

## New Zealand 101



*Travelers often think of New Zealand as just beautiful vistas (remember Lord of the Rings?). While it does boast stunning landscapes, you'll also find a fantastic wine scene, unbelievable lodges, and happening cities.*

*By Arabella Bowen, Sherman's Travel Magazine*

### **Auckland**

*Most international flights arrive in Auckland. Wise travelers lay over here a night or two to recover from jet lag and experience the country's largest city.*

Founded by the British in 1840 on what was once native Maori land, Auckland today is a remarkably cosmopolitan South Pacific city where the unusual combination of Maori and British influences is underpinned by a yachting lifestyle - thanks to its superlative waterfront setting.

While quays jut out from much of downtown, Auckland's waterfront really coalesces around glitzy Viaduct Harbour north of the Fullers Ferry landing, built in the late-1990s to host the city's first America's Cup race. Gawking at expensive boats from harborside restaurants is the main attraction here, and you'll gain a deep appreciation for Auckland's nickname, City of Sails...

Farther inland, Ponsonby Road is a popular local hangout lined with some of the city's most happening restaurants and bars. The contemporary Italian SPQR has a great terrace from which to watch the scene, while nearby Rocco serves up Spanish-influenced dishes in a sophisticated corner house. With the exception of Food Alley—a collection of no-frills pan-Asian food stalls much-beloved by locals—you'll have no reason to go downtown after dark.

Most of Auckland's hotels with downtown locations and modern conveniences cater to business travelers. The best of these is the great-value Heritage Auckland Hotel, which has spacious suites that lie within easy reach of waterfront restaurants (request a room in the newer Tower section). A more stylish stay awaits at the three-suite Boatshed, offshore on Waiheke Island, where rooms occupy individual boathouses and a three-story lighthouse (ferry transfer included). Decadent Mollies, a 13-suite boutique hotel near Ponsonby Road, is the finest in-town choice, with bold Philippe Starck designs, Christie's-worthy artwork, and in-room fireplaces.

### **Auckland Where to Stay:**

**Mollies** 6 Tweed St.; from \$331/night; 64/9-376-3489, [mollies.co.nz](http://mollies.co.nz)

**Heritage Hotel** 35 Hobson St.; from \$180/night; 64/9-302-1277, [heritagehotels.co.nz](http://heritagehotels.co.nz)

**The Boatshed** Waiheke Island; from \$235/night; 64/9-372-3242, [boatshed.co.nz](http://boatshed.co.nz)

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The information in this story was accurate at the time it was published in December, 2008, but we suggest you confirm all details and prices as these can change at any time.

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