

WILDERNESS LODGE NEWS

- DECEMBER 2002 -



Arthur's Pass

GREETINGS

Greetings from the New Zealand Wilderness at **Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass** in the heart of the Southern Alps and **Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki** nestled in West Coast rainforest between the Alps and the Tasman Sea. Thankyou for visiting our Lodges or for sending guests to stay with us to discover Wild New Zealand. This newsletter will update you on the Lodges, special events and nature protection. Feel free to send us any messages and pass the newsletter on to any friends who might want to visit us in the future. **Anne Saunders and Dr. Gerry McSweeney, Directors**

APPRECIATIVE GUESTS



Dear Gerry,

We returned home (Chicago) from our trip to New Zealand in early December and wanted you to know how much we enjoyed our stay at Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass -- it was one of the highlights of our trip.

Your commitment to conservation and ecology was truly inspiring. Your love for what you do was quite clear to us, as it must be to all of your guests. Our walk up the mountain to the Otira Glacier was absolutely fantastic! One of the best memories we have of our trip to New Zealand.

After we left Arthur's Pass, we spent several days at your Wilderness Lodge in Lake Moeraki. We had a wonderful time there and your staff was the best! You have created two truly unique lodges -- both are experiences not to be missed.

Thank you so much for your hospitality and for making our trip so much fun.

Best Regards,



Jim & Lynn Friedman
November 2001

INDULGENCE IN THE MAJESTIC SOUTHERN ALPS

80 kilometres (50 miles) of the Southern Alps stretch across in front of you as you sit in the Cora Lynn Lounge of Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass and gaze out the window. Your host brings you a glass of gold medal Waipara Springs' Sauvignon Blanc and the kea parrots are playing on the lawn in front. Bach's Concerto No 2 in E major plays gently in the background and for the first time on your holiday you really relax.

As evening falls you amble into the Mt. Rolleston Restaurant for dinner; sunset colours light up the alps. You progress to a Palliser Estate 1999 Pinot Noir as the gourmet food comes to your table. Around the log fire you relax, meet new friends and enjoy a well earned rest. Later that night from the balcony of your room you see Jupiter, Orion, Taurus and the full sweep of the Milky Way in our pitch black sky as the lonely call of a morepork echoes off the silent hills. **This is the Wilderness Lodge experience.**

FOOD, WINE AND GRACIOUS SURROUNDINGS

Lodge House Sauvignon Blanc Wins Gold! Waipara Springs vineyard in North Canterbury lies in an alluvial valley surrounded by limestone and sheltered from coastal winds. 2001 was a year of an exceptional hot summer and a very cold winter. Waipara Springs Sauvignon Blanc, our Wilderness Lodge house wine for the last 4 years, won a gold medal in this year's Air New Zealand wine awards. Suddenly, this wine has become as rare as hen's teeth.

We hold around 200 cases of wine in our cellar so are in no danger of running out. Amongst our cellar treasures are Gibbston 1999 Reserve Pinot Noir, Jim Barry 1996 Armagh Shiraz, Cloudy Bay 2001 Sauvignon Blanc, Foxes Island 1999 Pinot Noir and, perhaps our favourite, the Waipara Springs Barrique Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

Grits and Turnip Greens come to the Wilderness Both Wilderness Lodges feature the best of New Zealand's food... Venison, tender Lamb, Akaroa Salmon, prime West Coast Beef, West Coast Groper and Monkfish and Green Lipped Mussels. Easter 2002 saw Marie Edwards of Atlanta, USA, return for her 5th visit to both Wilderness Lodges with her "Southern Treks" walking groups. Imagine the surprise of the NZ Agriculture officials

at Auckland Airport when Marie declared she was carrying corn grits! During their 4 night stay at our Arthur's Pass Lodge the Southern Treks group harvested baskets of turnip greens from our 200 acre field of turnip (which we grow for winter sheep food). Marie and her team took over the Lodge kitchen and served superb turnip greens (cooked with pork bones) and cheese and garlic grits. Our Wilderness Lodge Chef's jumped to match this best of "Southern Fare" with New Zealand's traditional dishes. Here is the recipe for one below. Pavlova, a New Zealand desert delicacy!

SPECIAL WILDERNESS LODGE PAVLOVA!

*6 Egg Whites
200 g Castor Sugar
1 Tspn Vanilla Essence
1 Tspn Vinegar
1 Tspn Boiling Water*

Beat egg whites until firm, then add sugar and beat for 5 minutes. Fold in vanilla essence, vinegar and water.

Place six spoonfuls on a lined oven tray and bake at 120°C for one hour. Let cool in oven for another hour and keep in an airtight container until needed.

Top with whipped cream folded with yoghurt and kiwifruit.

THE 2001 / 2002 SEASON

Like many others in the travel industry, we experienced mass cancellation for our Southern Summer (November - March) following the New York bombings. A quiet October to December were followed by a rush of last minute bookings as travellers scabbled to travel to our safe and beautiful land. The nett result was a small downturn in business overall - and a huge increase in paperwork!

The last 9 months have drawn all of us closer together. Over recent years we at Wilderness Lodges have felt a little threatened by travel companies and tourists always pushing to discover more and more exotic destinations; Central Asia, Africa, China and the Himalayas. Wild New Zealand, in our eyes, had a more simple appeal; space, security, health, tranquillity and warm friendly people who speak your language and welcome you as friends. Events of the last 9 months have made us, and our visitors, appreciate just how precious these New Zealand qualities are for international travellers.

Come on over, bring your relatives, send your friends and we will make them all feel part of our family.

WILDERNESS LODGES AND LORD OF THE RINGS - Gandalf loved it so come to Middle Earth!

Have you seen the movie and did you like the scenery? Tourism New Zealand's website, www.purenz.com, has a section welcoming you to **Middle Earth**. Amongst Gandalf the Wizard's favourite places are Bealey Spur, Castle Hill's Limestone Castles, the Upper Otira Valley and Lake Pearson. Gandalf (Sir Ian McKellan) joined us on Wilderness Lodge guided walks during one of his 3 vacations at Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass. The

marvellous landscapes of Lord of the Rings have heightened interest worldwide in visiting New Zealand. Come and visit us and experience the primeval forests, canoe in the flax swamp forest of Lake Moeraki beneath snowy peaks and clamber amongst the Arthur's Pass limestone towers and castles.



WHAT IS THE BEST TIME TO VISIT THE WILDERNESS LODGES?

Nature is great. There is always something new and interesting going on.

- If you want to see **Fiordland Crested Penguin, they come ashore into the Lake Moeraki rainforest to breed from June to**

December. September, October and November are the best months for penguins.

- **At Arthur's Pass September to December are the best months to cuddle lambs and see our main sheep shearing.** We save 100 sheep from the main shearing on 1 September and every second day use old fashioned blades to shear a sheep for our visitors.

- **Giant Buttercups, Mountain Foxgloves and Mountain Daisies are at their best in the Arthur's Pass Mountains, November to January.** Edelweiss and gentian flowers are best February to March.

- **Whitebait Season** - a great time for trout fishing - is from 1 September to mid November at Lake Moeraki. For information on the seasonal highlights of each Wilderness Lodge check out our page <http://www.wildernesslodge.co.nz/monthly.html>.

JOIN FOREST AND BIRD - THE BEST NZ\$95 YOU WILL EVER SPEND

The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society (Forest and Bird) is New Zealand's largest nature protection group, 79 years old with 40,000 members throughout New Zealand (and 1,000 around the world). Wilderness Lodge Director, Dr. Gerry McSweeney, was elected National President of Forest and Bird in 2001. Forest and Bird has been the driving force behind New Zealand setting aside 1/3 of its total land area as National Park and Reserve Land. Forest and Bird's 3 big 2002 campaigns are to champion marine reserves and albatross protection, seek tussockland parks in the Southern Alps and restore New Zealand's dawn chorus of birdsong through the control of pests and predators in reserve areas.

NZ\$95 (approx. US\$50, UK£30) buys you a year's overseas subscription to Forest and Bird. This means you will:

- Keep in touch with New Zealand.
- Help protect New Zealand's nature heritage
- Receive 4 times a year the lovely 48 page colour glossy nature magazine "Forest and Bird". If you want to join, check Forest and Bird's website www.forest-bird.org.nz.

THE NEW WILDERNESS LODGE LAKE MOERAKI

- **Torlesse/Korowai Tussocklands Park.** New Zealand's first tussockland park was opened on 10 November 2001, just 45km (30 miles) east of Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass. The 21,000 hectare park is a dry land park of tussock grass, vegetable sheep, rocky outcrops and desert like landscapes. The **Torlesse Tussock Traverse** is an exciting new high mountain guided day walk we offer from Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass. 60 guests joined us on the 8 trips we ran this summer. The walk starts at 3,000 ft (900 metres) altitude amongst snow tussocks and mountain daisies. We traverse the rolling summit of the Benmore range at around 4,000 ft (1300 metres) altitude. We pass vegetable sheep, woolly heads and rare scree plants. There are superb views east to Banks Peninsula and the Pacific Ocean and west to the Rakaia Peaks and Craigieburn Range. We lunch in beech forest clearings filled with bellbirds and run down scree to Lake Lyndon. The trip finishes with a canoe traverse of the lake.

- **North Okarito and Saltwater Forest now National Park** (near Lake Moeraki). On 31st March 2002 the New Zealand Government halted all state sponsored logging of native forest. Wilderness Lodge directors Anne Saunders and Gerry McSweeney attended a special Parliament function hosted by our Prime Minister Helen Clark, Minister of Conservation and Minister of Forests to mark the halt to logging. The ceremony also marked the Government's addition to Westland National Park the two forests at the centre of the logging controversy; North Okarito and Saltwater Forests. All New Zealand's domestic and export timber needs are met by our vast plantations of fast growing American conifer species.

- **The Riverside Walk.** This short 10 minute nature trail and boardwalk up the Moeraki River from the Wilderness Lodge gives visitors a wonderful easy glimpse of the ancient trees that are also a feature of North Okarito and Saltwater forests. You pass giant kahikatea, rimu and miro beneath which is a garden on ferns, vines and moss... and yes, there are seats every 200 metres to rest and look for birds!

- **50% Increase in the Number of the World's Largest and Rarest Parrot, the Kakapo** (used to live at Lake Moeraki and Arthur's Pass). In an extraordinary achievement for endangered bird conservation, Conservation Department staff have this summer increased the number of giant flightless kakapo parrot from 63 to 93 birds! The success is a result of getting rid of rats off their island sanctuary, Codfish Island, and ensuring that the birds have abundant food supplies.

- **Mistletoe Recovery Programme, Rare Plants and a New Alpine Grasshopper.** Giant scarlet mistletoes (*Peraxilla colensoi*) are in full recovery all around Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki following a major possum control programme carried out by the Department of Conservation this summer. You will be able to kiss beneath the mistletoes to your heart's delight! At Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass for the last 7 years we have eliminated introduced possums, rats and weasels in a huge effort to restore native birds and rare mistletoes. There is a red mistletoe (*Peraxilla tetrapetala*) and the even rarer yellow mistletoe (*Alepis flavida*). We have also hand planted 4,000 seedlings of yellow mistletoe. These attach with a natural glue to the branches of young beech. Lodge guests and a group of US Ecoquest college students have helped us with the planting.

- This summer at Arthur's Pass we fenced the McKay Moa Forest natural shrublands - an amazing collection of plants uniquely adapted to resist Moa browsing. In these shrublands, on a walk with Lodge guests, we discovered the very rare Kirks broom and a large 30mm long new species of grasshopper

- **Kea Parrots**, a distant relative of the kakapo, can be seen all around Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass. In February 2002, scientists from Vienna's

Max Plank Institute of Animal Behaviour visited Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass. Extensive scientific studies at the Institute reveal that kea (average life span 70 years!) are, with chimpanzees, the most intelligent animals on earth! Keas will wake you up at Arthur's Pass and entertain you during dinner.

Dear Gerry and Anne

We had an uneventful trip back to Madison, Wisconsin, after a wonderful month in New Zealand. Certainly one of the highlights of our trip was our all-too-brief stay at Arthurs Pass (another highlight, of course, would be Lake Moeraki) The quality of life style and accommodations at your Lodge, were for us, unique and wonderful.

Gerry, the Frank Lloyd Wright quote I mentioned which speaks to what you and Your architect have done so well with the Lodge is: "A building should be of the land, and not on the land".

Thanks for being great hosts- especially the early morning kayaking! The pictures turned out great. You might consider photography, in your spare time!

Till next time, many thanks!

*Ida and Bob
Madison, Wisconsin*

You will receive a warm welcome from Lodge Managers Dorothy Piper and Malcolm Edwards. You can join nature guides Caid and Swade to canoe on Lake Moeraki and explore the wild seacoast and rainforest.

Have a wonderful holiday of relaxation and discovery at our Wilderness Lodges.

Anne Saunders & Gerry McSweeney

Directors