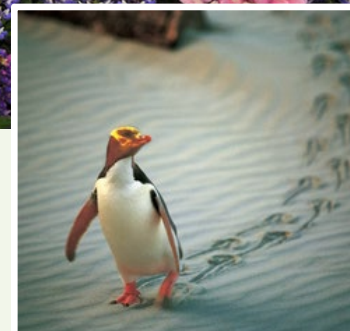
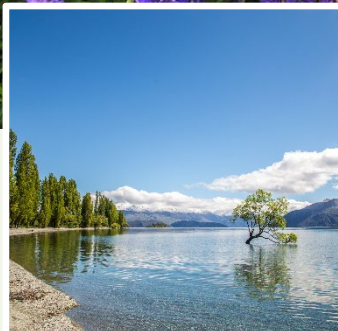


OTAGO SPRING GARDENS & GOLDFIELDS

25 October 2023

**Home – Oamaru – Mount Cook – Cromwell – Wanaka –
Central Otago – Dunedin – Lawrence – Dunedin – Home**





OTAGO SPRING GARDENS & GOLDFIELDS

25th October to 2nd November 2023

WED 25 Home – Christchurch – Oamaru (L) (D)

This morning we arrive in Christchurch and after a short drive out of Christchurch, visit the delightful garden of Diane and Ian Mackenzie, **Akaunui Garden**. The Akaunui garden was originally designed by Alfred Buxton, established over 100 years ago. During the last 15 years major developments have taken place. The garden now covers 6 hectares and includes magnificent old trees (both native and exotic) and a wide variety of recently planted species. With a pond, creek, bog garden, and a woodland garden including a large collection of rhododendrons, formal and less formal gardens, many roses and a productive vegetable garden, the garden complements the imposing century old double storey brick homestead. Lunch is included here today.

From here continue along the eastern coastline to the town of Oamaru the largest town of the Waitaki District, rich history and proud heritage, enriched by the passionate and perhaps quirky locals. Explore this heritage in the Victorian Precinct, where you will find, shops, galleries and traditional crafts within some of the Southern Hemispheres most complete Victorian streetscapes and 19th century architecture.

This evening we dine at a local restaurant before **visiting the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony** - be captivated by nature and watch the penguins in their natural habitat, as they return home from sea in the evening. We will be informed about the lives of the penguins during a commentary delivered by one of the guides. Then we make our way out to the grandstand and enter into the breeding colony on a boardwalk and walk among their nesting burrows. In the Premium Viewing grandstand, we'll view the penguins from only a few metres away.

THU 26 Oamaru – Mt Cook (B) (D)

Breakfast this morning is at a local café before we enjoy a visit to the **Gardens at Rockvale**, a formal garden with thousands of plants to admire such as salvias, camellias, much more.

After our visit here, we head south to the **Moeraki Boulders** to see these fascinating giant marble-like boulders on the beach. We then head north turning inland through the Waitaki Valley. A region of scenic contrast and natural beauty, the Waitaki region combines wild, windswept coastline with green plains, bare brown hills and towering mountains.

We follow the Waitaki River passing the major hydro dams of Aviemore and Benmore a major source of power for New Zealand then after passing through the junction town of Omarama the road continues north through the tussock covered MacKenzie Country to Lake Pukaki a classic glacial formed lake and travel along the shores of the lake into the Southern Alps and Mt Cook National Park.

Aoraki – Mt Cook is New Zealand's tallest of many spectacular mountains in Mt Cook National Park deep in the heart of the Southern Alps. Aoraki/Mt Cook Village is situated near the spectacular turquoise waters of **Lake Pukaki** and provides a comfortable base for alpine activities. On every side, the Southern Alps scrape the sky. The Park attracts visitors who want to walk, hike or climb in the Southern Alps – or those that just want to soak in the scenic splendour of the area.

Dinner this evening is in the Alpine Restaurant at The Hermitage.

Meals included.

(B) Breakfast (L) Lunch (D) Dinner

Trip Highlights

- AKAUNUI GARDEN
- OAMARU BLUE PENGUIN COLONY
- GARDEN AT ROCKVALE
- MOERAKI BOULDERS
- MOUNT COOK/LAKE PUKAKI
- TOUR OF 'OLD CROMWELL TOWN'
- 4WD ADVENTURE THROUGH WEST WANAKA STATION
- CROWN RANGE ROAD JOURNEY
- EXPLORE CENTRAL OTAGO INCLUDING WANAKA, CLYDE & ALEXANDRA
- GUIDED TOUR OF JACKSON ORCHARDS
- CLACHANBURN GARDENS GUIDED TOUR & LUNCH
- GUIDED TOUR OF HISTORIC LAWRENCE
- VISIT TO OLVESTON HOUSE, DUNEDIN
- LARNACH CASTLE GUIDED TOUR & GARDENS
- GLENFALLOCH WOODLAND GARDENS

Otago Spring Gardens & Goldfields including Mt Cook

Join us over 9 delightful days, exploring the Otago Spring Gardens & Goldfields with Mt Cook thrown in for good measure.

From Oamaru to Mount Cook, from Cromwell to Dunedin, with a touch of everything in between, from remote sites, inland river basins and deep river gorges, fascinating history, wonderful wildlife, incredible scenery and spectacular gardens, Central Otago and beyond is sure to delight.

Journeying through Central Otago visiting some of the small towns and settlements that are definitely 'off-the-beaten track' along with the quintessential lakeside village of Wanaka and its many cafes and boutique shops, before discovering the charming historic town of Lawrence, Otago's first gold-rush town & onto Dunedin a city rich in its Scottish heritage and also renowned for its wildlife and distinctively quirky character.

Our Otago Spring Gardens & Goldfields journey showcases everything the region has to offer and so much more. There is so much to see and do on this tour, you won't be disappointed.

FRI 27 Mt Cook – Cromwell

(B) (D)

This morning we have a leisurely start at Mount Cook before retracing our journey alongside glacial **Lake Pukaki** and passing through the small towns of Twizel and Omarama before crossing the barren terrain of the **Lindis Pass** which links the **MacKenzie Basin** with Central Otago.

This dramatic alpine area of tall tussock covered mountains is beautiful in every season and crosses a saddle at an altitude of 971 meters above sea level.

Next we pass through Tarras Village where the vast open space includes a superb vista taking in the Dunstan Range to the east and the Pisa Range to the west. To the south is a great view looking down the Cromwell Valley, northeast to the St Bathans Range and northwest to the mountains and Matukituki Valley.

We continue onto Cromwell out base for the next three nights. Located on the shores of **Lake Dunstan**, Cromwell has the appearance of a modern town, however history stretches back to the gold rush days of the 1800's. We have time here for a good wander and experience the **Old Cromwell Town**, a mixture of original and reconstructed buildings.

This evening we dine together at the famed **Stoaker Room Bistro & Grill**, utilizing retired French oak Pinot Noir wine barrels they steam, bake, grill and smoke their delicious array of regional food on the spot.

Our accommodation during our 3- night stay in this lovely area is at the Lake Front, Marsden Lake Resort.

SAT 28 Central Otago – Wanaka

(B) (D)

Today is an adventure as we travel along the base of the Pisa Range and through the small settlements of Queensberry and Luggate to Wanaka on the shores of Lake Wanaka, stopping to take a short wander along the lakeshore to see #ThatWanakaTree – reputedly one of the most photographed trees in New Zealand!

Here in Wanaka, we meet our local guides and take an exciting **4WD adventure** that explores the wild and remote landscapes of Lake **West Wanaka Station**. This tour travels private back roads into the mountains of the Wanaka West Station. Jaw dropping scenery, historic sites, walks, and conservation projects help make this one of the most authentic and memorable off – road experiences you'll take in New Zealand. Enjoy freshly brewed coffee and famous fruit cake whilst onboard and there will be an opportunity to go for a drop in the crystal-clear lake and river if you are game.

From Wanaka we head over the Crown Range, NZ's highest main road and famous for its switchbacks and spectacular views towards Queenstown. We drop down into the Gibbston Valley then head through the rugged Kawarau Gorge back to Cromwell.

After our day out, we dine at the hotel this evening.





SUN 29 Central Otago

ⓑ ⓓ

Today we explore the region around Clyde and Alexandra.

Firstly, we make a stop at the lookout at the **Clyde Dam**, the largest concrete gravity dam in New Zealand. The town of Clyde is steeped in history and culture and would have been rammed with rowdy gold miners in the 1860s. Here we take some time to explore the perfectly preserved historic buildings precinct and take a potter around the boutique shops.

Next, we visit Alexandra, a gold mining town at its heart with its personality very much rooted farming and the outdoors, with time here for a wander before we retrace our journey back to Cromwell.

This afternoon we visit **Jackson Orchards** for a fun, informative and educational insight into one of Central Otago orchards. During our guided tour we learn why bees are so vital to growing fruit, why trees here grow on "V" shape trellis and much more as we make our way through the orchard.

Located on the shores of Lake Dunstan, Cromwell has the appearance of a modern town, but its history stretches back to the gold rush days of the 1800s. This history is best experienced in '**Old Cromwell Town**', a mix of original and reconstructed buildings from the old main street of the 1860's gold town of Cromwell. We take time to have a wander through this heritage area and a walk along the lakeshore.

We dine together this evening at our accommodation.



MON 30 Cromwell – Dunedin

ⓑ ⓓ

Today we have an early start as we head deep into central Otago visiting some of the small towns and settlements that are definitely 'off-the-beaten track'.

We made a quick diversion to **St Bathans**. This tiny town of about 10 permanent residents was once a place of riches as the Otago Gold Rush swept through this region in the mid-late-1800s. Once a boomtown and home to around 2000 miners, now some buildings from that era remain today and it is easy to imagine the town as it was during the gold rush. See the iconic Vulcan Hotel built in 1882 and a fine example of mud-brick construction – and reputedly haunted! See the **Blue Lake** created by extensive mining activity. Surrounding rocks give the water an astonishing blue colour which is offset by surrounding columns of white quartz tailings.

From St Bathans, we continue on state highway 85 before reaching the **Clachanburn Gardens** where we will enjoy a guided tour and lunch with Jane Falconer as she welcomes us to her rambling country garden, set in the stark beauty of the Maniototo. The lawns and borders roll gracefully away from the house to two large ponds with rugged hills to one side and the distant mountains beyond, giving an impression of a lush oasis in the heat and dry of Central Otago.

We then travel from Puketoi, heading south through the towns of Kokonga, Middlemarch then travel towards the coast through Outram and Mosgiel before arriving in **Dunedin**.

Dunedin sits at the head of the magnificent Otago Harbour. Founded in 1848 by Scottish settlers, Dunedin was envisaged as the "Edinburgh of the South" and the city still wears its Scottish heritage with pride. She is a city of gracious dignity and charm, characterised by many handsome stone buildings mixed with a quirky city vibe influenced by the local university students.

After our full day of touring today we check-in to our hotel and home for the next 3 nights, before dining together at the hotel restaurant.



TUE 31 Dunedin – Lawrence - Dunedin (B)(L)

We have a leisurely start to the morning before departing on a scenic drive to the small historic town of **Lawrence**.

The small town of Lawrence is situated 92-km south-west of Dunedin and nestled in the rolling hills of the Clutha region. During the gold rush and sawmilling eras, the whole district rattled with the sound of diggers and wagon trains as trade routes were established through the plains and across the Clutha River. The discovery of gold at Gabriel's Gully near Lawrence by Gabriel Read in May 1861 led to the Central Otago gold rush. While gold had been found in Otago before, this rush was beyond expectation, with the population of the gold field rising from almost nothing to around 11,500 within a year, twice that of Dunedin at the time.

During our time in Lawrence a local guide joins us and will take us back through time of the history of the Lawrence town centre, with facts provided by our local host to inspire your imagination and minds-eye to see what Victorian style Lawrence was like during the gold rush and the decades after.

Afterwards we enjoy a lunch at a local café before departing in the early afternoon, travelling through Waipori before joining onto State Highway 87, back into Dunedin.

The remainder of the afternoon and dinner tonight is at your leisure, with an opportunity to sample one of Dunedin's excellent dining establishments.



WED 1 NOV Dunedin (B)(L)(D)

This morning we visit **Olveston House** where we take a guided tour to learn about this historic home which was completed in 1907 and was a masterpiece of modernity in the Edwardian era, featuring central heating, an in house telephone system and even heated towel rails. Olveston has been carefully preserved and now offers a glimpse into the lifestyle of a privileged family in the early 1900's and the rich historical heritage of Dunedin.

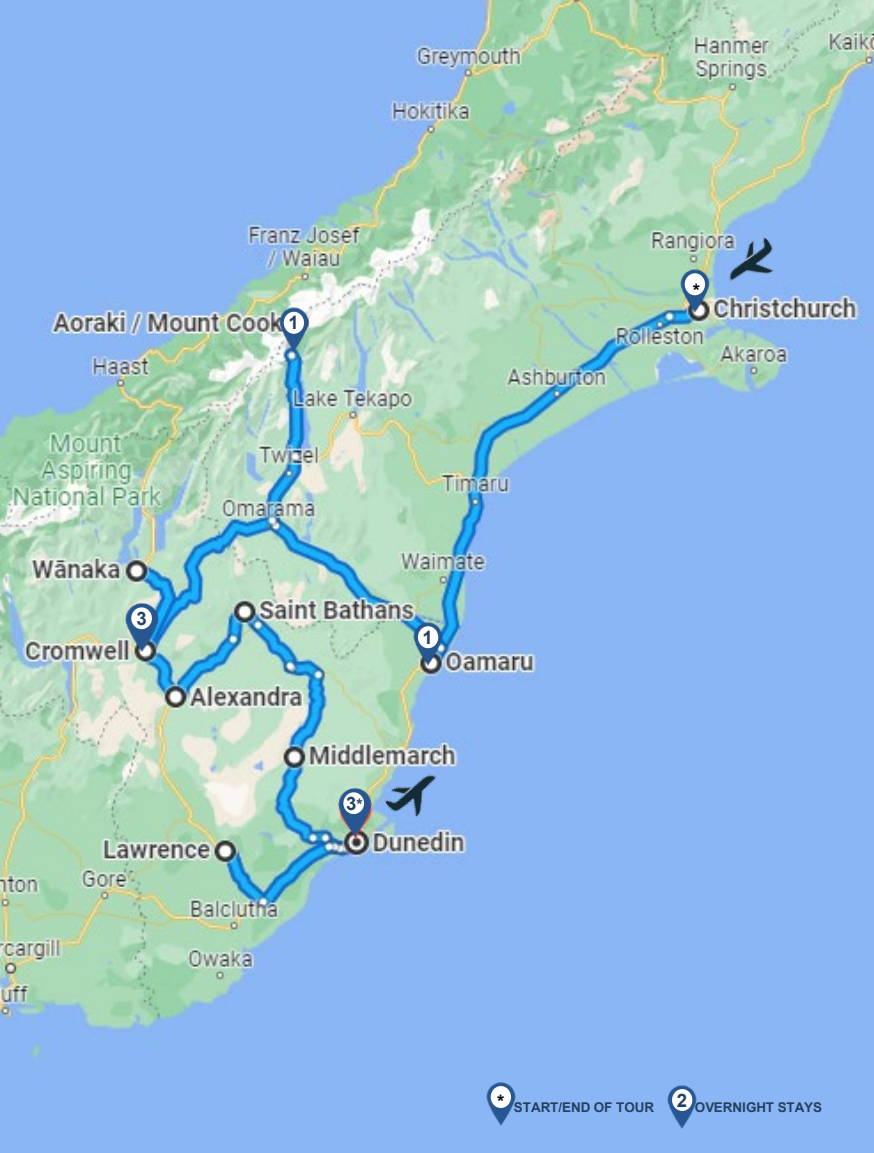
Our next visit is the lovely **Glenfalloch Woodland Gardens**, situated in a coastal valley overlooking the harbour. Sheltered by a ring of pine and eucalypts, Glenfalloch features original European trees from 1872, with much underplanting. In the summer, native clematis climb the trees, with peonies and lilies flowering beneath. There is also a bush walk to explore as you walk through ancient matai, where birdlife includes tui, bellbirds and native pigeons. After our guided tour, we stay here to enjoy a delicious lunch in the restaurant.

Later this afternoon we visit **Larnach Castle** for a guided tour. High on the hills above Otago Harbour, built in 1871 with a unique collection of New Zealand antiques and furniture. Here you may climb the tower for unique panoramic views over Otago Harbour, Dunedin City and Taiaroa Heads and explore the vast grounds and picturesque gardens. Wander through the gardens surrounding Larnach Castle which present a more formal aspect with an expansive lawn and symmetrically planted conifers, and you could perhaps imagine yourself at a country house in Scotland, however, just beyond the wishing well lies a rainforest garden full of familiar native species: ponga, kauri, totara, rimu and cabbage trees.

Tonight, we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

SUN 2 Dunedin – Home (B)

Day at leisure until our transfer to Dunedin Airport for our return flight home.



OTAGO SPRING GARDENS & GOLDFIELDS

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Meals as per itinerary

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