

# On track for adventure

With the borders finally fully open again, Yolanda Zappaterra explores all the new things to see, do and sell in New Zealand

A trip to New Zealand has always meant embracing nature and outdoor fun, but a range of new adventure attractions and hiking and biking trails – which opened across the country while the borders have been closed – have made it even more appealing. Add to that eco-friendly initiatives, stylish new accommodation options, along with the recent removal of pre-departure testing, and there's never been a better time to sell this heaven on Earth to clients.

#### GREEN GIANTS

New Zealand's support of conservation and sustainability continues with a range of new green initiatives, including the Hands on Conservation Safari from adventure operator Ridgeline Wanaka on the South Island. This comes with the chance to get involved with planting native species and to find out why predator control is so necessary. In nearby Queenstown, Ngāi Tahu Tourism's iconic jet boat rides on the Shotover River are getting in on the act by converting their boats from using fossil fuel to electric power. And clients looking for sustainable

accommodation on the North Island will love the solar-powered Kokomea PurePod on the Kāpiti Coast; Wi-Fi and mobile phone reception are replaced with a telescope and star map for stargazing through the glass ceiling.

#### HIKING AND BIKING

Cycling enthusiasts now have two new reasons to visit the South Island: the Lake Dunstan Cycle Trail and Kawatiri Coastal Trail. The former has cantilevered platforms clipped to a steep gorge and a 279ft-long suspension bridge. On the west coast, the 34-mile Kawatiri Trail offers gorgeous views of the Paparoa Ranges. The grade 2 trail is particularly good for families, and includes luggage and shuttle services. On the North Island, Kaitiaki Adventures in Rotorua has extended its Mount Tarawera crater hiking expedition with the six-hour Volcanic Crater Experience, which consists of a hike around the Tarawera dome before linking up with the half-day excursion on the summit of Ruawahia. And in Queenstown, Skyline Guided Walks leads similarly challenging excursions up Ben Lomond's great granite peak. ➤

Hiking up Ben Lomond, near Queenstown



# DESTINATIONS

## AUSTRALASIA | NEW ZEALAND

### HOW TO SELL



“Emphasise how New Zealand has everything, and how there is nowhere on this planet quite like it. Its oceanic climate is similar to western parts of Britain and Ireland, which keeps temperatures amenable all year round.”

**Gary King, head of trade sales, Wendy Wu Tours**



“Hotel availability is likely to be the biggest challenge for clients looking to book a trip.

Recommend they plan ahead and book early (around eight to 12 months before travel), especially for niche adventure tours and smaller boutique properties.”

**Gareth Thomas, Australasia senior specialist, Audley Travel**



“With high season (January/February) a peak booking time for international

and domestic travellers, I would recommend agents try and move clients to the New Zealand spring and autumn periods, when the weather is superb, roads are less crowded and accommodation is easier to find.”

**Brian Hawe, product manager, First Class Holidays**

### BOOK IT

**G Adventures'** 15-day Highlights of New Zealand package is a great introduction to the country's national parks and activities. From £2,349 excluding flights.

[gadventures.com](http://gadventures.com)

**Wendy Wu's** 23-day Hidden Treasures of New Zealand starts from £8,090 including flights.

[wendywutours.co.uk](http://wendywutours.co.uk)

The 13-night Spirit of New Zealand self-drive holiday from **First Class Holidays** costs from £3,859, based on two people sharing, travelling in November, including flights and 10 days' car hire. [fcholidays.com](http://fcholidays.com)



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** Ōpuke Thermal Pools & Spa; Hands On Conservation Safari; expert guide on safari; Lake Dunstan Cycle Trail **PICTURES:** Mark Orbell; Geoff Marks



### THRILLS AND SPILLS

Rotorua is the destination for thrill-seekers in New Zealand, and was already a very appealing offer for clients who love adventure – but now, there's more. Rotorua Rafting's new zipline experience is a two-and-a-half-hour journey that has riders soaring through the air on four ziplines over three waterfalls, one swing bridge and a series of boardwalks within the Ōkere Falls forest. For something very different, the Shweeb lays riders in a clear capsule before whizzing them along a monorail track at speeds of up to 30mph. And Rotorua's hugely popular luge has added one mile of new tracks down Mount Ngongotahā.

### A CULTURAL COUP

It's always nice to experience culture while travelling, and the new Hundertwasser Art Centre north of Auckland in Whangārei is an eye-catching beauty. Encompassing the largest collection of Hundertwasser's art outside of Vienna, the Wairau Māori Art Gallery, a viewing platform and rooftop garden, is definitely a step up from the city's other iconic Hundertwasser building, a roadside bathroom block. You can't help feeling the man who was an early champion of sustainability would have very much approved of its 40,000 recycled bricks, 5,000 recycled paving blocks, 1,600 cubic metres of native timber and 3,000 square metres of locally made tiles.

### HOT HOTELS

A clutch of great new hotels now offer clients considering New Zealand more choice than ever. Queenstown lays claim to the country's first 'six-star' hotel, The Carlin. In Wellington, kids will love the five-star Mövenpick Hotel Wellington for its daily 'Chocolate Hour' and unlimited free ice cream. More sophisticated clients might prefer the art deco theme of Tryp by Wyndham. Christchurch has new offerings aplenty in the shape of the Observatory Hotel, whose 33 uniquely designed rooms feature locally crafted furniture; the boutique Mayfair; and the arty Muse Art Hotel. And environmentalists will appreciate the four-star waterfront Sudima Kaikōura in Kaikōura; it's the first hotel in New Zealand to be awarded 'CarboNZero' certification, and offers all the amenities clients would expect, including a seasonal outdoor pool.

### AND...RELAX

An hour out of Christchurch City, Ōpuke Thermal Pools & Spa is the latest wellness destination to entice visitors wanting to chill out in exquisite landscapes. The site has pools filled with glacial meltwater (heated by the on-site solar farm), cedar hot tubs with views across the foothills of the Southern Alps, and private cabanas for premium treatment and hot pool packages. On the North Island, the 86-year-old geothermal mineral pools of Ngawha Springs are looking more appealing than ever, thanks to a year-long \$4.3 million revamp. **TW**