

room service

Heaven for early birds



Don't miss sunrise – it's the best part of the day at New Zealand's Acacia Cliffs Lodge

IT TOOK 12 hours for Acacia Cliffs Lodge to reveal its wow factor. After arriving in darkness it wasn't until dawn on the Wednesday that my eyes were open to the true beauty of this boutique lodge.

It started as a burnt orange glow in the distance. I deliberately had left open the curtains on my floor to ceiling windows to witness what had been described to me as the perfect sunrise.

The morning streams of light were not only bringing me to life, but they were creating a masterpiece worthy of the signature of one of the great painters.

As the sun climbed, Lake Taupo in New Zealand's North Island, was coming to life in spectacular fashion. The mist was rolling across the lake as the colours of winter were exposed for all to see. As the boats bob about in the cove below you can't help but draw comparisons with the New England area on America's east coast.

Acacia Cliffs Lodge is owned by Rick and Linda Whitlock and has been open only since April this year. Not that long ago the Whitlocks were running a mountain biking business in Noosa, but decided to return home and after much searching found a pole-house property that they could convert into an upmarket lodge.

Acacia Lodge is not meant to be competing with the high end lodges that New Zealand is famous for, lodges like Cape Kidnappers. But it is not that far behind and is perfect for those who enjoy



the good things in life, but can't quite afford the high-end price tag.

The lodge, set in two hectares of private grounds, is 6km off State Highway 1, about a five-minute drive from Taupo — a town of about 20,000 people which spreads around the shores of New Zealand's largest freshwater lake.

It is a popular destination for Kiwis who come here for water sports, golf, bungy jumping and car racing. It's just a 45-minute drive to Turangi and some of New Zealand's best fly-fishing rivers or an hour to my reason for visiting, the Mt Ruapehu ski fields.

The Lodge has four bedrooms, each with its own ensuite, TV, complimentary mini bar and in-room tea and coffee making facilities. The common areas — lounge, dining, kitchen, library and decks — are on the second level. The upper level of the house is the private domain of the Whitlocks.

It is fair to say that Acacia Cliffs Lodge more than meets the expectations of

guests who will pay at least \$500 per night to stay here. The rooms are beautifully furnished and the neutral colour scheme helps to create a feeling of peace and tranquillity. The modern reworking of the original house has created a lot of indoor/outdoor living spaces — perhaps more appealing in summer than on a frosty July morning.

Rick and Linda are charming hosts who make you feel like a welcome guest, rather than an intruder, in their house. Rick, thanks to some lessons at the Sunshine Coast's Spirit House cooking school, is a dab hand in the kitchen and cooked a four-course feast of Thai soup, blue-cheese pasta, lamb (of course, it's New Zealand) and a lemon tart for my evening meal. After that I could only manage his homemade muesli for breakfast, despite the offering of another breakfast banquet. If for some reason the lodge doesn't work out, Rick's culinary talents could easily earn him a living.

But there's no reason to think Acacia Cliffs Lodge won't be a success.

Essentials

Acacia Cliffs Lodge
133 Mapara Rd, Acacia Bay, Lake Taupo. Telephone: +647 378 1551. Email: info@acaciaciffslodge.co.nz
Room rates start at \$500 per night in the low season.
For more details go to www.acaciaciffslodge.co.nz

Getting here

Air New Zealand flies from Brisbane to Auckland with connecting 45-minute flights from Auckland to Taupo.

Brian Crisp was a guest of the New Zealand Ski Tourism Marketing Network.

How much, how hot

	Rate of exchange \$A	AUGUST AVERAGE			
		day low	day high	sun.hrs	rain.(cm)
ARGENTINA Buenos Aires	PESO 2.88	6°C	16	6	6.1
AUSTRIA Vienna	EURO .61	15	24	8	7.2
BELGIUM Brussels	EURO .61	12	22	6	8
BRAZIL Rio de Janeiro	REAL 1.50	18	24	7	4.3
CANADA Montreal Toronto	DOLLAR .98	12 14	23 25	7 8	10.2 6.9
CHINA Beijing	YUAN 6.52	20	30	7	14.1
DENMARK Copenhagen	KRONE 4.52	14	21	7	6.6
FIJI Suva	DOLLAR 1.44	20	26	8	21.1
FRANCE Paris	EURO .61	14	24	7	6.4
GERMANY Berlin	EURO .61	13	23	7	6.9
GREAT BRITAIN Edinburgh London	POUND .48	11 13	18 21	4 6	7.7 5.9
GREECE Athens	EURO .61	23	33	12	7
HONG KONG Hong Kong	DOLLAR 7.45	26	31	6	36.7
HUNGARY Budapest	FORINT 140.19	16	27	9	4.7
INDIA New Delhi	RUPEE 40.89	26	34	6	17.3
INDONESIA Jakarta	RUPIAH 8729.93	23	31	8	4.3
IRELAND Dublin	EURO .61	11	19	5	7.4
ITALY Rome	EURO .61	20	30	10	2.1
JAPAN Tokyo	YEN 102.89	22	30	7	15.2
MALAYSIA Kuala Lumpur	RINGGIT 3.11	23	32	6	16.3
MEXICO Mexico City	PESO 9.60	12	23	6	15.2
NETHERLANDS Amsterdam	EURO .61	14	21	6	6.5
NEW ZEALAND Auckland Christchurch Wellington	DOLLAR 1.29	8 2 6	14 11 12	5 5 4	11.7 4.8 11.7
PHILIPPINES Manila	PESO 42.36	24	31	4	43.2
RUSSIA Moscow	ROUBLE 22.30	12	22	6	7.1
SINGAPORE Singapore	DOLLAR 1.30	24	31	6	19.6
SOUTH AFRICA Cape Town	RAND 7.15	8	18	7	6.6
SPAIN Madrid	EURO .61	17	30	11	1.5
SWITZERLAND Zurich	FRANC 0.99	13	24	7	12.4
THAILAND Bangkok	BAHT 31.99	24	32	5	17.5
TURKEY Istanbul	NEW LIRA 1.17	19	28	11	3
US Los Angeles New York	DOLLAR .95	16 19	28 27	11 9	0 10.9
VIETNAM Hanoi	DONG 16,031.78	26	32	4	34.3

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