

New Zealand

OTAHUNA LODGE

Words by Elaine Hilbelink

HONEYMOON HIDEAWAYS

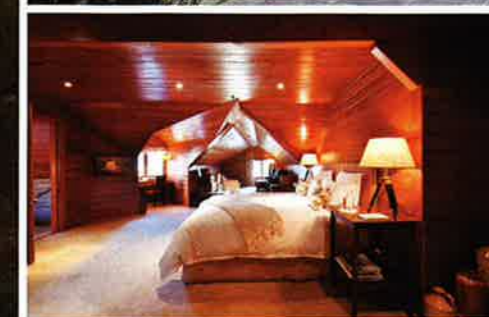


Photos courtesy of Otahuna Lodge

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HONEYMOON HIDEAWAYS



If an isle in the South Pacific is your wedding or honeymoon destination dream, New Zealand offers a breathtakingly beautiful locale; and Otahuna Lodge, a Relais & Chateaux property, could provide the ideal romantic venue. Nestled in the hills near Christchurch, it is a destination which transports you to an era of bygone elegance and charm. Otahuna, a Victorian mansion built in 1895, in a Queen Anne style by Sir Heaton Rhodes, remained a family estate through the 1950s.

In 2005, the 30 remaining acres of this historic country property were purchased and the accommodations restored to their turn of the century elegance with all of the comforts and amenities one could wish for in a modern day luxury lodge.

Otahuna and its acres of gardens could provide an exclusive site for your "down under" destination wedding, or a romantic honeymoon home-base to explore all this scenic country has to offer. When you choose Otahuna, its seven distinctive luxury suites with spa-like bathrooms and fireplaces can provide accommodations for your closest guests. The property is recognized as "A Garden of National Significance" and guests can meander through formal gardens, along manicured wooded trails, around ponds or fields of daffodils, or enjoy the pool, hot tub and tennis court.

Dining at Otahuna is an experience which tantalizes the taste buds and is included in the room tariff. Distinctive cuisine paired

with fine New Zealand wines is offered communally to guests each evening in the dining room or in more private settings if you so choose. When you head down to the homey kitchen in the morning, chefs are on hand to prepare breakfasts tailored to your personal tastes. Much of the produce served comes from the potager-style garden and orchard on Otahuna's land. Guests can also enjoy cooking demonstrations and guided tours of the garden.

While visiting the southern island of New Zealand, Canterbury Guiding Co. can tailor excursions to suit your taste. Try a helicopter ride over verdant patchworks of pasturelands, snow-capped peaks on the Southern Alps, glacial braided rivers or historic sheep stations. Another day you might sail from Akaroa Harbor, a geologic remnant of New Zealand's volcanic history, in search of Hector's dolphins. In keeping with the tradition of another time, the staff will greet you on the front veranda as you return to your lavish Otahuna home.

The "Kiwis," as New Zealanders are affectionately referred to, are hospitable and welcoming to visitors whom travel below the equator. The owners, chefs and staff truly epitomize sophisticated, gracious hospitality to all who come to visit for their New Zealand destination wedding or honeymoon.

