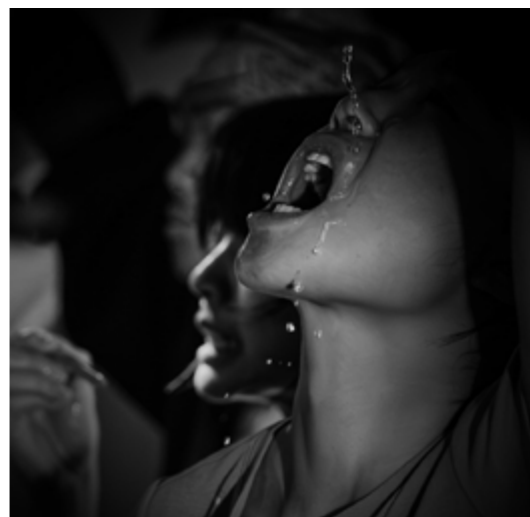
8 May - 6 June

*Dark Matter* brings together four contemporary artists from Aotearoa New Zealand, each exploring the gothic and uneasy in their practises. Pōneke-based artist Simon Attwooll's recent housefire series layers charcoal scraped from a burnt out house. Harry Culy's work is openly influenced by the Antipodean Gothic art movement. Simon Endres presents recent work from his menagerie of anxious misfits. Kirsten Roberts has made a new series of postcard-sized monoprints, powerful in the expression and emotions that Roberts captures within her figures.

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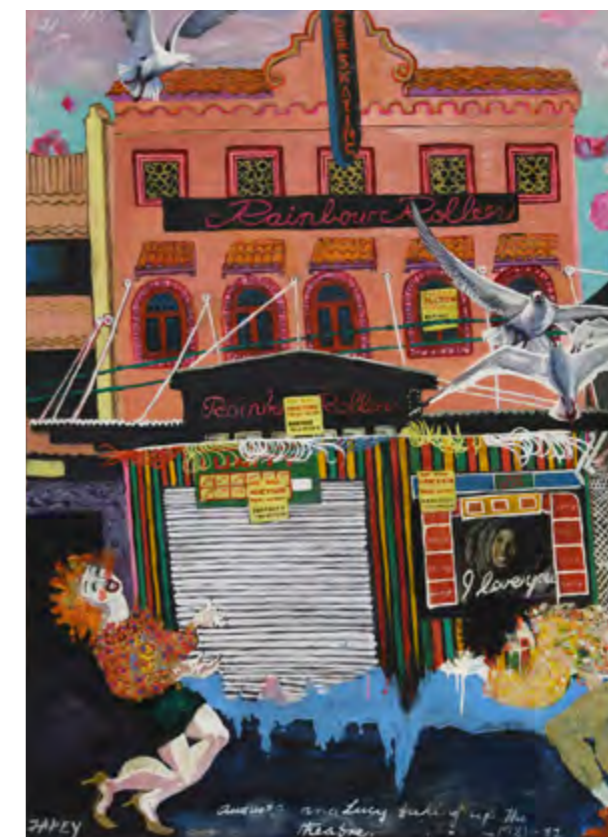
ARTWORK: HARRY CULY, UNTITLED (BRUCE AVENUE),  
MELANIE ROGER GALLERY



ARTWORK: YIN-CHI LEE, STUDIO ONE TOI TŪ



ARTWORK: MAYUMI SUZUKI, FROM THE SERIES, THE TIDE'S GIFT,  
AUCKLAND FESTIVAL OF PHOTOGRAPHY



ARTWORK: JACQUELINE FAHEY,  
AUGUSTA AND LUCY TAKING UP THE THEATRE, GOW LANGSFORD

## TURUA GALLERY

### *Vintage*

Jody Hope Gibbons

15 - 27 May

This deeply personal exhibition offers a rare opportunity to experience The Jody Hope Gibbons Archival Collection – a curated body of works spanning decades. *Vintage* traces the evolution of Gibbons' signature style, revealing the enduring threads connecting her work. Visitors will experience a unique gallery setting, with a selection of Gibbons' vintage collection incorporated into the exhibition design. Known for her richly layered works spanning abstract painterly forms, contemporary landscapes, and assemblage, Gibbons' practice is driven by an innate need to create.

10A Turua Street  
[turuagallery.co.nz](http://turuagallery.co.nz)

## FRAME WORKSHOP AND GALLERY

### *Natural Phenomena*

Melanie Field

29 April - 16 May

Bringing together approximately 30 new works, *Natural Phenomena* spans large-scale canvases and more intimate paintings, each developed over extended periods through a process of layering, removal and reworking. Field's practice is deeply intuitive; rather than working toward a fixed result, each painting evolves through a dialogue between control and surrender. Melanie creates realms that breathe, vibrate and shift; subtle phenomena that invite the viewer into a deeper kind of seeing.

182 Jervois Road  
[frameworkshop.co.nz](http://frameworkshop.co.nz)

## FLAGSTAFF GALLERY

### *Socialite Society*

Ingrid Boot

Auckland artist Ingrid Boot has been invited to join DTR Modern, one of the United States' most established contemporary art galleries, with locations in Palm Beach, Boston, New York and Washington DC. To mark the partnership, she is unveiling a new body of work in a dual launch – five paintings debuting at DTR Modern Palm Beach, with two works retained for exhibition at Flagstaff Gallery in Auckland. The series draws on Slim Aarons' iconic visual language, reimagined through Ingrid's distinctly cinematic, feminine lens.

6 Victoria Road, Devonport  
[flagstaff.nz](http://flagstaff.nz)

## STUDIO ONE TOI TŪ

### *White Blood*

Yin-Chi Lee

21 May - 3 June

*White Blood* is a multi-channel installation exploring the intimate legacies of migrant labourers within imperial structures. Weaving together diasporic memories of rubber plantations in Malaysia, camphor extraction in Taiwan and the history of Manila Hemp in the Philippines, the work reflects on migratory labour, colonial economies, and the inherited systems that shape bodies and memory. Through everyday objects, *White Blood* examines how imperial power operates beyond territorial conquest, embedding itself in domestic and bodily rituals, manifesting in routine acts of surveillance.

1 Ponsonby Road  
[studioone.org.nz](http://studioone.org.nz)

## AUCKLAND FESTIVAL OF PHOTOGRAPHY

**Highlighted: Portrait of Mayumi Suzuki**  
Mayumi Suzuki

29 May - 14 June

Since 2004, the annual Auckland Festival of Photography has been celebrating emerging and established photographers. Founder and CEO Julia Durkin MNZM defines this year's theme of movement (Kori) in photography as "...the measure of change – within the body, the home, the landscape, and the world. To photograph movement is to acknowledge nothing stands still... The still image becomes paradoxical: a pause within motion, a fragment of time that continues to move within us."

[photographyfestival.org.nz](http://photographyfestival.org.nz)

## GOW LANGSFORD

### *Protest Paintings*

Jacqueline Fahey

23 May - 20 Jun

Over an almost seven-decade-long career, Jacqueline Fahey has been an icon of feminist painting in Aotearoa. This exhibition explores the artist's unwavering commitment to visually expressing her worldview, from politics through to family dynamics and the domestic sphere.

Onchunga Gallery  
[gowlangsfordgallery.co.nz](http://gowlangsfordgallery.co.nz)

# Phenomenal



Verve chats with artist Melanie Field ahead of her *Natural phenomena* exhibition at Frame Workshop and Gallery.

**What was your upbringing like?**

Creativity was always present. My mother and birth father both attended the art college across the park which I could see it from my bedroom window. Mum later worked full-time but remained deeply creative - sewing, knitting, painting, crafting. There was always something being made.

Some of my fondest memories are of making things with her. We're still very close, and I feel lucky we share that. I grew up in the northwest of England before emigrating to New Zealand in 1981. As a teenager, I became more self-critical when work was assessed and compared - that was a turning point, and I shifted into crafting, which felt gentler.

**Has your art director background shaped your painting?**

In some ways, but not as you'd expect. Art direction is outcome-focused - refining ideas for a clear result. My painting now sits almost in opposition. It asks me to let go of control and resist thinking about audience or outcome - to wait, listen,

and allow the work to unfold. I do carry forward editing and discernment, but it also showed me what I don't want to replicate - moving away from "should".

**How did studying counselling and art therapy influence your work?**

It was foundational. It helped me understand myself and sustain a creative practice. Painting can be confronting - it's a mirror. There are moments of uncertainty and doubt; the process moves in cycles. That work built resilience. It takes a certain courage to make something without knowing how it will be received, or even if it will be seen at all.

**Your approach is described as intuitive - what does that mean?**

I don't begin with a fixed idea. The work unfolds over time, responding to what's there. Sometimes it feels like the painting leads. Not knowing where it's going can be uncomfortable, but I've learned to trust it. It's taught me patience and how to let go of control - the process becomes a kind of teacher.

**Do you work in silence or with sound?**

Mostly with music. I'm drawn to ambient sound - soft and unobtrusive. It helps me settle into the work, creating a quiet field where I can slow down and listen more closely. At times it feels almost meditative.

**Why is nature central to your work?**

Because it's central to my life. Time in the forest brings stillness and deeper noticing - smell, texture, light. These translate into colour and movement. There's also an energy or presence that becomes part of the work.

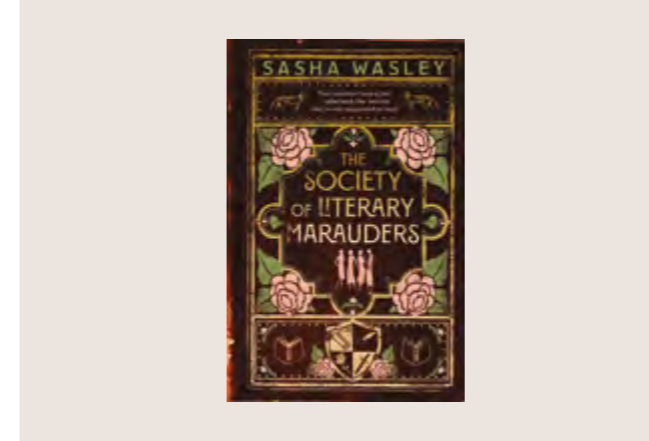
**How do you see your practice evolving?**

I'm curious about where it might go. I want to refine my visual language while staying open to the unknown. I'd love to work at a larger scale - creating immersive spaces people can feel. At its core, it's about learning to be more fully myself, following my own path and not the pull of the outside world.

*Frame Gallery, 182 Jervois Rd, Herne Bay*

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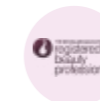
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