

Perched on Pakiri

A birdseye view from the new Pakiri Point Boutique Lodge provides an extra perspective to a stretch of New Zealand coastline



The landscape is even more enticing from the deep tub



The wine cellar uses native New Zealand wood

Blessed by the local Maori tribe during a traditional housewarming ritual, Pakiri Point Boutique Lodge opened in late 2009 high atop a stretch of isolated coastline on New Zealand's North Island. Owners, Rae Ah Chee and Billy and Evelyn Chong, retired from hectic Auckland careers with an eye on creating an inn to rival the country's famed Huka Lodge, albeit on a smaller scale. Just 70 minutes from Auckland (20 minutes by chartered helicopter flights, if you prefer), Pakiri Point commands a halcyon perch overlooking Pakiri Beach, with sweeping Pacific views that take in surrounding islands, including Goat Island Marine Reserve (renowned for snorkeling). Five airy guest rooms maximize space with vaulted ceilings, deep soaking tubs and patios that open to the main attraction, the views. The scenery is quintessentially Kiwi, and the lodge was designed to defer to it: the long windswept beach, parkland lush with native flax and Pohutukawa trees, and rolling hills fluffy with sheep. Low and unobtrusive, the wood and stone structure straddles a ridge to capitalise on sunlight and vistas while remaining out of view from the beach below. Inside, Kiwi and Asian accents include a 2,000-year-old dining table of native New Zealand swamp kauri wood, 18th-century Japanese shoji screens and a dine-in wine cellar visible through glass plates in the entrance-way floor. Ah Chee ran an acclaimed catering company in his Auckland days, and his impeccable lodge menus source local seafood, New Zealand game and organic produce for multi-course feasts paired with New Zealand wines, including a bounty from the renowned Matakana vineyards, located just a few minutes down the road.

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