

Wanaka might be more sedate than Queenstown but there is no shortage of thrills on offer.



Wanaka

LIME TREE LODGE

JUST AN HOUR and a half's drive from the thrillseekers' Mecca of Queenstown, the picturesque little town of Wanaka is a haven for those looking for activities that are a little less extreme in a more relaxed environment. Which is not to say the town, located amongst some of New Zealand's most spectacular mountain scenery, doesn't provide its share of thrills.

Sally Carwardine and Rebecca Butts run Lime Tree Lodge, which is five minutes from Wanaka township and is the perfect base from which to explore the region's many delights. The lodge's five spacious suites are accompanied by supremely comfortable lounge and dining areas, and open onto perfectly manicured grounds – a testament to Rebecca's experience as a landscaper for Auckland's most elite gardens – complete with pool, spa and tennis court.

Wanaka boasts several excellent eateries, and over a couple of fireside drinks (the Carrick 2006 pinot gris is a highlight), Sally and Rebecca are happy to recommend the ones to visit. We tried Missy's Kitchen, and enjoyed the perfect antidote to the biting temperature – crayfish ravioli, steak and succulent venison.



You can't help but feel spoiled at Lime Tree Lodge, with suites revealing an expansive view of the Southern Alps and the chance to debate the day's itinerary over a delicious breakfast of fresh local produce.

Tempted though we were to follow our natural instincts and eschew any form of taxing activity in favour of relaxing in our suite, we opted for a day of outdoor pursuits. A morning of jet-boating down the crystal-clear offshoots of the Matukituki River was an eye-opener – huge brown trout linger, seemingly within arm's reach. For the timid among us the ride was thankfully more about exploring the breathtaking surrounds and rich history of the area than stomach-turning 360-degree turns.

Then, for a view from a completely different perspective, we boarded helicopters at the lodge's private heli-pad, for a wonderful flight that included an up-

Lime Tree Lodge is the perfect base for relaxing after a day spent jet-boating on the Matukituki River or a helicopter ride over the magnificent Rob Roy glacier.

close-and-personal view of the mammoth blue-ice crevasses of the Rob Roy glacier.

For those seeking a more slothful time, Lime Tree Lodge's owners are happy to organise a trip to the renowned Soak day spa or provide mouth-watering home-cooked meals on demand. But as we headed back to Queenstown through the sun-drenched Crown Range, we were glad that, for once, we had raised ourselves from the couch.

CONTACT:

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