

THE MILLIONAIRES' PLAYGROUND

If you had a fortune, how would you spend it? **Jacqueline Taylor** finds that many of the world's wealthy are choosing to come to New Zealand, for our luxury lodges, experiences, and fine food.



Cape Kidnappers



The Kinloch Club



Helena Bay



Treetops Lodge & Estate



The Penthouse by Eichardt's



The Kinloch Club



Helena Bay



The Kinloch Club



The Penthouse by Eichardt's

strongest growing market segment worldwide. They report a 48 per cent increase in the last five years, with luxury travel growing twice as fast as all other types of international tourism (at 24 per cent).*

One of Tourism New Zealand's priorities is to target these top-end travellers. A key part of this goal is to grow the number of high-value visitors to New Zealand. With spends of between NZ\$50,000 and NZ\$100,000-plus per visit**, high-value visitors bring lots of benefits to the economy.

Over the last few years, visitor numbers to New Zealand have grown. At the end of October 2016, it was reported that tourism earnings had soared,

surpassing dairy to become New Zealand's top export-earner for the first time since 2010.

Luring in the luxury traveller

The growth in luxury travel suggests that New Zealand is successfully catering to the needs of those looking for a premium experience. Lisa Gardiner, Manager Business Events and Premium for Tourism New Zealand, agrees.

“New Zealand is unique in being able to offer a range of products in one place. It gives luxury consumers choice and the ability to create bespoke itineraries.

+ **IMAGINE TAKING A HELICOPTER TRIP** up the coast. As the chopper hovers, the co-pilot dives into the ocean to pull up some crayfish. You continue your flight to a mountain peak and enjoy champagne, canapés, and a freshly cooked lunch.

Or how about a round of golf on a cliff-top course overlooking expansive seas, followed by a private in-suite retail experience, where you're presented with high-end brands, as your butler serves whatever you desire?

Or maybe you're seeking more adventure, and want to take a helicopter flight to untouched back-country rivers for some peaceful fly-fishing, or to venture further into the mountains for some robust hunting?

Then, after a day of pampering or exhilarating activities, you wind down in deluxe accommodation and enjoy the finest cuisine and world-class wines.

This all sounds like 'perfection from every perspective'. And luxury experiences like these are exactly what Tourism New Zealand is marketing to the top 10 per cent of the world's wealthy – high-net-worth individuals (with liquid assets of US\$1–5 million) to ultra-high-net-worth individuals (with liquid assets of US\$30 million and over).

Luxury travel on the rise

According to travel trade firm ITB Berlin and consultants IPK International, high-price trips are the



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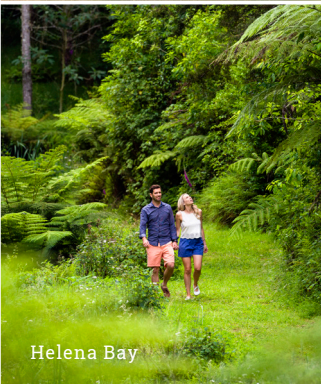
“We often get feedback from the industry that New Zealand offers a form of luxury that is authentic and honest, and reflects the landscape and the people. And this really appeals to international travellers looking for a luxury experience.”

Late last year, Tourism New Zealand received the prestigious ‘Destination Award’ for the second year running at Australia’s Luxperience event, in recognition of the importance it places on luxury travel in its global marketing.

Also, in December last year, Helena Bay, Northland’s new exclusive coastal lodge, was named the world’s best new luxury hotel by global research group Luxury Travel Intelligence.

“Global accolades like this help put New Zealand on the must-do map for luxury travellers,” says Gardiner.

Helena Bay joins a long list of high-end New Zealand establishments available to the luxury traveller, including newer properties Mahu Whenua near Wanaka, The Marlborough Lodge in Blenheim, and The Penthouse by Eichardt’s in Queenstown, as well as longer-established properties such as The Farm at Cape Kidnappers, Delamore Lodge on Waiheke Island, Kauri Cliffs in Northland, Taupo’s Kinloch Lodge and Golf Club, Treetops Lodge & Estate near Rotorua, and Matakauri Lodge near Queenstown.



Experiential luxury

Sofia Ambler, director of both helicopter company Heletranz and The Luxury Network, believes New Zealand luxury is about accessing experiences you could not have anywhere else in the world.

“Landing on a secluded river bank or a private beach and having it all to yourself . . . that, I think, is luxury. Or going heli-fishing in the morning and playing golf in the afternoon. And finishing off your day with amazing local food and wine at the highest international level.”

Heletranz provides clients with unique helicopter experiences, tailoring trips to suit the individual and showing off New Zealand’s stunning scenery and hidden gems. The company frequently arranges trips for luxury travellers to various high-end lodges across New Zealand, providing exclusive luxury experiences along the way.

“We arranged a ten-day trip around New Zealand for one overseas client. Having two mountain bikes ready to go in the helicopter was his type of luxury, as well as free-diving for paua and crayfish.”

With recognition of the unique experiences and produce available in New Zealand, high-end lodges and hotels also focus on providing their guests with



‘experiential luxury’ that comes with a personalised and genuine service.

James Cavanagh, Group GM of the Imperium Collection of luxury boutique hotels, including The Penthouse by Eichardt’s, Queenstown, believes that with increasing international exposure the bar is raised again and again, and New Zealand continues to deliver.

“New Zealand is so hot right now for international high-net-worth travellers, ticking a lot of boxes in terms of the entire experience, from flights to vehicles to intimate lodgings and on-ground interactions.”

The Penthouse by Eichardt’s is paving the way for exclusive luxury in New Zealand, delivering a unique guest experience. Along with its large private terrace and uninterrupted views across Lake Wakatipu, The Penthouse includes world-class amenities, a private chef, 24-hour butler and concierge services, and the private use of a Land Rover Discovery, with driver.

And along with its high-end facilities, The Penthouse arranges ultimate New Zealand adventure experiences, including sheep shearing, fishing on Moke Lake, and a mountain spa indulgence with canapés and Krug champagne.

Superyacht service

Well up there in luxury with The Penthouse is Helena Bay.

“The facilities themselves are second-to-none outside the world of superyachting, and no expense has been spared in the attention to detail. This can be seen in all areas of the lodge, including the guest suites,” says the lodge’s general manager Neil McFarlane.

Set in 300 hectares of coastal privacy, the lodge offers a ‘superyacht service’, a tailored and proactive approach to a guest’s wants and needs. Staff are adaptable to most requirements and do their best to anticipate what it is that guests enjoy, or don’t.

When catering to guest requirements, it is essential that service, although always available, should be discrete and never intrusive. Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the high-end traveller is a high priority at the Northland lodge.

With its high-quality facilities, the lodge allows guests to stay and play without the need for more travelling. Travel to the lodge can be by the lodge’s own twin-engine helicopter, even at night.

Not only for the international guest

Increasingly, Kiwis are also seeking out the luxury experiences New Zealand high-end lodges offer.

Karine Thomas, Director of Navigate Oceania – the marketing company for Treetops Lodge & Estate in Rotorua – says Kiwis get the same quality and service international guests receive.

“I think New Zealanders enjoy exactly the same quality as international guests. However, Kiwis probably come more for the outdoors and spa experiences.”

Thomas says the difference between international guests and New Zealanders is that Kiwis are not as interested in cultural experiences – until they get to the lodge, where they’re wowed by the Maori Food Trail, for example.

“Guests learn about native herbs, vegetables and how the Maori people use them for naturopathic remedies. And [they love] the wild food cooking school we offer, the ‘estate to plate’.”

Roselyn Storey, from longstanding Waiheke property Delamore Lodge, says she sees guests from all over the world, peaking at different times of the year. “Guests include a lot of New Zealanders just wanting a special weekend away.”

Golf, fishing, crayfish, back-country experiences, gourmet dinners . . . As international travellers pour into New Zealand to enjoy once-in-a-lifetime experiences, Kiwis don’t need to feel envious. For a lot less cost, they can access similar experiences any day – without a plane ticket.

Sources:

* www.openeyesopinion.com/luxury-travel-has-increased-48-in-the-past-five-years

** 2013 World Wealth Report

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