



THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH

New Zealand's
stunning South Island
has welcomed three
new luxury lodges.
AIR takes a look
around...



Lodge at The Hills Arrowtown

In 2007, avid golfer and one of New Zealand's most successful businessmen, Sir Michael Hill, transformed a former deer farm, 20 minutes from the centre of Queenstown, into a world-class championship golf course. Set in a glacial valley and surrounded by snow-capped mountains, Sir Michael recently added a luxurious lodge with swathes of floor-to-ceiling glass so you can make the most of those views.

Sleeping up to 12, the lodge features six light-filled suites with earthy décor and cosy fireplaces. Communal spaces range from grand galleries with soaring ceilings to intimate nooks for quiet contemplation. Walls are adorned with early Maori and contemporary New Zealand art, while the sprawling sculpture park includes installations by Chinese artist Liu Ruowang and English-born sculptor Max Patte.

There's a state-of-the-art spa with tailored treatments, and a Michelin-trained chef to cook gourmet meals of local delicacies such as lamb and salmon, plus a heated infinity pool, grass tennis court, and private putting green. Go fishing for blue cod and catch crayfish in the nearby fiords, play unlimited golf at The Hills course, or take a helicopter to Oreti Sands, the world's southernmost links course, to play a round accompanied by a pro golfer. Just make sure you're back in time to watch the sun set over your sublime surroundings. thehills.co.nz





Annandale Banks Peninsula

If you're looking to drop off the radar, this 4,000-acre sheep and cattle farm, an hour's drive from Christchurch, is the place to escape to. Overlooking Pigeon Bay, the charming five-bedroom homestead, built in the 1880s and lovingly restored, lies at the heart of the estate. Or take your pick from four characterful villas, all uniquely different, dotted across the farm.

Our pick is the romantic Seascape Villa, set on its own private bay with just a pod of frolicking Hector's dolphins for company. Accessed by helicopter or by a 40-minute 4WD transfer, this ultra-modern villa seamlessly combines indoor and outdoor living, with a wall of windows offering uninterrupted ocean views – even the bathroom has an arrowslit window so you can spy on the seals – and an outdoor Jacuzzi and fireplace.

If you're feeling active, there

are several spectacular hiking and biking tracks along the rugged Pacific coastline, as well as kayaking, paddle-boarding, fishing, and sailing. Get into the swing of rural life with spot of cattle mustering or sheep shearing and then have a private farm-to-table cooking lesson with the award-winning chef. Finish up with a wander around the French-influenced town of Akaroa, half an hour's drive away. Life doesn't get more blissful than this. annandale.com

Matakauri Lodge Queenstown

Located just minutes from the adventure capital of New Zealand – home to bungee jumping, whitewater rafting, jet boating, and more – things move at an altogether slower pace at Matakauri Lodge. Set on the shores of Lake Wakatipu and flanked by pine forest, the serene setting inspires total relaxation, although you'll be itching to explore.

Opened in 2010, the lodge has 11 elegant suites all with private balcony and fireplace, but it's the newly opened, US\$5 million Owner's Cottage that has caught our eye. Every room of the four-bedroom house – including the outdoor Jacuzzi – affords spectacular views of the glacial lake and jagged peaks of The Remarkables mountain range. And acclaimed New Zealand interior designer Virginia Fisher has created a warm and inviting space in which to savour the Alpine scenery.

Guests have access to the spa, gym and pool in the main lodge and a personal concierge is on hand to help you plan your days – from adrenaline-fuelled activities to more sedate experiences such as fly fishing or a photography safari – while a private chef will create gourmet dinners. With a private jet terminal set to open later this month at Queenstown Airport, getting there will be easier, too. Get your kicks in Queenstown, then recover at this wonderful retreat. matakauri.co.nz

