



New Zealand Wine: An Unexpected Journey

March 24, 2018
David Skinner

By David Skinner

When Peter Jackson decided upon his native New Zealand to serve as middle earth for his rendering of the Hobbit and the Lord of the Rings, nationalistic nepotism served him less than the splendor of the rich and varied landscapes found in his home islands. The films depicted rugged terrain and lands carved from the mountains by the relentless influence of wind and water and there is still a sense of that primal constitution to the landscapes that now support modern viticulture in the “Shaky Isles”.

The **Thermal Explorer Highway** takes you from Hawkes Bay to Auckland through one of New Zealand’s most unique geological features. Volcanoes have shaped the land and continue to make their presence known sending steamy signals from the earth in the region around Lake Taupo. The area is a mecca for hikers (trampers in local parlance) and climbers, while golfers have access to **the Kinloch Club** and there’s no better fishing than what the Tongariro River offers on the southern shores of the lake.

A must for those seeking the best in food, lodging and total ambience is **Huka Lodge**. Here, idyllic charms of exclusive luxury and fine cuisine meet friendly hospitality and graceful guest services.

This recipe has been the foundation upon which the resort’s reputation has been forged and secured. The resort perennially occupies the top spots as best resort in Australia, New Zealand and the world. Its reputation is well deserved and spending even a single night there will be rewarded with a life-long memory of what it feels like to be treated like royalty (after all they have hosted more than their fair share of royals over the years).



Huka Lodge

Photo: David Skinner



Al fresco dining at Huka Lodge

Photo: David Skinner



Huka River at Huka Lodge

Photo: David Skinner

New Zealand is the perfect place to visit in the pursuit of pleasure through fine wine, gourmet dining and nature’s bountiful beauty. Spend at least three weeks exploring and the experience will still leave you wanting to return for more.



David Skinner has been a long-time aficionado of all things related to wine and food. A passion that led him to the Algonquin College Sommelier Program where he was honoured with the Sommelier Award of Excellence upon graduation.

Afterwards he attended master classes at London’s prestigious Wine and Spirit Education Trust to build a stronger appreciation for the grape. But becoming a certified sommelier was just the beginning of a search for a stronger understanding of what the wine and food world has to offer.

Searching for great wine experiences, he went to UC Davis to study to become a California wine judge. That experience in the heart of Napa and Sonoma bred a hunger for wine-related travel that continues today.

Travelling the world in search of great wine experiences gives David the opportunity to share his favorite stories of the vine.