

MODERN LUXURY

MANHATTAN

BEST OF MANHATTAN

A Curated Guide to
the City's Good Life

CHAMPION STYLE

Fashion's
Athletic Mood

EMPIRE STATE OF MIND

Aerin Lauder's
New York Edit

Plus

John Lithgow
Speaks From
the Heart

SHINING MOMENT

*DIANE KRUGER'S
ROLE OF A LIFETIME*

From top: The Lodge at The Kinloch Club on the shores of Lake Taupo in Taupo, New Zealand, overlooks The Kinloch Club's Jack Nicklaus-designed 18-hole golf course; The Lodge's bar, with views of the golf course and the lake.



OFF THE MAP

Exotic luxury, sophisticated interiors, gourmet farm-to-table dining, pampering—and, above all, tranquility—make The Kinloch Club one of the world's hottest escapes.

By Elina Fuhrman

The sun sets over New Zealand's Lake Taupo as I make my way to The Lodge at The Kinloch Club (rooms from \$586 per night, thekinlochclub.com), which recently won the Supreme New Zealand Architecture Award from the New Zealand Institute of Architects and is the newest luxury resort on the country's North Island. The stars dot the pitch-black sky, and it seems like I'm completely alone. "Would you like a throw to stay warm?" offers Ken McTague, the duty manager at the lodge, as he gestures toward a golf cart that will take me to my villa. It's my home for the next three days, and I'm excited to soak in all the stillness and solitude. This is my favorite type of place to get lost in; there is nothing here to distract

me—only space and peace to breathe deeply and marvel at the beauty of nature.

THE LODGE

An architectural gem, the "superlodge," as it's called, is pure wow from the moment you walk through the courtyard entrance. Floating on a bluff, it has expansive views of the golf greens, the lake and the volcanoes beyond. Designed by renowned Kiwi architect Andrew Patterson, it's meant to feel like a Scottish castle (the Kinloch Castle on the Isle of Rum, to be precise), with a contemporary twist. Interior designer Virginia Fisher channeled the mood for refined modern panache with a mix of lush furs, rich velvets,

leather and brass amid simple whites and wood.

The modern feel is carried through to the 10 villas; though the mood is lighter and more casual there. My two-bedroom villa effortlessly blends in with its setting and feels like a luxurious home: I have walk-in closets, a kitchenette with a stocked fridge, a laundry room, a dining area, a cozy den with a writing desk, a living room with a carbon-neutral fireplace, wraparound outdoor terraces and—my favorite—an opulent bath. The views are breathtaking from every angle; they feel like postcard windows.

THE DINING

Farm-to-table, or as The Lodge calls it, "Estate-





From left: The great room at The Lodge; The Lodge's chef serves indigenous fare, including fallow venison (reared on the Treetops Lodge & Estate property) with forest mushrooms, farm turnips, white pudding, roasted garlic and truffle oil; sister property to The Lodge, Treetops Lodge & Estate, near Rotorua, New Zealand.



to-plate," is the property's 100 percent pesticide-free and organic-driven philosophy and a true feast for the senses. The chef creates daily menus using indigenous ingredients (sourced from the gardens of sister property Treetops Lodge & Estate near Rotorua, including the game that is reared there) and serves many dishes to order. The five-course degustation dinners paired with the finest New Zealand wines are impressive, exciting and innovative. For someone who eats plant-based, I loved the complex flavors of the chef's creations and appreciated the art of plating. My other favorite experiences included having breakfast at sunrise beside a vista window and dinner by the crackling fire.

THE ACTIVITIES

Personally, I didn't want to leave the gorgeous villa's confines; however, there is plenty to do at the lodge and nearby. The Kinloch Club boasts the only Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course in the country and the perfect place to tee off. The magnificent 18-hole course is an eye-catcher, but if that's not your thing, try skydiving, rafting, boating, fly-fishing, game hunting or simply hanging out at the spa—like I did. You can also enjoy a long walk into town, soaking up the pristine nature and enjoying the lake. Or relax; open all the windows; get comfy in one of the chaises on your terrace; inhale the clean air; and watch the world go by.

Not to be missed is a separate trip to Treetops

Lodge & Estate (Pheasant House rates from \$500 per night, treetops.co.nz) a mere 45-minute drive north or a short chopper ride away. Even if you're not an adrenaline junkie, you'll appreciate breathtaking wilderness untouched by the world. The 2,500-acre Treetops estate is hidden in a century-old virgin forest with wild pigs, deer, water buffalo, elk and native birds, and has its own streams, lakes and waterfalls. The eco-friendly retreat with homegrown produce is all I needed to clear my mind, refocus on what's important and boost my health.

The Kinloch Club and the Treetops Lodge & Estate are both creations of John Sax, a Kiwi entrepreneur and passionate naturalist, dedicated to preserving the environment while allowing discerning travelers to experience the wilderness in its authentic form. The resorts are Sax's way of turning back the clock and getting a taste of the unique beauty and character of his country.

THE TREK

A trip to New Zealand feels as if you've escaped to a different world, but it can be considered a rather accessible destination, especially if you're traveling from the West Coast. Air New Zealand (airnewzealand.com) is the best choice, not only for the direct flights and the stylish cabins, but for some of the most sincere service in the sky. The airline has a unique Kiwi experience: relaxed, sophisticated, elegant and superfriendly. You'll feel like you're a superhero

in your own Space Age movie when you step into the fuchsia LED-lit cabin. The in-flight entertainment catalogue will keep you busy, but the bed (with a mattress) in the business cabin is guaranteed to cradle you to sleep until your arrival.

THE TIMING

There is no bad time to visit, but remember, winter in the U.S. is summer in New Zealand. ■

