Comm Media Awards
WEBSITE OF THE YEAR
Sign into your NZ Herald
Register here · Find out more
My News
Home > Travel
New Zealand
Regional News
Sport
Business
Property
Technology
World
Opinion
TimeOut Entertainment
Lifestyle
Travel
Rural
Driven Motoring
News Video
Photos
Puzzles & Quizzes
Classifieds
Trending Topics
Russia plane crash
Married at First Sight Australia
Winter Olympics
Report: NZ soldiers in Iraq
Weather
NZME Network
FOLLOW NZ HERALD ON
Newstalk ZB
The difference is opinion
From breaking news to debate and conversation, we bring you the news as it happens
About NZME
Help & Support
Contact Us
Subscribe to NZ Herald
Manage Your Subscription
NZ Herald Digital Edition
Advertise with NZME
Book Your Ad
Privacy Policy
Terms of Use
Competition Terms & Conditions
© Copyright 2018
NZME. Publishing Limited

ADVERTISEMENT
BLACKCAPS vs Australia
Friday 16 February 2018, Eden Park
Click here to view your public transport options.
Metro
Advertise with NZME

TRAVEL

The Glasshouse: Above by head and shoulders

16 Feb, 2018 11:00am · 4 minutes to read

Clinging to the Kauri Mountain Point cliff with 180-degree ocean views. We are completely alone with in Whangarei Heads, and it's absolute bliss.

By: Stephanie Holmes
Deputy Travel Editor, NZ Herald
stephanie.holmes@nzherald.co.nz
@HolmesStephanie

A weekend escape to a luxury lodge in Northland is magic, writes Stephanie Holmes.

The last time I saw Bream Head, it was after slogging my way along the 7.5km endurance test that is the Te Whara track, one of the toughest day walks in the Whangarei Heads region.

This weekend the outlook is very different. I'm gazing on the undulating rocky outcrop from the comfort of an oversized outdoor beanbag on a large wooden deck, glass of wine in hand and gentle background music complementing the evening birdsong. Bream Head is a few bays along the coast but from here, at luxury accommodation The Glasshouse, I have an unbeatable view.

The Glasshouse, Whangarei Heads.

It's early summer so the pohutukawa are starting to blossom — splashes of red brighten up the trees clinging to the Kauri Mountain Point cliff; the 180-degree ocean views beyond have me transfixed. We feel alone; so completely alone, and it's absolute bliss.

ADVERTISEMENT
FLIGHT CENTRE
Kids fly, stay, play & eat
from
$199*
per child
*T&Cs apply. Ends 18 Feb 18
Advertise with NZME

In reality, we're just a steep, winding driveway away from a second luxury property, Te Whara, but this architecturally-designed masterpiece makes us feel like we're the only people left on the planet. What a way to go.

The Glasshouse is the kind of place worthy of the superlatives thrown at it in the guest book. "Wow" is the word we involuntarily say as we get our first glimpse of the house after swinging around the final bend of the driveway. Two wings have three walls of floor-to-ceiling glass ranch-sliders that open up fully to the elements. They're connected by a "breezeway" in the middle, which opens to the exceptional deck and centrepiece outdoor fireplace. All around we're surrounded by native bush, with paths leading down to the cliffs and ocean below.

The Glasshouse, Kauri Mountain Point, Whangarei Heads.

The bathroom is affectionately known as "The Longdrop" but it, too, is luxurious. About 20 steps down the path from the deck, the small outhouse looks unassuming from the outside; inside there's a normal flushing toilet, hot running water and the most stunning shower I've ever seen. Its wall is floor-to-ceiling glass, nestled in the native bush with views out to sea. The glass opens vertically at the touch of a button, descending to hallway down, giving fresh air and birdsong as you perform your ablutions.

The sense of peace is soul-cleansing; just 10 minutes after arriving — a bit ratty from the Friday evening schlep from Auckland — we're relaxed on the beanbags, outdoor fire lit, breathing in the scent of woodsmoke and surrounding manuka trees.

There are walking tracks easily accessible from the house, leading down to the craggy rocks to the north, and The Cove — a private sheltered bay accessible only to guests of Te Whara and The Glasshouse — to the south. At the former, we float in the natural rockpools, filled with an irresistible combination of sea and rainwater warmed by the sun.

Kayaks and snorkelling gear are stashed at the Cove; I awake on our first morning to find Nathan has already headed out to explore. From the kitchen I see him in the distance, the smudge of his yellow kayak bobbing about on the water below. I stay sedentary; drinking coffee in bed, cocooned in the crisp white linen, the mosquito nets fluttering in the warm early morning breeze.

Related articles:

TRAVEL
Weird laws that could get you in trouble
9 Feb, 2018 9:00am · 5 minutes to read

TRAVEL
Mongolia on ice: Explorer skates across 85-mile lake
19 Feb, 2018 10:30am · 5 minutes to read

TRAVEL
Getaway tips from world's longest honeymooners
8 Feb, 2018 9:27am · 4 minutes to read

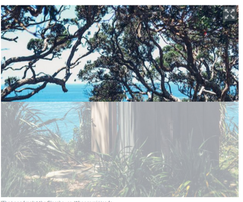
TRAVEL
Sri Lanka: Animal hunt
10 Feb, 2018 2:00pm · 5 minutes to read

We cook our first dinner on the barbecue, simple steak and veges, which always taste better when cooked outside. We need not worry about our second dinner however; the Glasshouse's private chef Caitlin drops off a pre-prepared three-course dinner for two; all we need do is heat it up in the fully-equipped kitchen and serve.

The deck with the ultimate view The Glasshouse, Whangarei Heads.

A beautiful quinoa salad packed with fresh ingredients like pomegranate seeds, tomatoes and asparagus, followed by a rich, hearty Mediterranean-style chicken bake, and pannacotta topped with fresh strawberries keeps us well satisfied and as the sun sets, we take our place by the outdoor fireplace with full bellies and full glasses of red wine, growing sleepy as we stare at the flames.

On our final morning, I take a last look across the bays, glimpses of Ocean Beach and the winding track up to the summit of Bream Head. With the Glasshouse's powerful binoculars, I can watch walkers ascending the steep Te Whara track, the same way I did many months before. They're just a speck on the landscape, like a trail of ants climbing their hill in formation. This weekend, I know where I'd rather be.



"The Longdrop" at the Glasshouse, Whangarei Heads.

Fact Box

The Glasshouse is one of five secluded, luxury properties available to rent from Ara Roa Villa and Boutique Lodgings.

For more information and to book, go to araroa.nz.

Recommended

Where to stay in Fiji on a budget...
Viator

[Gallery] Hysterical Tattoo Fails That Will Make You Think Before You Ink - You'll Cry Laughing
Pens & Pieces

See how a year on Xero helped The Raw Kitchen & try Xero for free
Xero

Recommended by Outbrain

Trending Topics

- Russia plane crash
- Married at First Sight Australia
- Winter Olympics
- Report: NZ soldiers in Iraq

ADVERTISEMENT
Want free data every day?
vodafone
*T&Cs apply
Advertise with NZME

Latest from Travel

TRAVEL
Security breach by smoker delays flight two hours
16 Feb, 2018 6:09pm · Quick Read

TRAVEL
Antarctica: White nights
16 Feb, 2018 8:06pm · 6 minutes to read

TRAVEL
Clarke Gayford: Tropical visitors
16 Feb, 2018 4:49pm · 4 minutes to read

TRAVEL
A dozen reasons to love Denver
16 Feb, 2018 7:52pm · 6 minutes to read

TRAVEL
Travel hits and misses: Sara Brodie
16 Feb, 2018 6:57pm · 2 minutes to read

Most Popular

SPORT
Winter Olympics: Star's horror dress malfunction
12 Feb, 2018 5:19am · 2 minutes to read

NEW ZEALAND
Hawkesbay Sign what you like, Xones won't lose knighthood
12 Feb, 2018 7:49pm · 3 minutes to read

NEW ZEALAND
Why we're all hot and sticky: how's the humidity at your place?
17 Feb, 2018 3:34am · 6 minutes to read

ADVERTISEMENT
HUNGER FOR COLOUR
Resene
Swap a can of food for a free Resene testpot at ColorShops!
Food donated to Kiwis in need
View more on resene.co.nz
Selling Online? Make This Your Most Profitable Year Yet
Learn from top performing brands in ecommerce at Online Retailer New Zealand, 9 March
View more on onlineretailer.com

Latest News | Most Read

SPORT
AEK beats Asteras 1-0 to go top in Greece
16 Feb, 2018 9:03am · Quick Read

WORLD
Mattis says North Korea can't drive wedge between South, US
12 Feb, 2018 9:20am · 2 minutes to read

BUSINESS
'Fifty Shades Freed' commands $38.8 million to top charts
19 Feb, 2018 9:19am · 4 minutes to read

ADVERTISEMENT
AEROPARKS
why pay crazy airport parking prices
Aeroparks $5 per day
Advertise with NZME

Trending on NZ Herald

SPORT
Scott Dixon crashes in Indycar test session
13 Feb, 2018 7:45am · Quick Read
Kiwi Scott Dixon crashed during an indycar test session over the weekend.

BUSINESS
Fletcher trading halt extended, in talks with banks
12 Feb, 2018 8:45am · 3 minutes to read
Fletcher was expected to make a market announcement this morning.

ENTERTAINMENT
Machine Gun Kelly to play four NZ shows
12 Feb, 2018 8:48am · Quick Read
He was only just here headlining Bay Dreams, but Machine Gun Kelly will be back in April.