



American Horticultural Society  
Travel Study Program

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

January 7–29, 2023

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 Māori, *omaio* means a place of peace, quiet, and tranquility, and we'll experience it firsthand at the Omaid 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. In addition to the gardens, we will experience fascinating cultural insights during our tour of the Government House. 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, across the Hauraki Gulf to Waiheke Island and the Inter Island Ferry between the North and South Islands. Water abounds in and around New Zealand, with a wide range of experiences available to enjoy the rivers, lakes, and ocean on your free days. During this treat for the senses, we'll be surrounded by towering peaks, cascading waterfalls, and abundant wildlife. True to the title of this program, wine and local cuisine play a major role in our tour. Mudbrick and Kopuwai Delta will host us for wine tastings and lunch, as we travel we'll experience unique opportunities to share food and wine with our garden hosts in the hospitality of their gardens along with the many occasions we share lunch and dinner together as a group in a variety of locations.

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 reservation form is included along with this brochure.

Cordially,



Marcia Zech  
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, JANUARY 7 — DEPART LOS ANGELES

Depart Los Angeles on Air New Zealand for the overnight flight to New Zealand. Those with East Coast connections are encouraged to arrive a day early to spend the night in L.A. and relax prior to departure.

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 8 — TRAVEL DAY

We will cross the International Dateline during our flight. We lose a day, but don't worry, it will return as we cross the date line on our way home.

### MONDAY, JANUARY 9 — AUCKLAND (B, D)

Welcome to New Zealand! We will arrive in Auckland early in the morning. After collecting baggage and clearing customs, we check into our hotel, where we are pre-registered for early arrival. The rest of the morning is free to unpack, rest, and experience our first impressions of New Zealand. In the afternoon we will visit Auckland War Memorial Museum, to view Māori and Pacific Island exhibits as an introduction to New Zealand's early history. Next, we will visit Totara Waters, a stunning subtropical garden set on the shores of the Waitemata Harbor. This exotic garden features a variety of palms, bromeliads, and cycads. Heading inland, we then complete our day at Mincher, an expansive country garden with diverse planting styles. Here we'll enjoy a welcome dinner and become better acquainted with our fellow travelers.

### TUESDAY JANUARY 10 — WAIHEKE ISLAND (B, L)

A short ferry ride takes us to Waiheke Island, where the microclimate produces some of New Zealand's finest red wines. After a wine tour and *al fresco* lunch at Mudbrick Vineyards, our next stop is Connells Bay, a breathtaking property developed by John and Jo Grow. Their vision of uniting art with nature is apparent in the sweeps of native trees that form special spaces for site-specific New Zealand sculpture. We end the day with a ferry ride back to Auckland to enjoy waterfront dining and shopping.

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11 — PACIFIC COAST (B, L)

Our first stop will be Wenderholm Regional Park where we will

experience New Zealand's wonderfully unspoiled natural scenery. Next, we go to Omaio, the Māori word for "place of peace and tranquility." This unique venue offers stunning views, diverse native plants, and fascinating gardens. After a leisurely garden luncheon courtesy of our gracious hostess, we will stop for a short stroll through the subtropical Kauri Forest, where we can appreciate the native forest that once covered this land. We'll return to Auckland with time to explore New Zealand's largest city with its parks, waterfront, and restaurants. Alternatively, we will take a short ferry ride to Devonport to enjoy its quaint Victorian villas and waterside cafes.

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 12 — SOUTH ISLAND (B, L)

There are dramatic differences in geology, climate and to some extent culture between the North and South Islands. A short flight from Auckland has us landing in Queenstown in the South Island. Upon arrival, we pick up our luggage and board the coach. As we head into the rugged landscape of Central Otago, we pass abandoned gold fields and lush groves of apricots and grapes. In a private vineyard setting we relax for lunch after tasting the estate olive oils and wines. Returning to Queenstown, we settle into this dramatic alpine resort nestled in the Southern Alps on the shores of Lake Wakatipu.

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 13 — QUEENSTOWN (B)

Today is your opportunity to explore Queenstown at your own pace. Take an exciting trip by jet boat up the Dart River into Mt. Aspiring National Park—authentic "Lord of the Rings" country—or a quiet steamship ride across Lake Wakatipu, or a romantic gondola ride to enjoy stunning alpine views. Other possibilities include white water rafting, hiking, golf, shopping, bus tours, bike riding and fly fishing, not to mention abundant shopping and dining options.

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 14 — DOUBTFUL SOUND (B, L, D)

This morning, we head to Fiordland National Park in Southland, where we will take a ferry ride across Lake Manapouri. Carved by glaciers and surrounded by ancient temperate rainforests, this lake is stunningly scenic. After our ferry ride, we cross over Wilmont Pass, an incredible natural habitat that receives over 20 feet of rainfall each year. We then board the well-appointed Fiordland Navigator yacht for a cruise of serene Doubtful Sound, surrounded by towering peaks, cascading waterfalls, and abundant wildlife. After dropping anchor for the night, we dine on board under the stars.

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 15 — DUNEDIN (B, L, D)

Leaving Doubtful Sound, we will return by ferry across Lake Manapouri to board our coach. Passing through the lush farm country of Southland, we will stop for a picnic lunch while enroute to Dunedin. Once New Zealand's largest city, Dunedin boasts a rich Scottish heritage and sublime examples of Victorian and Edwardian architecture. Tonight, we relax over dinner in our historic hotel. Later you can take a stroll through this thriving University city while enjoying the long days of the southern summer.

### MONDAY, JANUARY 16 — DUNEDIN (B)

Our day begins with a guided tour of the Botanic Gardens,



New Zealand's oldest. This Victorian-style pleasure garden is internationally recognized for its extensive plant collections. Next, we visit Historic Olveston House to experience the historic and aesthetic delights of early New Zealand when gold and wool ruled, and Dunedin was the economic powerhouse of the county. The afternoon is yours to enjoy the city's vibrant urban scene near our downtown hotel, or you may take a tour out onto the rugged Otago Peninsula to view the South Island's most accessible diversity of wildlife—yellow-eyed penguins, albatrosses, seals, and sea lions.

### **TUESDAY, JANUARY 17 — MOUNT COOK (B, L, D)**

Leaving Dunedin, we head North following the Pacific coast to Oamaru. This fascinating coastal town has proudly preserved its Victorian heritage. We have time to shop and explore the historic quadrant or stroll to the delightful botanic gardens close at hand. Heading inland, the landscape and climate begin to change dramatically as we begin our journey to Mt. Cook, New Zealand's highest peak. First, we stop to enjoy the wines and lunch in the Kurow Valley before travelling into the spectacular landscapes of the Southern Alps. Our destination is the lakeside village of Tekapo, this spectacular lake is known as the bluest in New Zealand. After settling in, we gather for dinner at the hotel.

### **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18 — MOUNT COOK (B, D)**

Today we offer you an abundance of choices. Relax in the thermal hot pools or explore the Southern Alps by helicopter. Alternatively, hike the alpine trails at the foot of Mt. Cook to a glacier-fed lake. Tonight, after dinner we offer the unique experience of the pristine night skies of the region. Come share the stories and science of New Zealand's southern skies from the nearby Mt. John observatory.

### **THURSDAY, JANUARY 19 — CHRISTCHURCH (B, L)**

Leaving Mt. Cook, we descend to the Canterbury Plains, New Zealand's largest expanse of flat land, rich in European history



and farming traditions. Our first stop is the Homestead Gardens of Akaunui, where we will learn about the farm's rich colonial past, explore the wonderful gardens surrounding the house with lunch to follow. Next, we head into Christchurch, known as the Garden City for its wonderful parks and charming cityscapes. The evening is free to explore on your own.

### **FRIDAY, JANUARY 20 — CHRISTCHURCH AND AKAROA (B, L)**

We begin the day with a visit to Ohinetahi, which features a historic home and spectacular gardens that have been restored over the last several decades by architect Sir Miles Warren and his family. The property is known for its collection of New Zealand art, native plants, venerable trees, and floriferous display beds. Next, we continue to the town of Akaroa, situated on the Banks Peninsula near Christchurch. Here we will stop at Fisherman's Bay Garden overlooking the Pacific, where we will enjoy a picnic lunch. The eclectic garden features a wide variety of New Zealand native plants, particularly Hebes. Our third destination in Akaroa is the Giants House, the home and terraced garden of artist Josie Martin. Her self-described "seriously-playful" sculptures and mosaics perfectly accent the equally eye-catching plantings throughout the grounds. Upon returning to Christchurch, continue to discover this delightful city at your own pace.

### **SATURDAY, JANUARY 21 — MARLBOROUGH (B, L, D)**

Leaving Christchurch, we again cross the Canterbury Plains before heading inland to enjoy the gardens of Penny Zino. As we explore her large rural garden, Penny will share her stories of farming, raising a family, and her passion for gardening. After lunch we return to the spectacular coastal highway as it hugs the Pacific shoreline. As the landscape changes, we begin to experience the vineyards that have made this region world-famous for the Sauvignon Blancs and Chardonnay it produces. After checking into our hotel, we begin to sample the local food and wine of this region at a nearby restaurant.

### **SUNDAY, JANUARY 22 — MARLBOROUGH (B, L, D)**

Our day begins with a visit to Barewood, a 3-acre garden full of rich plantings surrounding the 100-year-old homestead at its heart. Our hosts, born to the land share their experiences of transitioning from sheep farming to growing grapes. After enjoying lunch, wandering the gardens, and sampling local wines we head back to the coast. Our next destination is Paripuma, a stunning garden filled with native plantings and spectacular ocean views. Returning to our hotel, we have time to relax and enjoy dinner in the hotel.

### **MONDAY, JANUARY 23 — WELLINGTON (B)**

Departing our hotel, a short coach ride has us arriving at the delightful port town of Picton. Here we depart on the inter-island ferry, first passing through the protected waters of Marlborough Sounds and then into Cook Straits. As we sail into Wellington, New Zealand's capital, we begin to experience this wonderful, cosmopolitan city that will be our home for the next three nights.

### **TUESDAY, JANUARY 24 — WELLINGTON (B, L)**

Government House, home of New Zealand's Governor-General, is our first stop today for a tour of the grounds that were extensively redesigned in 1990 to include many native plant species. We will



learn about the historical role of the Governor General and how that has transitioned into today's political landscape. Then we'll head to Wellington's wonderful windswept coastline for lunch while enjoying the dramatic views. Returning to the city we will go to "Te Papa," the museum of New Zealand. Our guided tours there will focus on Māori history and culture. Spend the evening relaxing or exploring Wellington on your own.

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25 — WELLINGTON (B, D)

Today you are free to explore this enchanting city from your harborside hotel. Return to "Te Papa" to finish your exploration or visit one of the city's many museums. Ride a cable car to the top and stroll down through the botanical gardens, visit Zealandia bird sanctuary or the wild Wellington coastline. Shopping and dining abound close to our hotel or simply stroll by the waterfront of the magnificent harbor and enjoy the city. Late afternoon we gather to visit Weta Workshop to experience the digital mastery behind such movies as *The Hobbit*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *Avatar*. An iconic Kiwi experience to explore, learn and buy gifts for those envious of your opportunity. Later we relax over dinner to celebrate another long summer day.

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 26 — TO NAPIER (B, L)

Leaving the city, we climb over the Rimutaka Ranges and descend into the Hawkes Bay Region. With a sunny and mild climate, its economy is mostly farming, fruits and wine. Stopping at Gwavas, the garden is one of the largest privately-owned collections of woody plants in the southern hemisphere. Lunch at the homestead allows you to experience the history of early settlers when Europeans first farmed this area. Onto Napier, New Zealand's art deco city which was rebuilt in the 30's after the city was razed by an earthquake. Starting at the visitors' center, followed by a walking tour of the city we gather an appreciation

for the architecture. Ending our tour at our waterfront hotel, your evening is free to explore this vibrant coastal city.

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 27 — NAPIER (B, D)

Your morning is free to explore the city and waterfront, or simply relax. Serious golfers could get in a game at the world-famous Cape Kidnappers Golf Course. After lunch we will head out to Cape Kidnappers and take a guided tour to the Gannet Sanctuary. Recognized as the world's largest, most accessible nesting colony we can get within feet of these remarkable birds as they come home to feed their chicks. Enroute back to Napier we stop at a local winery to sample the finest wines and fresh produce of Hawke's Bay for dinner.

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 28 — ROTORUA (B, L, D)

Leaving the Pacific Ocean behind we head inland onto the central volcanic plateau of the North Island. Our first stop is on the shores of Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake and dormant volcanic caldera. Surrounded by active volcanoes and geothermal fields, we travel across this unique landscape to Rotorua. Stopping at Tamaki Village, we will enjoy lunch and a Māori cultural experience before arriving in the city. You will have time to explore before our farewell dinner to celebrate adventures shared and new friends made.

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 29 — AUCKLAND AND LOS ANGELES (B, D)

Leaving Rotorua and the volcanic plateau behind, we travel into the rich farmland of the Waikato Valley. As we travel north to Auckland we stop to visit Hamilton Gardens. The Gardens are a fascinating collection of themes portraying the history of gardening throughout the world. Next, we stop at Zealong, New Zealand's only tea-producing estate. After learning the fascinating history of tea, we share tastings and High Tea before heading to Auckland Airport and your overnight flight to the USA.







American Horticultural Society  
7931 East Boulevard Drive  
Alexandria, VA 22308  
[www.ahsgardening.org/travel](http://www.ahsgardening.org/travel)

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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, a lively alpine city.
- Serene sailings that include a cruise of Doubtful Sound aboard the Fiordland Navigator and ferry sailings.

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.
- Distinction Christchurch Hotel, ideally situated in the rejuvenated Cathedral Square in the heart of Christchurch.
- 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.
- Peppers Bluewater Resort Lake Tekapo, is set amongst the purest natural landscape, and in excellent proximity to the natural wonders of Mount Cook and the Mackenzie region
- Chateau Marlborough in Blenheim, the only 5-star hotel situated at the top of the South Island, great views, and pampered stay make this the perfect base for exploring this amazing region.
- QT Wellington in Wellington, perched on the sparkling harbor the hotel interior hosts one of New Zealand's most eccentric private art collections.
- Scenic Hotel Te Pania in Napier, remarkable location on the edge of the beautiful Hawke's Bay and just a stroll away from many attractions.
- Pullman Rotorua, in the heart of the city and perfect base to explore the region's geothermal paradise.

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. 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."*

