

Pillsbury Wine Club Group, limited to 20 travelers plus SAM!



Friday, March 4, 2016

Fly Los Angeles to Auckland

Saturday, March 5, 2016

Cross the International Date Line

Cross the International Date Line, an imaginary line on the surface of the Earth that runs from the North to the South Pole - and defines one calendar day from the next. Crossing the International Date Line adds one day (24 hours) traveling west, and subtracts one day (24 hours) traveling east.

Sunday, March 6, 2016

Arrive in Auckland, connect to Domestic Flight

When you arrive into Auckland, clear customs and claim your luggage and then as you leave the Immigration area, you will see to your left a desk where you can check your luggage for your domestic New Zealand flight (must be a minimum of 1 hour prior to flight time). After checking your luggage you then take the shuttle or you can walk 1km to the domestic terminal.

Fly Auckland to Kerikeri

Transfer Kerikeri Airport to Hotel

Your accommodations for March 6, 2016 - March 9, 2016, 3 nights

Copthorne Hotel & Resort, Bay of Islands

Standard Rooms

Your stay includes: Cooked Breakfast

Copthorne Hotel & Resort Bay of Islands is located within the Waitangi National Trust Reserve, surrounded by bush walks a scenic golf course the historic national Treaty House and the beautiful sparkling waters of the Bay of Islands. A prime historical location in the heart of the picturesque Bay of Islands. An international 18-hole golf course is a minute's walk away. Resort facilities include restaurant, bar, large swimming pool and spa pool.



Monday, March 7, 2016 (B, L)



Cape Reinga Scenic Tour

A visit to New Zealand is not complete without a journey to the top of the North Island - Cape Reinga. This tour is full of contrasts and provides plenty of scenic photo opportunities through-out the day.

Highlights of the journey include the drive along the mighty Ninety Mile Beach and a careful negotiation of the Te Paki quicksand stream. At Cape Reinga itself, ample time is available to visit the lighthouse and to enjoy spectacular views including the meeting of the two oceans, the Blue Pacific & the deep green Tasman Sea.

The Wanderer tour features a visit to the magnificent Puketi Forest where you may take an easy 20 minute stroll along the boardwalk, through the mighty Kauri trees and native bush. There are numerous stops made during the day and your coach captain's informative commentary will reveal the rich heritage of the North as you view the natural wonders throughout the day.

Depart Paihia around 7.30am and return 6.30pm. Includes casual lunch.

Tuesday, March 8, 2016 (B)

Waitangi Treaty Grounds Tour

Visit New Zealand's most important historic site and enjoy the panoramic views of the beautiful Bay of Islands.

Enjoy a guided tour of all the major treasures at Waitangi. Our guides bring the Treaty story to life and introduce you to some of the key personalities and events that have shaped the nation. Many of our guides descend from signatories to the Treaty – they bring a personal connection to Waitangi that will enhance your understanding of the relevance of the Treaty in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our resident performance group, Te Pitowhenua, gives you a special introduction to New Zealand's unique indigenous culture in Te Whare Rūnanga. Enjoy a fun-filled and spine-tingling performance of waiata (singing), poi, stick games, Māori weaponry, as well as the famous haka. All performances begin with a traditional Māori welcome outside the meeting house. After the show you will have the opportunity to interact with the performers, ask questions and have your photo taken with the group.



Wednesday, March 9, 2016 (B)

Bay of Islands to Auckland

Travel from the Bay of Islands to Auckland by private vehicle. Today's drive is approximately 150 miles or 4.5 hours.

Your accommodations for March 9, 2016 - March 11, 2016, 2 nights

Stay in Hotel in central Auckland Location

Thursday, March 10, 2016 (B, L)

Ferry Auckland to Waiheke Island

Transfer to the ferry terminal from your hotel. The ferry journey from Auckland to Waiheke Island will take around 45 minutes.

Waiheke Island Wine Tour

You will be greeted on the wharf by your driver/guide. The tour will commence with a drive along the scenic northern route, taking in spectacular views of the Hauraki Gulf and beyond to the Coromandel Peninsula.

Visit Stonyridge Vineyard for wine tasting. Founded in 1982, Stonyridge is a world-class producer of Cabernet blends and is the home of one of New Zealand's cult wines, Larose (available to taste for an additional charge). Here you will taste a range of their Waiheke wines which can include Rose, Pinot Gris, Chardonnay, The Pilgrim (Syrah blend) and Faithful (Bordeaux blend).

Visit Kennedy Point Vineyard where they produce Syrah, Merlot, Malbec, Chardonnay and Rosé wines using biodynamic methods. Here you will also taste estate-grown olive oil and New Zealand avocado oil. The winery decks are tucked among the Pohutukawa trees overlooking Waiheke Island's Kennedy Bay and are the perfect setting to sample a range of fine wines.

Wine tasting at Cable Bay Vineyard. Here you will taste a selection of their range, including Rosé, Chardonnay, Viognier, Pinot Gris, Syrah and a Merlot/Malbec blend from Waiheke, and from Marlborough, Sauvignon Blanc. Cable Bay's wines are known for their elegance and subtlety. The vineyard has great views back to Auckland City and a highly regarded restaurant.

Tasting and platter style lunch at Mudbrick Vineyard - beverages own expense. Sit out in the courtyard amongst their beautiful potager gardens and enjoy a vineyard platter-style lunch from the Mudbrick Bistro, with great views across the Waitemata Harbour to Auckland. Your platter lunch includes a glass of wine and house made petit fours for dessert.

Depart lunch venue for Oneroa where you can walk along Oneroa Beach, visit the local sculptor and jewellery makers in art shops, or sit in a café/bar overlooking the bay.

Departure is from Matiatia Wharf for the 40 minute ferry crossing back from Waiheke Island to Auckland.

Friday, March 11, 2016 (B)

Auckland to Taupo, via Waitomo Caves

As we leave The City of Sails heading south this morning, we travel through the 'Bridge City' of Hamilton as we meander through the rolling farmland hills of the Waikato Region. New Zealand's longest river (Waikato River) can be seen.



We head further south on to Waitomo, where we stop for a wonderful tour at the famous Waitomo Glow-Worm Caves. Begin the guided tour through long galleries and lofty chambers to view stalactites formed over thousands of years. Continue with a boat ride through the glow-worm grotto that is illuminated by thousands of tiny lights emitted by glow-worms suspended from the cave ceiling.

We leave this spiritual place and continue our journey, another 2 hours drive to Taupo. The resort town of Taupo sits on the edge of New Zealand's largest lake, which is well stocked with sizeable trout.

This is a full day tour. Admission for the Caves Tour is included today. A stop will be made for lunch (own expense).

Your accommodations for March 11, 2016 - March 13, 2016, 2 nights at Lake Taupo

Lake Taupo has many attractions and activities including Huka Falls, hot thermal pools and four wonderful golf courses - two of which are of international standard. Relax, unwind or exhilarate - it is all on your doorstep.

Saturday, March 12, 2016 (B)



Kayak to The Carvings

Half Day Excursion

Experience Lake Taupo's fresh clear waters. Explore Lake Taupo's beautiful coastline while learning about the region's incredible volcanic creation and about the area's local history. Lake Taupo has itself experienced at least 26 volcanic eruptions in the last 26 000 years. Two of which were possibly some of the largest the world has experienced in recent geological times.

These Maori Rock Carvings are over 10 meters high (possibly the largest of their type in the world) and are only accessible by boat or kayak. Sea Kayaking will allow you to get up close to the carvings with plenty of time to study their details. Hear about their history, how they were carved, and also about their cultural significance.

Stop for a break on the beach and enjoy some classic kiwi treats such as ANZAC cookies, slice and tea, coffee or Milo (kiwi style of hot chocolate).

There is time for swimming in summer, while in winter there is the opportunity to further explore Mine Bay before our return paddle home. Transfers are included.



Sunday, March 13, 2016 (B)

Taupo to Wellington

From Taupo, we take Route 1 South. The stretch between Turangi and Wairoura is called the Desert Road because it traverses the Rangipo Desert, where long straights are broken by steep dips and gorges. Around Palmerston North you will cross the broad plains of the Manawatu and follow the Kapiti Coast into Wellington.

Today's drive is approximately 236 miles or 5.5 hours.

Your accommodations for March 13, 2016 - March 15, 2016, 2 nights

Not only is Wellington the seat of Government, packed with national treasures and restored cultural centers, it is also a vibrant, cosmopolitan and sophisticated city with the Te Papa Museum, the vibrant Courtney Place and local theatre.

Monday, March 14, 2016 (B, L)



Martinborough Wine Tour

Full Day

Indulge in a day of tasting some of New Zealand's leading wines leaving the worries of driving behind. Enjoy the specialist knowledge of some of Wairarapa's leading wine makers and experience a day of tastings that is uniquely Martinborough.

Your guide will meet you at your city hotel and drive you through the picturesque Hutt Valley, over the impressive Rimutaka Hills and into sunny Martinborough. The journey to the Martinborough vineyards takes approximately 1.5 hours from Wellington city. You will have the opportunity to stop along the way to enjoy the charming countryside and lovely scenery.

In the heart of the Wairarapa wine region between a rugged coastline and bush clad hills, are Martinborough's boutique wineries, internationally renowned for Pinot Noir. This personal tour includes tastings at award-winning boutique wineries, an opportunity to talk with local winemakers, a superb lunch at a vineyard and the option of visiting a boutique brewery or olive processing estate.

Your tour includes lunch, morning and afternoon tea, and entry fees as needed.



Tuesday, March 15, 2016 (B)

Capital Tastes Walking Tour

Morning Excursion

Discover fresh tastes in New Zealand's café capital, as Zest Tours introduce you to the city, its local tastes, products and people on this popular excursion. Stroll behind the scenes at some favorite Wellington food places with a personal guide, to taste hidden culinary treasures and meet some of the people behind some of the city's best food. Today's excursion departs at 9.30am, returning at around 12:30pm, with approximately 60 minutes walking time.

Transfer City to Wellington Ferry Terminal

Please wait in the lobby of your hotel. You will be met by your driver and transferred to the Wellington Ferry Terminal by private vehicle.

Depart Wellington 2.45pm

Arrive Picton 5.55pm

The 92 kilometer (58 mile) journey between Wellington and Picton takes just 3 hours and 10 minutes, yet it's one of the world's great scenic cruises. When you cruise across on The Interislander, you'll find a wonderful combination of entertainment and services that will make your Cook Strait crossing even more memorable.

The picturesque seaside town of Picton is the South Island base for the Interislander ferry service, which links the North and South islands of New Zealand. It's also the gateway to the marine, forest and island attractions of the Marlborough Sounds.

The short drive to Blenheim, taking only 45 minutes, takes us across the Wairau Plains past vineyards and wineries. Blenheim is named after the Battle of Blenheim (1704), where troops led by John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, defeated a combined French and Bavarian force.

Today, it is the heart of wine-growing Marlborough. With over 70 wineries, a range of boutique breweries and even a world class distillery, the Marlborough region is a fantastic destination. Add to this an incredible range of cafes and restaurants and Marlborough really is a 'Gourmet Paradise'.

The population of Blenheim is 35,000. It enjoys one of New Zealand's sunniest climates, with hot summers and crisp winters.

Your accommodations for March 15, 2016 - March 18, 2016, 3 nights

Wednesday, March 16, 2016 (B, L)

Marlborough Icons Tour

Today, your tour guide will show you through the fabulous Marlborough wine region stopping to enjoy two fine wine experiences. After the winery visits, we will depart the wine region through to the small seaport town of Havelock. Havelock is the gateway to the Pelorus and Kenepuru Sounds, and has the official title of Greenshell Mussel Capital of the World. Enjoy a nice lunch right on the waterfront (own



cost for lunch), after which we depart Havelock on the Marlborough Travel launch for the Greenshell Mussel Cruise through the Marlborough Sounds.

Take in the natural beauty of the native bush and the tranquility of the Sounds. Learn from your experienced Skipper the history of the Marlborough Sounds and the history of the pioneering families who have settled in the Sounds over 6 generations. Visit a Greenshell Mussel farm and learn why this delicacy grows so well in the Marlborough Sounds. Taste a local favourite - freshly steamed Mussels matched perfectly to a complimentary glass of Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc. On arrival back in Havelock board the coach for the transfer back to Blenheim and Picton.

Excursion departs Blenheim around 10am with a return of around 5pm. A platter lunch at Giesen Wines is also included today.

Thursday, March 17, 2016 (B, L)

Half Day Blenheim Wine Tour – 4 Hours

Another half day tour to absorb and beauty and tastes of Marlborough. Visit a select number of boutique and iconic wineries, selected for their history, fabulous service and stunning range of wines. A 2 course lunch at Wither Hills is also included.

Friday, March 18, 2016 (B)

Blenheim to Kaikoura

Today's journey takes us south on State Highway 1 alongside the Pacific coast to Kaikoura. Vantage points along the Highway allow a close-up view of seals basking on the rocks.

On the east coast of New Zealand's South Island, majestic mountains that are snow-capped for many months of the year overlook the seaside settlement of Kaikoura. The township is located on a rocky peninsula protruding from lush farmland beneath the mountains. In the waters off this peninsula, a complex marine system provides an abundantly rich habitat for marine mammals and seabirds, making it an ideal place for getting 'close to nature'. Kaikoura is world renowned for whale watching and is one of the few places in the world where these magnificent creatures can be seen year round.

The drive is approximately 2 hours or 80 miles.





Whale Watch Excursion, Kaikoura

Morning Departure

Each Whale Watch excursion is a unique experience and the sightings vary. The giant sperm whale is the 'star' of the show, he is resident year round, so while sightings are not guaranteed - we do experience 95-97% success rate. A number of different species of whale have been spotted off the Kaikoura coastline. A typical trip will cruise by colonies of New Zealand fur seals and perhaps groups of dolphins (depending on the season). In addition to the marine mammals, Kaikoura has a wide variety of off shore birds, including Albatross, Gulls, Shearwaters, Gannet and Penguins.

Allow 3.5 hours for the Whale Watch experience. Between 2 and 2.5 hours is spent on the water, with the extra hour covering report time, checking in and transport to and from the boat.

Kaikoura to Christchurch

The drive further south takes you along the edge of the rugged coastal ranges. The landscape becomes gentler as you approach Waipara - a region known for its vineyards and olive groves. The last leg of the journey takes us past the surf beaches of Amberley, Leithfield, Waikuku and Woodend.

The South Island's largest city, Christchurch is an entertaining mixture of refined lifestyle and cultural excitement. Also known as the Garden City, it is said to be the most English city outside of England. The tranquil Avon River meanders through the city, historic buildings house a lively arts community and restored trams make it easy to get around. Visit heritage sites, museums and art galleries, and enjoy the highly developed restaurant and café scene.

The drive is approximately 3 hours or 120 miles.

Your accommodations for March 18, 2016 - March 19, 2016, 1 night

Saturday, March 19, 2016 (B)

Christchurch to Queenstown via Mt Cook

This tour takes you from Christchurch, through diverse farmland to Lake Tekapo, where you can view the solitary Church of the Good Shepherd - an historic church dedicated to the early pioneers of this area, and the sheepdog - a statue that is a tribute to high country farmers' best friend.



Your tour continues along the Tasman River before arriving at the location of New Zealand's tallest mountain, Mount Cook. There are 17 peaks over 10,000 feet in Mt Cook National Park including Mt Cook itself at 12,349 feet. Nudging one side of Mt Cook is the mighty Tasman Glacier, a 30-kilometre/18-mile giant and one of the longest outside the Himalayas.

Visit one of Sam's Friends winery along the way! We then continue south, crossing the Lindis Pass and arriving into New Zealand's Adventure Capital, Queenstown.

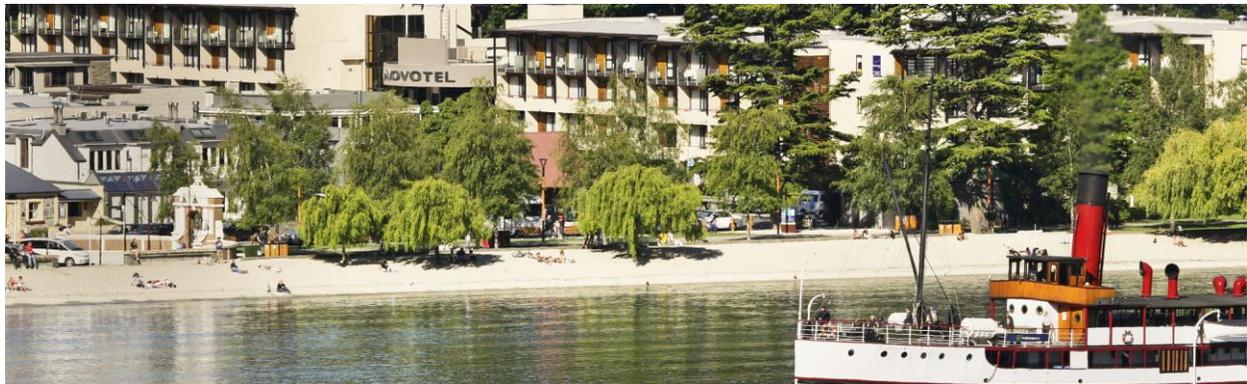
This is a full day, approximately 8 hours drive or 395 miles.

Your accommodations for March 19, 2016 - March 22, 2016, 3 nights

Novotel Queenstown Lakeside

Garden View Rooms

Your stay includes: American Breakfast



Located in one of the most picturesque settings in the world, Novotel Lakeside is in the very heart of Queenstown and nestled beside the beautiful and tranquil lake on which Queenstown sits. Queenstown is often referred to as the 'Adventure Capital' of New Zealand as there is always an exciting new adventure to experience. Thrill to new adventures every day with activities such as bungy-jumping, jet boating, white water rafting, luge riding and much more. Or seek more leisurely pursuits such as golf, fishing, tramping and visiting the award winning vineyards. Winter, of course, also brings the choice of skiing or snow boarding at four ski fields.

Sunday, March 20, 2016 (B, L)

Milford Sound Day Tour

You will be picked up early from your hotel this morning for a stunning drive to the Fiordland National Park, one of the largest in the world.

You will travel to Milford by private vehicle, traveling around the lake and across the Southland countryside to Te Anau and into the Fiordland National Park. The scenery is dramatic with high mountains and deep valleys carved out by ice glaciers. There are clear rushing mountain streams and waterfalls set amid magnificent rainforests with huge trees hundreds of years old.

On arrival at Milford Sound, board a shared cruise down the Fiord past Mitre Peak to the open sea. The



vessel stops at various points and plenty of time is available to view waterfalls, rainforest, mountains and seals. You may even be lucky enough to see dolphins frolicking alongside the boat. Lunch is included on board.

After the cruise your driver will be waiting, for the return drive back to Queenstown. Alternatively you can arrange an optional return by light aircraft (own expense) which will afford you a totally different view over this untamed region (and you will return to Queenstown earlier). Flight is subject to weather conditions on the day.

Please note this tour is a full day tour (approximately 12-13 hours) but will certainly be a highlight of your stay in this beautiful region!

Monday, March 21, 2016 (B, L)

Gourmet Wine Tour - Full Day

Savor the hidden delights of the world's southernmost wine growing region in comfort and style. A mix of spectacular New Zealand scenery, fascinating regional history and a chance to visit a selection of delightful boutique wineries are the rewards of a truly great day out! The tour commences with a hotel pick-up at around 9.30am and return to your Queenstown accommodation around 5.00pm. City hotel pick up and drop off is provided. Tour also includes meeting and tasting with at least one winemaker, all tastings and lunch.

Tuesday, March 22, 2016 (B)

Transfer City to Queenstown Domestic Airport

Meal Codes: (B) Breakfast, (L) Lunch, (D) Dinner

\$7,450 per person

Includes: accommodations, transportation within New Zealand, all tours and admissions and meals as noted, hotel portorage, goods & service tax of 15% in New Zealand. Based on 20 people traveling together

International Airfare is additional.

\$200 per person non-refundable deposit is required to hold space. Deposit is due by July 15, 2015, additional payment of \$1000 is due by August 31st. Final payment is due on January 1, 2016. Please contact Monika at Avenues of the World Travel, 1 928 556 0853 or monika@avenuesoftheworld.com



Sam's notes about this unique trip

Bay of Islands:

I know the whole of Northland pretty well. Both coasts are stunning, with Whangaroa, 40 miles North of the Bay of Islands, known for being a deep harbor big enough to fit part of the US Fleet.

Further north is the quirky town of Kaitiaia, not unlike Cottonwood. I first went there to compete in a school swim competition in 1960, and later in 1979 shot the opening scenes of the iconic NZ Feature Film Goodbye Pork Pie as 1stAssistant Director, a year before shooting my own 1st Feature, The Scarecrow.

For many years my parents owned a farm running cattle in a tiny rural hamlet near the West Coast called Takahue, several miles by dirt road west of Kaitiaia. You had to reach their house by a swing bridge over the river. My mom taught mostly Maori kids in the local school, somewhat like the character in Sylvia Ashton Warner's novel 'Teacher'.

Years later, in 2000, the year I first planted grapes in AZ, I was taking part in a Tangi ceremony (Maori Funeral) in a little hamlet a few miles from Takahue, doing research for the film I made in NZ, 'Crooked Earth', and ran into Pete Smith, the Maori actor we brought to national notice by casting him in 'The Quiet Earth', which I wrote and produced in 1985.

I have been further north a number of times, both with my parents, as a teenager camping, and later camping with my own kids. I have always adored 90 Mile Beach, a legal NZ Highway, and Cape Reinga at the very northerly tip is dramatic both for being the place two gigantic oceans, the Pacific and the Tasman, meet in a roiling line, and also for being where Maori believe their dead leave the land to join their ancestors.

At the foot of this remarkable beach, where one gets onto the sand for the drive to Cape Reinga, is the tiny hamlet Ahipara, where years ago a Dutch couple ran a small restaurant on the beach. There they served local fruit, veggies and seafood (including seaweed) from the immediate hillside and beach, which was my initial inspiration for developing what we are doing at my vineyard in Cochise County.

Auckland:

I lived in this city for most of my life in NZ, except for a 5 year stint in the Capital City of Wellington, where I learned my craft of film-making, working for the NZ National Film Unit.

Starting in 1960, I went to High School and University here, completing a Masters Degree in English at Auckland University in 1969.

I opened my own Film Company here in 1976, made a series of Documentaries and Features before moving to Hollywood in 1988. My first Feature 'The Scarecrow', was the first NZ Feature to be invited to the Cannes Film Festival.



I used to live in a 100 year old Victorian close to the City Center in Grey Lynn, which I renovated in 1979, and still have an Apartment in Freeman's Bay, and an old beach house on the Coromandel Peninsula to the East, in a place called Port Charles.

Waiheke Island:

This place, magical and distant back in the 1960s, way before the advent of high speed ferries, is now a trendy suburb of Auckland, and home of some of the best boutique wineries in NZ, including Stonyridge, owned and pioneered by my friend Stephen White, who I first met in 1986, just after he produced his first, and very famous Bordeaux blend, 'Stonyridge Larosse'.

As kids, we used to take the ferry out there and camp on the many deserted beaches. In 1963, at age 15, some friends and I circumnavigated the island in a couple of small skiffs we owned, camping on the coast, feasting on oysters and crayfish (Pacific Lobster), and raiding deserted farm orchards for fruit.

In 1986 I purchased 17 acres on the island to plant a Vineyard, but had to sell the land when the film business took me to Hollywood.

Waitomo Caves:

Also known as Glow Worm Caves, you enter this magical world by boat. Maybe I can get my sister Kim who lives in Hamilton to come. Kim and her hubby Paul lived on and managed a 1000 acre farm right on the coast of the Coromandel Peninsula for 32 years, Paul running sheep and cattle, and Kim running a small private Bush School, where she spent her time on their 3 secluded beaches teaching her kids and the others about the land, the bush and the sea. We used to come several times a year to hang out, fish, collect shellfish and dive for scallops and abalone.

Kim is now a Govt. Inspector of Schools, and she and Paul are building their own house on the Coromandel, not far from my old beach house.

Taupo:

Famous for Trout fishing, this huge lake sitting in a now extinct volcanic crater is where my nephew lawyer Tom and his lawyer wife Kate live with their kids. We will ask them to join us for dinner and tell us more stories about the lake and the rivers they journey on and know so well.

Wellington:

I lived in this Capital City for 5 years, and later for years travelled from Auckland to shoot movies and documentaries, and attend board meetings of the NZ Film Commission and the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, where I was a Govt Appointee.

While living there, between 1970 and 1975, I taught Shakespeare at Victoria University, ran the Dept of Extension Film School, worked full time at the NZ National Film Unit making documentaries, and later at TVNZ, both facilities now gobbled up by Peter Jackson of Lord of the Rings fame.

Many of my good friends live here, including famous NZ Cartoonist, humorist, journalist and screenwriter Tom Scott, who I hope we can invite for dinner, to tell us about his country and some of our times together. He's a dear friend and a brilliant raconteur.



Martinborough:

Home of NZ's first quality Pinot Noir plantings, where I hope we can invite my friend and Academy Award nominated film editor Michael Horton to join and tell us about his long history as one of the original investors of Martinborough Vineyards.

Michael edited many films and TV commercials I made or worked on, including Goodbye Pork Pie, Starlight Hotel, Heart of the High Country, the cult sci-fi film The Quiet Earth, and Zandalee, before going on to The Lord of the Rings.

Cook Strait Ferry:

This crossing is famous for being one of the most tempestuous crossings in the world. Once again, as at Cape Reinga, this is where the Pacific Ocean and Tasman Sea meet.

It's a gorgeous trip, and usually stunningly beautiful. But it's also known for shipwrecks, as in the Wahine Disaster, where an inter-island ferry capsized in a storm in 1968. I made a documentary about this event in 1971 while at the National Film Unit. The crossing is now not attempted in inclement weather!!

Picton, Blenheim and Marlborough:

I am less familiar with this part of NZ than the North Island...I did camp out on Apple Tree Bay in Abel Tasman National Park for 2 weeks in 1971. I love Nelson, where there are a number of terrific boutique wineries, including my friend Terry Milton's Millcrest Winery. I have never even been to Marlborough, so famous for Sauvignon Blanc. Many of the NZ Savvys (as NZers call them) we drink in the US come from monstrous operations in this famous valley.

The Giesen wines are fabulous.

Kaikoura and Christchurch:

I have little personal experience of Kaikoura beyond driving through. I will enjoy this excursion, especially as I spent a year in Vancouver making Free Willy 3, and I love getting up close to marine mammals.

I have spent time in Christchurch. I was one of 4 Directors at the NZ National Film Unit to make a feature length documentary on the 1974 Commonwealth Games. I'll never forget the look of disgust on Princess Anne's face when I ran past her at the Olympic Pool where the Diving was in progress, her splendid surrounded by her courtiers, me in flip flops and a dirty t-shirt and shorts, carrying a piece of camera equipment.

Mt Cook and Queenstown:

I'd love to be able to stop at some of the Pinot Noir Vineyards in Central Otago, where many of the best NZ Pinot's come from. My once colleague, Film Star Sam Neill (My Brilliant Career, Jurassic Park) had his 'Two Paddocks' Vineyard, where he produces quality Pinot Noir and Riesling.

Sam and I shared an office for several years at the National Film Unit, where we were both Directors.

Outside of Queenstown is the stunning town of Alexandra, covered with Apricot Orchards and wild Thyme. This is where I shot much of my favorite Feature Film, 'Starlight Hotel' in 1987. A magical place. Queenstown itself is knockout beautiful.

