



15 REASONS TO GO TO

AUCK



Drop anchor in
the City of Sails for
great food, fashion,
ancient culture
and modern art

WORDS **Jo Bates**
PHOTOGRAPHY **Kieran Scott**

LAND



3 Coast with the most

Te Henga, **RIGHT**, also known as Bethells Beach, is a wild *Piano* beach of black volcanic sand and dunes along the elemental west coast. A stroll here clears the mind and invigorates the senses. Afterwards, enjoy a snack at the cafe – the decommissioned caravan is modern, beachside Kiwiana at its best and serves great food. **Te Henga, Bethells Rd via SH16.**

4



Best kept secret

You can't run a restaurant without passion, and owners Michael and Annette Dearth throw plenty at The Grove, in a heritage building off a charming city lane. Chef Sid Sahrawat, **ABOVE**, makes his mark with food that revels in the unpredictable, and the tasting menu lets it all shine through. Artfully coordinated flavours, impeccable service and a wine list that dazzles will serve you well at this upper-crust establishment. **Saint Patricks Sq, Wyndham St, City, +64 9 368 4129, thegroverestaurant.co.nz.**

2 Walk of art

The vast Brick Bay Sculpture Trail outdoor gallery features the work of eminent and emerging New Zealand sculptors displayed among superb stands of native forest. A gentle meander takes you past pieces by Jeff Thomson, **LEFT**, Gretchen Albrecht, Lyndal Jefferies, Lauren Lysaght and many others. The award-winning Glass House beckons from its tranquil lakeside spot for a bite and a glass of Brick Bay wine. **+64 9 425 4690, brickbaysculpture.co.nz.**



Take the cake

Anzac spirit means nothing when Aussies and Kiwis fight over which nation first invented lamingtons and pavlova. But who cares when the lamingtons at Agnes Curran, **LEFT**, taste this fantastic? A wedge of sponge soaked in dark chocolate, coated in coconut and served with raspberry jam and thick cream takes this culinary icon to new heights. **181 Ponsonby Rd, Ponsonby, +64 9 360 1551.**

Double happiness

How convenient – East Day Spa, **RIGHT**, is on the floor beneath the award-winning Dine by Peter Gordon at Skycity Grand Hotel. Book in at this city sanctuary for a massage followed by a table for two at Dine. Or clear your head with the Bali Crème, a traditional 60-minute head and hair treatment using ginseng or avocado to cleanse and revitalise, followed by a knot-wrangling head, shoulder and neck massage. **East Day Spa, Skycity Grand Hotel, 123 Albert St, Auckland, +64 9 363 7050, eastdayspa.com. Dine, +64 9 363 7030.**





6



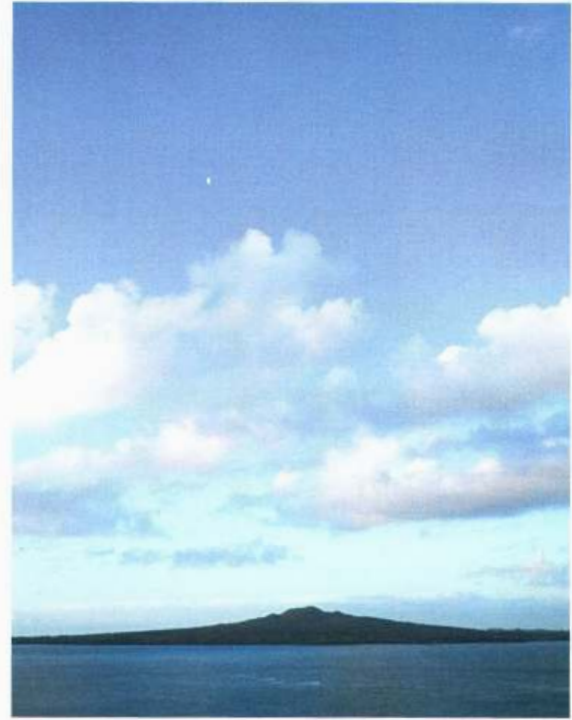
Bar flyers

Ponsonby Road is like Sydney's Oxford Street for shopping and comes into its own at night with a string of bars and restaurants. Gold (No 212, +64 9 360 0396), ABOVE, is the best looking bar, with embossed wallpaper and lounge chairs – very civilised. The 'legendary' SPQR (No 150, +64 9 360 1710) has been drawing devotees for 15 years with its irrepressible service, consistently good food and never-a-dull-moment bar. The Musket Room (No 29, +64 9 376 1430) tops the list for late-night sessions.

The crater good

Auckland is situated on a potentially active volcanic field, and you don't have to look far to be reminded of this. The graceful silhouette of Rangitoto Island, RIGHT, dominates Waitemata Harbour. It's relatively young, only 600 years old, and is shrouded in Maori mythology. Another nearby crater, Maungawhau (Mt Eden) is the highest and probably most famous of Auckland's volcanoes, and is an incredible 20,000 years old.

7



This yachting life

The racing yachts competing in the America's Cup Match by Louis Vuitton cost millions to build and several hundred dollars to complete a single tack. Glide through Waitemata Harbour on an ex-America's Cup yacht, LEFT, for great views of the Devonport peninsula, Rangitoto and the city. Or take on a three-hour head-to-head race challenge. Sail NZ, +64 9 359 5987, explore.co.nz.

9

Cinema scope

It's almost a shame to dim the lights at the Matakana Cinemas, where whimsy, decadence, and boudoir-chic come to life in the cinema as much as on the big screen. North-east of the city, in Matakana, architect/designer Noel Lane created three vastly different themes: Tivoli is regal in gold and black; Paradise, RIGHT, has a wild Pacific theme with its ceiling lined with handmade paper flowers; Roxy breathes burlesque. 2 Matakana Valley Rd, Matakana, +64 9 422 9833, matakanacinemas.co.nz



8

10

Perfect pitch

Mollies, LEFT, in Auckland's desirable St Mary's Bay, is a celebration of beauty. Owners Stephen Fitzgerald and Frances Wilson, an opera set designer and opera teacher respectively, transformed the former boarding house run by Wilson's mother with artfully chosen and arranged antiques, and contemporary furnishings. Part of the Small Luxury Hotels group, each evening there is an opera recital before an exquisite dinner – all set to candlelit perfection. 6 Tweed St, St Mary's Bay, +64 9 376 3489, mollies.co.nz.



11

Deep and meaningful

A city is just another city until its layers are revealed. Get beneath Auckland's surface with the lively, authentic Potiki Urban Maori Experience. Directors Melissa and Bianca, ABOVE, run high-end customised tours in either culture, art and outdoor, or adventure activities. Gain insight into Maori legends and traditions, and how these are incorporated into everyday city life. +64 9 845 5932, potikiadventures.com.

12

Thread connection

When New Zealand designers started out in and around High Street with just a few handcrafted clothes on the racks in the 1980s, they not only established their labels but a boutique shopping destination in the heart of the city. Many others followed and you can now shop here for some of the country's best designer threads, including Karen Walker, Zambesi, Mala Brajkovic, Kate Sylvester, Workshop, World, LEFT, and Untouched World.

13

Cap it suite

You can't get much closer to the harbour action than at the Hilton Auckland, a giant ocean-liner of a building on the Princes Wharf. This sleek hotel includes the appropriately named White restaurant, the Bellini Bar, 160 rooms and six suites, all with their own deck or balcony, and 35 apartments. If your budget will allow, go for the spectacular penthouse suite, BELOW, and its 180-degree views. Princes Wharf, 147 Quay St, +64 9 978 2016, hilton.co.nz.



14

Then and now

Auckland's War Memorial Museum, ABOVE, located in the city's oldest park, has the world's finest collection of Maori and Pacific artefacts and *taonga* (Maori treasures). Domain Dr, The Domain, +64 9 309 0443, aucklandmuseum.com. In contrast, Aveia Gallery displays contemporary Pacific art that explores cultural diversity and ethnic fusion. +64 9 307 2310, aveia.co.nz.

15

Smooth landing

Waiheke Island, a favourite weekend getaway for many Aucklanders, is a seductive mix of unspoilt scenery, top-class wineries and surprisingly good restaurants. And though the island pace is wonderfully relaxed, there are also jet-set accommodation options. Check out Waiheke Landing, a beautiful, modern house perched on a steep hillside with its own private rocky cove, RIGHT. It sleeps eight in total comfort – you won't want to leave. 91 Great Barrier Rd, Waiheke Island, essencenz.com. VE+T



Air New Zealand has regular flights to Auckland from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. More information and bookings, 132 476, airnewzealand.com.

