

## Best Luxury Lodges On New Zealand's North Island



**Amber Gibson** Contributor ⓘ  
*I write about luxury travel, food and wine.*



### HUKA LODGE



Huka Lodge HUKA LODGE

First conceived as a simple fishing lodge on the Waikato River in 1924 by Irishman Alan Pye, [Huka Lodge](#) has been the grande dame of New Zealand luxury lodges since Dutchman Alex van Heeren purchased the property in 1984 and transformed it into the beloved lodge it is today. Bathroom skylights offer ideal lighting and it's just a few steps from the terrace to the river's edge. Fishing is still a favorite pastime, although the diverse offerings also include jetboating at nearby [Huka Falls](#), horseback riding and helicopter tours of Lake Taupo.



Huka Lodge Owners Cottage HUKA LODGE

If you're intrigued by the selection of raw honey offered at the abundant breakfast buffet, visit [Huka Honey Hive](#) just down the road for the largest selection of New Zealand honey in the country, including prized varieties from native manuka and rewarewa plants. There are also bee venom creams (locals claim it's better than Botox), meads and refreshing ice cream.





Lava Glass AMBER GIBSON

Also close by, and another great place to shop for gifts, is Lava Glass, the largest glass studio in the country. Glass artist Lynden Over's signature shapes include the volcanic teardrop and oval hangi stone (inspired by the traditional Māori cooking pit) and the organically layered colors and matte finish reflect the country's dramatic rugged landscapes.



Huka Lodge Garden Vegetables Vegan Entrée AMBER GIBSON

After a day of adventures and exploration, Chef Paul Froggatt's five-course tasting menu is always a treat. The British-born chef has a knack for reading guests and customizing menus to suit any dietary restriction or preference. Each evening begins with a parade of enticing canapés in the lodge room followed by dishes like local snapper with broccoli, crispy chicken skin and garlic or a vegan rainbow of petite garden vegetables dusted with malt crumble. There are more than 20 romantic alcoves both indoors and al fresco to linger over a leisurely dinner before finishing with a nightcap and local cheese back beside the fireplace in the lodge room.



Leigh Snapper Crusted With Chicken Skin AMBER GIBSON