

## [ bedding down ]



Plush does it at two luxe Kiwi lodgings: Blanket Bay (above) and the Lodge at Kauri Cliffs (right).

## Gimme Shelter, New Zealand Style

**S**leeping probably isn't on your list of must-dos in New Zealand, but you may want to add it," says Elizabeth Hansen, who has written four travel guides to New Zealand. "This country offers an array of lodgings—hotels, B&B inns, homestays, farmstays, country lodges, caravan parks—and most supply much more than a good night's rest. The places listed below are my top picks of the hundreds I have vetted over the years."

*All prices are in U.S. dollars and are for accommodations for two people.*

■ **Stafford Villa** (2 Awanui St., Birkenhead Point, Auckland; 9-418-3022; [www.staffordvilla.co.nz](http://www.staffordvilla.co.nz); \$274, includes breakfast, afternoon tea, and port). When actress Joan Collins stayed here, she chose to extend her reservation. She must have liked the picture-perfect bedrooms: king beds, high-thread-count linens, large bathrooms, Asian objets d'art. "It's an old house with all the mod cons, which we find our guests like," says Chris Windram, who restored the Victorian with her husband, Mark.

■ **Ducks Crossing Cottage** (58 Seabreeze Rd., Devonport, Auckland; 9-445-8102; e-mail [duckxing@splurge.net.nz](mailto:duckxing@splurge.net.nz); \$64-92, includes breakfast). Peter and Gwenda Mark-Woods feel like family—and their homestay B&B soon feels like home. They pick up and take folks to the ferry, and invite guests to read in the sun-filled living room or watch the eponymous ducks around their pond. This B&B is one of New Zealand's best values.

■ **Lodge at Kauri Cliffs** (Tepene Tablelands Rd., RD1, Kaeo; 9-407-0010; [www.kauricliffs.com](http://www.kauricliffs.com); \$727-1,221, includes breakfast, cocktails, gourmet dinner, and use of most facilities). The setting is the showstopper: The lodge sits on 6,000 acres by the Pacific Ocean, with a view of islands stretching to the horizon. Another calling card: a championship golf

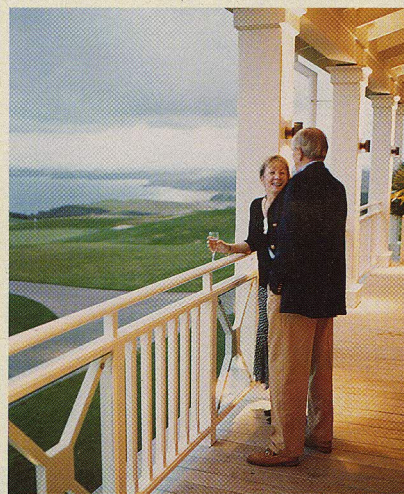
course that Tiger Woods's caddy Steve Williams compares to Pebble Beach. "The difference is that over half the fairways at Kauri Cliffs face the ocean." The accommodations: 22 roomy suites done in country-chic decor.

■ **Abri Apartments** (10/12 Bayview Rd., Paihia, Bay of Islands; 9-402-8003; [www.abri-accom.co.nz](http://www.abri-accom.co.nz); \$91-175). This hideaway is for privacy-seeking folks who want to fend for themselves. The two stand-alone studios with water views have hardwood floors, beamed ceilings, cooking facilities, and spa baths.

■ **Te Ana Farmstay** (Ngakuru, RD1, Rotorua; 7-333-2720; [www.teanafarmstay.co.nz](http://www.teanafarmstay.co.nz); \$70-105, includes breakfast). The Oberer farm offers a breather from touristy Rotorua. Heather Oberer gives four-wheel-drive rides across the hills of the dairy property; gum boots are available for exploring by foot. Hearty breakfasts come with the room; smart travelers also arrange for dinner here (\$28).

■ **Clearwater Motor Lodge** (229 Lake Terr., Taupo; 7-377-2071; [www.clearwatermotorlodge.co.nz](http://www.clearwatermotorlodge.co.nz); \$108-112). Scenic Lake Taupo is the main attraction; this motor lodge sits on its shore. Eight of the ten guest rooms have water views; the best have beachfront patios. All have kitchenettes (big with Kiwis). A soaking pool features local geothermal waters.

■ **Papamoa Beach Top 10 Holiday Resort** (535 Papamoa Beach Rd., Papamoa; 7-572-0816;



[www.papamoabeach.co.nz](http://www.papamoabeach.co.nz); \$23-34 seaview tent or RV site, \$42-50 cabin, \$107-193 beachfront motel unit). Beach-loving Kiwi families flock to this "caravan park" during the summer holidays (Dec.-Feb.), so book early. All the lodging options are just steps from the Bay of Plenty, where you can swim and fish.

■ **James Cook Hotel Grand Chancellor** (147 The Terrace, Wellington; 4-499-9500; [www.ghihotels.com](http://www.ghihotels.com); \$144 midweek, \$90 weekends, subject to availability). Built in the 1970s, the James Cook Hotel is a Wellington landmark. Arrive on a weekend, and you can stay at this centrally located hotel for about half the midweek tariff.

■ **Blanket Bay** (Glenorchy; 3-442-9442; [www.blanketbay.com](http://www.blanketbay.com); \$923-1,423 main lodge, \$1,423-1,710 chalet suites, includes breakfast, cocktails, gourmet dinner). Some of New Zealand's priciest lodgings, the rooms and chalet suites here are booked way ahead. The schist-stone lodge sits by Lake Wakatipu, perfect for outdoor pursuits (heli-fishing anyone?) and gazing at the Southern Alps and Greenstone Valley ("Middle-earth" to LOTR fans).

■ **Queenstown House** (69 Hallenstein St., Queenstown; 3-442-9043; [www.queenstownhouse.co.nz](http://www.queenstownhouse.co.nz); \$160-280, includes breakfast, cocktails). This boutique B&B inn is an easy walk from central Queenstown. Louise Kiely's scrambled eggs with smoked salmon are as memorable as the lake view from the breakfast room. Pre-dinner drinks and "nibbles" are a house tradition.

■ **Larnach Lodge and Stables** (Larnach Castle, 145 Camp Rd., Dunedin; 3-476-1616; [www.larnachcastle.co.nz](http://www.larnachcastle.co.nz); \$69 in stables, \$149-178 in the lodge, includes breakfast and castle admission). Larnach Castle, built in the 1800s, was in ruins when the Barker family bought it in 1967. Restored to its neo-Gothic glory, it has rooms in a newish lodge or the stables, and a big garden. A trip back in time—and otherwise.

■ **Te Wanaka Lodge** (23 Brownston St., Wanaka; 3-443-9224; [www.tewanaka.co.nz](http://www.tewanaka.co.nz); \$106-270, includes breakfast and afternoon tea). This homey inn with a contemporary feel features two comfy lounges, a hot tub, and help-yourself wine and beer. Fun-loving hosts Graeme and Andy Oxley are "mad keen trampers" (hikers) who enjoy advising guests about trails—and even loan out walking sticks.