



American Horticultural Society  
Travel Study Program

# GARDENS, WINES & WILDERNESS — A TOUR OF NEW ZEALAND

February 5–27, 2022

WITH AHS HOST RACHEL MUIR AND TOUR LEADER  
RICHARD LYON OF GARDEN ADVENTURES, LTD.





Dear Friends of the American Horticultural Society,

I'm happy to present "Gardens, Wines, & Wilderness — A Tour of New Zealand." This wonderful program will offer a wide range of "I'll never forget..." experiences. And the timing couldn't be better: This is your opportunity to leave our January weather behind for the welcoming environs (and people!) of New Zealand.

The Society has offered several New Zealand tours, most recently in 2018, and they have proven to be so popular that we're pleased to offer this extraordinary destination again. Here are just a handful of highlights of this carefully crafted program.

The gardens we'll visit are nothing short of spectacular. In Maori, *omaio* means a place of peace, quiet, and tranquility, and we'll experience it firsthand at the Omaio garden, which features a puriri tree that is thought to be between 800 and 1,000 years old. The Dunedin Botanic Garden is a Victorian-style pleasure garden that has evolved into an internationally recognized attraction. At the Otari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve, we'll see more than 1,200 native plants from across the country in one location. Upton Oaks, an award-winning garden that was created to complement the style of the property's 1911 Victorian villa, boasts an abundance of color from spring to autumn. Now, that is a "can't miss" experience. And this is just scratching the surface of the horticultural wonders we'll see.

Museum visits and a castle tour make this itinerary even more extraordinary. At Wellington's Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, we'll take a private guided tour that recounts Maori history and culture. The Auckland War Memorial Museum houses internationally significant Maori and Pacific Island collections. Larnach Castle, built in the 1870s in the Gothic revival style, tells the story of the country's early European history.

We'll have the pleasure of exploring several of New Zealand's delightful cities. Christchurch has earned a reputation as the Garden City. Auckland, New Zealand's largest city, is blessed with beautiful parks and a lively waterfront. Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, has been named one of the world's most livable cities in several surveys. Queenstown is an alpine paradise with much to see and do.

This varied itinerary also includes cruises and ferry excursions. The three-masted sailboat *Fiordland Navigator* will take us through serene Doubtful Sound. During this treat for the senses, we'll be surrounded by towering peaks, cascading waterfalls, and abundant wildlife. When we return to Auckland by ferry from a private dinner on Waiheke Island, we'll have the unforgettable experience of seeing the sun setting behind the city skyline.

True to the title of this program, wineries will play a major role in our tour. Mudbrick Vineyard will host us for a wine tasting and private dinner. Blenheim is known for its white wines and abundant gardens, and we'll be treated to a wine tasting at Cloudy Bay, famous for its chardonnays and sauvignon blancs.

Our AHS host will be Rachel Muir, an environmental scientist and ecologist who over the course of a 40-year career worked for a variety of private firms and Federal agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Service, and the Executive Office of the President, Office of Science and Technology Policy. Now retired and living in North Carolina, Rachel spends her time writing, traveling, teaching at the North Carolina Arboretum, gardening, hiking, and participating in triathlons. You'll appreciate Rachel's warm personality and her in-depth knowledge of botany, ecology, conservation, and gardening.

Our tour leader, Richard Lyon, is a native Kiwi who practices landscape architecture in southeastern Pennsylvania. Richard has been designing and leading garden tours to New Zealand for more than 20 years, including three previous tours for the Society. With his passion for travel, his design expertise, and his familiarity with New Zealand's culture and history, Richard is uniquely suited to guide us on this journey.

Our accommodations are true to the Society's usual high standards, and all are ideally located, whether in city centers or among pristine nature.

My summary here is limited, but the appeal of this itinerary is limitless. Read on for more details about this memorable adventure to New Zealand.

A word to the wise: Make your reservations as soon as possible! This tour is sure to sell out quickly — possibly within days. For your convenience, a reservations form is enclosed in this brochure.

Cordially,



Terry Hayes  
Chair, AHS Board of Directors



# GARDENS, WINES & WILDERNESS — A TOUR OF NEW ZEALAND

WITH AHS HOST RACHEL MUIR  
AND TOUR LEADER RICHARD LYON  
OF GARDEN ADVENTURES, LTD.



Join AHS Host Rachel Muir and tour leader Richard Lyon for this once-in-a-lifetime garden travel experience.

## Itinerary Highlights

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5

We'll depart Los Angeles on Air New Zealand's overnight flight to Auckland. Those with East Coast connections are encouraged to arrive a day early and spend the night in Los Angeles prior to our departure.

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6

We'll cross the International Date Line during our flight. We'll lose a day, but don't worry — we'll get it back on our return flight home.

### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7 — AUCKLAND (B, D)

Welcome to New Zealand! We will arrive in Auckland early in the morning. After we check into the Stamford Plaza Hotel, we'll have the rest of the morning free to unwind and begin experiencing this beautiful country. In the afternoon, we will visit the Auckland War Memorial Museum for an excellent introduction to the country's history, culture, and heritage through the museum's internationally significant Maori and Pacific Island collections. Our next stop will be Totara Waters, a stunning subtropical garden on the shores of the upper Waitemata Harbour. This two-acre garden boasts a bonsai collection, more than 25 varieties of palms, and a large display of bromeliads and succulents. Heading inland, we'll complete our day at Mincher, a large private garden that reflects an array of design influences. Long perennial borders and a parterre give way to a cottage-style garden, and gravel paths wind through a mix of native and exotic plants. Victorian-inspired glasshouses and a gardener's cottage are tucked inside a traditional walled kitchen garden. Mincher is home to a variety of birds as well, including grey teals, kingfishers, and shining cuckoos. Our welcome dinner this evening will give us a chance to become better acquainted with our fellow travelers and lovers of horticulture.

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8 — AUCKLAND (B, L, D)

After a leisurely morning, we'll head to the farm country of the Waikato River valley. At Hamilton Gardens, we will first enjoy lunch and then tour this fascinating 130-acre park that explores the history, context, and meaning of gardens. A series of theme gardens include an Indian Char Bagh Garden, an Italian Renaissance Garden, a Japanese Garden of Contemplation, and a Modernist Garden. On our way back to Auckland, we'll stop

at New Zealand's only commercial tea estate, Zealong. We will learn about the cultivation of tea and be treated to a tasting of the estate's award-winning, 100 percent organic teas. With our appetites whetted, we'll enjoy a hearty high tea that will satisfy us as dinner before returning to our hotel.

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9 — AUCKLAND (B, L)

Our first stop this morning will be Wenderholm Regional Park, where we'll get a view of wonderfully unspoiled natural scenery, including a long, sandy beach and stately pohutukawa trees (*Metrosideros excelsa*). Next we'll proceed to a private garden named Omaio, a Maori word that means a place of peace, quiet, and tranquility. Omaio was created to encourage calm. Clivia, hydrangeas, arthropodium, bergenia, ligularia, hostas, and ferns flourish under a canopy of native trees. One standout feature is a puriri tree that is estimated to be 800 to 1,000 years old. After a leisurely lunch at Omaio courtesy of our gracious hostess, we'll visit Penny and Rowan Wiggins, two professional horticulturists whose garden is filled with plant species adapted to the local climate. Afterward, we'll take a short stroll through a subtropical kauri forest to marvel at these large, ancient trees. We'll return to Auckland in late afternoon and have time to explore New Zealand's largest city, which boasts beautiful parks, a lively waterfront, and a wonderful selection of restaurants. Or we may take a short ferry ride to Devonport to enjoy its quaint Victorian villas and waterside cafés for a picture-perfect evening. Dinner tonight will be on our own.

### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10 — AUCKLAND (B, D)

A short ferry ride will take us to Waiheke Island, where some of New Zealand's finest red wines are produced. Our island experience will begin with a guided minibus tour to enjoy the area's beauty and get a taste of its unique culture. Our first stop will be Sacred Blessing Sanctuary Garden, a serene property that includes a tropical garden, a woodland garden of camellias and magnolias, a rose garden, a fern garden, and a Japanese-inspired garden. A short ride will take us to Mudbrick Vineyard and Restaurant for a wine tasting and private dinner. We'll return to Auckland by ferry — an unforgettable experience as the sun sets behind the city skyline.

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11 — WELLINGTON (B, L)

We'll depart with luggage this morning for a short flight to Wellington, the capital of New Zealand. After we arrive, we'll head out to the windswept coast to appreciate its beauty and then proceed to lunch. When we return to the city, we'll stop at Government House, one of two official residences of the governor-general of New Zealand. We will visit the gardens, which are used for formal functions, and learn more about the governor-general's important constitutional, ceremonial, international, and community roles through a tour of the visitor's center and house. Tonight we will be free to explore Wellington on our own and dine in one of its fine restaurants. Our hotel for the next three nights is the Copthorne Hotel Wellington Oriental Bay.

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12 — WELLINGTON (B, D)

The morning will be ours to spend exploring or relaxing. We'll take an early-afternoon stroll to the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Popularly known as Te Papa or Our Place, the museum opened in 1998 as a way to unite the collections of the National Museum and the National Art Gallery so that New Zealand's stories



could be told in an interdisciplinary way. Our private guided tour will focus on Maori history and culture. Our next stop is the Otari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve, the only public botanic garden in New Zealand devoted solely to native plants. We'll have the unique experience of seeing more than 1,200 native plants from across the country in one location. Our day concludes with a private dinner in the Begonia House at Wellington Botanic Garden.

### **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13 — WELLINGTON (B)**

Starting from our harbor-side hotel, we'll be free to explore this cosmopolitan city. Wellington has been named one of the world's most livable cities in several surveys, and Lonely Planet went so far as to call it "the coolest little capital in the world." Our only dilemma is how we'll spend our free time here. There are many tantalizing options: Further explore Te Papa or take in one of the city's other museums and galleries (the Dowse Art Museum, City Gallery Wellington, and Space Place at Carter Observatory, to name a few). We could visit Zealandia wildlife sanctuary or ride a cable car up to the Wellington Botanic Garden and stroll back down through the beautiful gardens. Perhaps we'll walk the waterfront of the magnificent harbor and get a feel for the city. There are also plenty of shopping and dining options close to our hotel. Lunch and dinner are at our choosing.

### **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14 — BLENHEIM (B, L, D)**

The ferry will take us on a relaxing journey across Cook Strait and into Marlborough Sounds. The two main islands of New Zealand are dramatically different geologically, climatically, and, to some extent, culturally. Our first stop is the Marlborough region on the South Island, which produces more than three-quarters of all New Zealand wines, including world-famous sauvignon blancs. A short bus ride will take us to Blenheim, a town known for its white-wine production and abundant gardens. A light lunch awaits us at Upton Oaks, an award-winning garden that was created to complement the style of the property's 1911 Victorian villa. The different garden areas are defined by a formal framework of hedges and walls. Key features include a large 17th-century-style knot garden, herbaceous borders, a small olive grove, and a rose walk. We'll spend the next two nights at Marlborough Vintners Hotel, surrounded by vineyards and beautiful rural landscapes. We'll enjoy dinner in the hotel restaurant.

### **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15 — BLENHEIM (B, L, D)**

Our day begins with a visit to Paripuma, a stunning beachside garden featuring a unique collection of indigenous and rare plants. Next we'll head inland to visit Barewood Garden, which includes a traditional sheep station and homestead. We'll observe sheep-herding dogs at work and see a shearing demonstration. Afterward, we'll have lunch and take a garden tour with our charming hosts. This afternoon, we will celebrate the wine and food of this region, beginning with a wine tasting at Cloudy Bay, famous for its chardonnays and sauvignon blancs. Our day will draw to a close at the Hans Herzog Estate winery, where we will enjoy one of New Zealand's finest dining experiences.



### **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16— CHRISTCHURCH (B, L)**

Taking our luggage and leaving wine country behind, we'll drive south along the Pacific Coast Highway and soak in the stunning sea views. We'll arrive at Flaxmere Garden for lunch and a garden tour. A highlight will be the hospitality of our hostess in this rural setting, once part of a large sheep farm that offers breathtaking vistas of the Southern Alps. Afterwards, we'll be on our way to Christchurch, the largest city on the South Island. Known as the Garden City, Christchurch has experienced an incredible revitalization after a series of devastating earthquakes several years ago and now boasts exciting new architecture and street art, cocktail bars, bustling restaurants, and public green spaces. This evening, we will be free to wander through this charming city and make delightful discoveries. We'll begin a three-night stay at Distinction Christchurch Hotel.

### **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17 — CHRISTCHURCH (B, L)**

After a leisurely morning, our first stop is Ohinetahi, a historic home and garden that was gifted to New Zealand by the last owner, architect Sir Miles Warren. The property is known for its collection of New Zealand art, native plants, venerable trees, and floriferous display beds. After lunch, we'll have time to explore the gardens and sculpture park before we travel on to Broadfield, an extensive private garden that features a mix of native plants and New Zealand-raised azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias, maples, peonies, and others. Afterward, we'll visit Frensham Gardens and enjoy late-afternoon tea at this relaxing country property. Dinner is on our own.

### **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18 — CHRISTCHURCH (B)**

Our day begins with a private tour of Christchurch Botanic Gardens, where the Garden City truly lives up to its name. We'll see roses, begonias, dahlias, hydrangeas, and more in bloom in January. Then we'll be free to explore the city at our own pace — on foot, by bike, or by tram. There are countless opportunities for adventure, including downhill biking, kayaking, and zip-lining. Or we can stroll along the beach, join a guided bike tour, or hop on a double-decker bus for great views and informative commentary. The history buffs among us can take a journey through New Zealand's military aviation tradition at the Air Force Museum of New Zealand or discover the history of Christchurch and surrounding regions at the Canterbury Museum. Or how about punting down the Avon River in the heart of the city?

### **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19 — MOUNT COOK (B, L, D)**

Leaving with luggage, we'll cross the Canterbury Plains, New Zealand's largest expanse of flat land. This region is rich in European heritage and agrarian traditions. Our first stop is the historic homestead and gardens of Akaunui. We'll learn about the farm's rich past, explore the wonderful gardens surrounding the house, and stop to enjoy lunch. Then it's inland to Mount Cook. Our journey to the highest peak in New Zealand is an attraction in itself, with spectacular landscapes unfolding as we climb into the higher elevations. Then we'll check into the historic Hermitage Hotel, nestled in Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. Dinner will be served in the aptly named Panorama Room, with breathtaking views all around.

### **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20 — MOUNT COOK (B, D)**

After breakfast, we'll spend the day exploring on our own. There are many enticing possibilities, including hiking through the alpine terrain, cruising a lake, or taking a helicopter ride to admire the scenery from above. For some historical perspective, perhaps we'll choose to visit the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Center, a tribute to New Zealand's

famous explorer. He and Sherpa mountaineer Tenzing Norgay were the first people confirmed to have reached the summit of Mount Everest. Perhaps we'll choose to visit the center's Digital Dome Planetarium, where we can take a guided "tour" of the evening sky. Dinner will be a relaxed buffet in the center's Alpine Restaurant.

### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21 — DUNEDIN (B, L)

As we descend from Mount Cook, we'll be treated to spectacular views of turquoise blue glacial lakes, rugged limestone landscapes, and rich coastal plains. We'll stop for lunch in historic Oamaru, a small harbor city that paints a fascinating picture of the prosperous 1880s, when local commerce centered around sheep. We'll have time to wander the historic area, stroll through the Oamaru Public Gardens, or fossick along the seashore (in Australia and New Zealand, fossicking refers to rummaging or prospecting, especially as a recreational activity). Then we will follow the outline of the Pacific Ocean south to our next destination: Dunedin. Our accommodation for the next three nights is Distinction Dunedin Hotel. We'll be free to take dinner on our own and explore the city.

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22 — DUNEDIN (B, D)

Our afternoon begins with a guided tour of the Dunedin Botanic Garden, New Zealand's oldest. This Victorian-style pleasure garden has evolved into an internationally recognized attraction for its wide range of horticultural and botanical collections, including roses, a rock garden, more than 3,000 rhododendrons, and variety of rare and endangered native plant species. Our next stop will be the Orokonui Ecosanctuary, where a guided tour will educate us about how New Zealand's flora and fauna evolved before the arrival of people and predators from Polynesia and Europe. We will also learn about ongoing efforts to restore the ecological integrity of the Orokonui Valley and have dinner at the ecosanctuary.

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23 — DUNEDIN (B, L)

The morning will begin with a tour of Larnach Castle and Gardens. The house, which was built in the 1870s in the Gothic revival style, has had a number of owners over the years and has served as a hospital for shell-shocked soldiers and a nun's retreat, among other things. Beginning in the 1960s, the house has been beautifully restored, and a unique collection of specialized gardens includes the Patterned Garden, the Rain Forest, the South Seas Garden, the Alice Lawn, and the Laburnum Arch and Green Room. We'll enjoy lunch at the castle before returning to Dunedin for a free afternoon. We can sample the lively urban environment near our hotel or perhaps take a tour to the rugged Otago Peninsula, where we will be rewarded with a view of the South Island's diverse wildlife: rare yellow-eyed penguins, albatrosses, seals, and sea lions. We can also visit the Toitu Otago Settlers Museum to learn more about the lives of New Zealand's settlers — the indigenous Maori, the early Chinese, and the following waves of migrant groups. We'll dine on our own at one of Dunedin's fine restaurants.

### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24 — FIORDLAND NAVIGATOR (B, L, D)

Leaving Dunedin with luggage in tow, we'll pass through lush farmland en route to Fiordland National Park, where we'll take the ferry across Lake Manapouri. This beautiful lake was carved by glaciers and is surrounded by ancient temperate rainforests. The Fiordland area receives more than 20 feet of rainfall each year, which supports dense vegetation and spectacular waterfalls. After our ferry ride, we'll cross over the 2,200-foot-high Wilmot Pass. We'll then board the *Fiordland Navigator* — a three-masted sailboat

— for a cruise of serene Doubtful Sound, which is surrounded by towering peaks, cascading waterfalls, and abundant wildlife. After dropping anchor for the night, we'll dine on board under the stars.

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25 — QUEENSTOWN (B)

Leaving Doubtful Sound, we'll take the ferry back across Lake Manapouri to board our coach. We will arrive in Queenstown in the early afternoon and have time to begin exploring this alpine resort town. Nestled into the mountains, our lakeside hotel is central to the city's activities, shops, restaurants, and botanic gardens. Queenstown has much to hold our interest, from wineries to outdoor adventures. Our hotel for our final two nights, Novotel Queenstown Lakeside, boasts delightful lake views. We'll choose our own lunch and dinner today as we explore Queenstown.

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26 — QUEENSTOWN (B, D)

This morning will be open to our imaginations. We can golf, ride an alpine gondola, go jet boating, or simply relax by the lake. Lunch will be on our own. In mid-afternoon, we'll depart to experience the rugged wilderness of Central Otago. Our first stop will be the historic Kawarau Gorge Suspension Bridge, where commercial bungee jumping was introduced and where we can watch the more daring members of our group try their hand at it. Next we'll pass through vineyards and cherry and apricot orchards on the way to our dinner destination. At Kopuwaiti Delta Vineyard, our hostesses will arrange a wonderful evening to celebrate the close of our New Zealand adventure as we bid farewell to our new friends. Following a wine and olive oil tasting, we'll sit down to dinner and be serenaded by a local musician.

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27 — (B)

This morning, we will be free to explore, shop, and pack before catching an afternoon flight back to Auckland and an evening flight to Los Angeles.

*While no revisions of this itinerary are anticipated, the American Horticultural Society and Garden Adventures and its travel partners reserve the right to make changes, with or without notice that may become necessary.*







# Announcing an American Horticultural Society Travel Program

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February 5–27, 2022

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### GARDENS, WINES & WILDERNESS — A TOUR OF NEW ZEALAND

Join us for unforgettable experiences including:

- Brilliant gardens that reflect the unique flora of this amazing country, ranging from large, impressive botanic gardens to romantic and intimate gardens.
- Insight into native New Zealand history and culture through museum visits.
- Pristine nature, experienced through environments ranging from glacial lakes to rugged landscapes to rich coastal plains.
- Adventurous activities that include a visit to Mount Cook, the highest peak in New Zealand; bungee jumping (as a spectator or, for the more daring, as a participant); and opportunities for helicopter rides, zip-lining, or jet boating.
- An introduction to New Zealand's wine culture through visits to several vineyards.
- Delightful cities: Christchurch, called the Garden City; Auckland, blessed with beautiful parks and a lively waterfront; Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, with a wonderful cosmopolitan vibe; Queenstown, an alpine city with much to see and do.
- Serene sailings that include a cruise of Doubtful Sound aboard the Fiordland Navigator and ferry sailings, including an unforgettable experience as the sun sets behind the Auckland skyline.

The outstanding accommodations for this program:

- Stamford Plaza Hotel in Auckland, just a few minutes' walk from lively Viaduct Harbour and the restaurant precinct and close to the city's top theaters.
- Copthorne Hotel Wellington Oriental Bay, overlooking stunning Wellington Harbour, the perfect base to explore the city.
- Marlborough Vintners Hotel in Blenheim, in the heart of the Marlborough wine region, with views of vineyards and gardens.
- Distinction Christchurch Hotel, ideally situated in the rejuvenated Cathedral Square in the heart of Christchurch.
- The Hermitage Hotel, nestled in Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park, is the perfect base for exploring the park's natural wonders.
- Distinction Dunedin Hotel, located in the vibrant Warehouse Precinct in the heart of Dunedin.
- Novotel Queenstown Lakeside, a stunning lakefront location with a cosmopolitan town center and a world of activities nearby.

Please refer to the enclosed reservation form for pricing and instructions for reserving your place on this AHS Travel Study Program tour. For more information about Travel Study Program tours, please contact [development@ahsgardening.org](mailto:development@ahsgardening.org) or (703) 768-5700, ext. 127 or ext. 132. Information is also available at [www.ahsgardening.org/travel](http://www.ahsgardening.org/travel).

Designed with the garden-travel connoisseur in mind, the American Horticultural Society Travel Study Program offers exceptional itineraries that include many exclusive experiences and unique insights. Your participation benefits the work of the American Horticultural Society and furthers our vision of *"A land of sustainable gardens, cultivated by a diverse population with a common passion for plants."*

