

NZ Country Trails

Newsletter



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What's new on the Trail? Let's take a look.

Farmstays/visits - Braemar



Situated on the shores of Lake Pukaki, sits Braemar a working station, offering vast and spectacular views of Mt Cook, the Southern Alps, farmstay accommodation, mountain hiking/biking, trout fishing, picnicking, and venues for outdoor functions.

Vintage Railways - Glenbrook Vintage Railway



Take a vintage train ride on a steam train through beautiful countryside while enjoying a First Class Experience featuring a "High Tea", and as you go, learn something about early NZ railroad history and the skills that built New Zealand's railroad network.

Local History/Vintage Machinery - Fiordland Vintage Machinery Museum



Hear the stories and learn about the history of Fiordland. Visit the museum which exhibits over 60 working tractors, a selection of early road graders, motor bikes, a collection of early machinery, and a fully operational blacksmith shop.

Living “off the grid” - “We killed a few appliances along the way”

Sharon’s and Shane’s story: Today, Sharon and Shane live a totally self-sustainable life, in their Kaipara Views Eco-lodge high up on the hills overlooking the Kaipara Harbour. But it was a journey getting there and, “it wasn’t planned that way”, says Sharon,



Both Sharon and Shane had lived before on lifestyle blocks farming Fallow deer, Angora goats and chickens. But their last property in Albany near Auckland, became too busy for them and so they looked elsewhere, moving north west to their new home in the Kaipara district.

Putting the power on: On arrival, their first thought was to connect the power, but they soon found doing that wasn’t going to be easy, and cost \$80,000. That simply was not affordable. Shane, being electrically minded, having previously worked as a Post Office telecom worker, wanted to give solar and wind power a go. “We just wanted to see if it would work”, says Sharon, “and we killed a few appliances along the way”. That is, until they learnt about the complexities of matching load and power usage, of learning how to read the inverter and other gauges, “me mostly”, says Sharon.

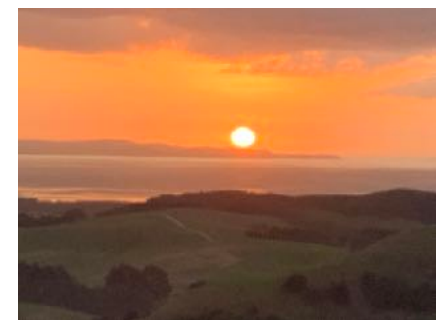


One thing that they discovered was how solar panels weren’t much use in Winter, “You don’t realise how cloudy it is in Auckland until you have solar and so the need for a wind turbine and back-up generator”. Their’s was a steep learning curve but they succeeded, having now lived 23 years off the grid.



Food supply: Feeding themselves was another challenge and they are now completely self-sufficient in food, using organic farming practices to supply all of their own food requirements. Sharon had previously worked in Pharmacy, followed by owning her own delicatessen, “hence my love of food kicks in”.

Sharing their story with visitors: It wasn’t planned that way but Sharon and Shane love sharing their story with guests from all around NZ and overseas who are often fascinated by their self-sufficient lifestyle. “You don’t always have to rough it to be off the grid”, says Sharon.



Shane being a cyclist and hunter had always liked the outdoors and for “me” says Sharon, “I just like the birdsong, the native bird life, Kiwi, Tui, Kererū and Piwakawaka (Fantail) and animals, that abound in the beautiful NZ native bush”.

Accommodation is provided for guests in a two bedroom lodge, located separately on the property which sleeps four people.

For more information



For the love of wool & natural fibres: Patrizia tells her story

“It wasn’t planned that way”, says Patrizia, about the small craft studio that now sits on her 1000 hectares Rewa Rewa Station.

Buying the farm: It all started many years ago, when Patrizia, an Italian interior designer took her chances, and came to NZ with her English partner Rod. Together they purchased a hill country sheep and beef breeding farm in Tinui, in the Wairarapa. But, to Patrizia it became more than just that, because it gave her the opportunity to set up a craft studio in which to express her love for wool and natural fibres.

The love for natural fibres: Her love of natural fibres goes way back to when she as a young sport’s person, was aware of the superior quality of wools over synthetics for use in sports clothing, “they lasted longer and performed better”, she says. Patrizia has always been a discerning shopper for clothing, always looking out for those made from natural fibres.

Becoming a crafter: The interest in craft came from her mother, a skilled crafter, and who inspired her to learn the art of knitting. On arrival in NZ Patrizia met Phylis who was a spinner and taught her the art of spinning. Phylis also owned coloured sheep and so Patrizia, now with her own farm, was able to breed some black sheep of her own.

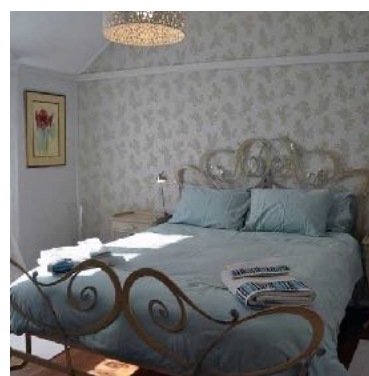
Today she has her own flock of 70 coloured sheep to gather fibre from consisting of Polwarth, Romney x Corriedale and Gotland Pelt Sheep along with some Alpacas and Cashmere goats. Patrizia’s aim is to produce good quality products suitable for spinners, weavers, crafters, knitters or those that crochet.

Craft club days: Once a month Patrizia holds a “craft day” at her studio where people, interested in natural fibres, are invited to mix with others to learn, or to work on their own project. Guests are invited to learn knitting, spinning and can purchase yarn, fibre or knitted goods. People are encouraged to bring their own projects and, “there is always someone there who can add new knowledge to the group”, says Patrizia. The “craft” days also offer knitters, spinners, crocheters and keen crafters an opportunity to socialise and enjoy the company of like minded people. “Everyone is welcome to bring their lunch and join in over a cuppa and a slice”. Courses are also on offer during the year providing the opportunity to learn Natural Colour Dyeing using natural ingredients & techniques. Patrizia hopes to grow the education side of her business over time. A Belfast Mini Mill will soon be coming which will enable the fibre produced on farm to be processed on farm to create yarn & other products for crafters.

Farmstays: Rewa Rewa Station, situated at Tinui in the Wairapa is also a working sheep and cattle farm, breeding around 4000 Romney sheep and 150 Angus cattle. Patrizia has the responsibility to oversee its operation. With the untimely death of her late partner Rod, Patrizia says “You just have to take responsibility”, when referring to the continued journey of their dream for Rewa Rewa Station.

Cottage accommodation is available for booking via AirBnB and guests are welcome to meet Patrizia’s animals, go for a walk, learn to spin or just relax and enjoy the peace. Rewa Rewa Station boasts a beautifully restored farm cottage which can accommodate 6 guests in it’s 3 bedrooms (4 beds).

For more information



Highlights from our previous newsletters:



Karetu farmstay and gardens - garden tour, farm tour, recreation Hurunui.



Island Hills Station - bush walks - nature tour, hunting, Hurunui.



Beverley Forrester, woollen yarn, fabrics - Leithfield.



Levack Forestry - Kapiti Coast - practical tree growing tuition.



Mahaanui Farmstay - farm tour, bush walks, rest and relaxation.



NZ Farm Forestry - tree growing education and advice



The Shearers Quarters Cafe - offering a range of menus, celebrity events, and fun activities.



The Good Union cafe - family friendly local events, hosting private functions.



The Secret Garden - Mexican food & drink, live music, outdoor garden, family friendly.



The Astro Cafe - food and drinks & access to Mt John Dark Sky Observatory.



Burnside Homestead - meals and accommodation, historic homestead and garden tours.



Eastwoodhill Arboretum - bush walks, educational tours, wedding venue.



Wareama Coastal Walk - independent Wairarapa coastal walk.



AgResearch - agriculture and horticulture research.

What to look out for in our Newsletter's next edition

In our next newsletter we will feature more NZ Country Trails listers of special interest, who have a story to tell to those who travel through New Zealand's countryside.



NZ Country Trails

NZ Country Trails is a website on which rural property owners, interested in connecting to the tourism market, can list their activities and feature in regular newsletters to the travelling public.

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