



Lounge at Kinloch Manor, far left; The Farm at Cape Kidnappers' restaurant, left

and coffee machine, separate den with tartan sofa and huge light-filled bathroom with deep tub.

While we're at dinner the kindly house-keeping team braves the cold to light the fire, turn down the bed and leave some chocolate caramels on the bedside table. It's indicative of the kindly service from a friendly team that knows exactly when to appear and, more importantly, to disappear.

Onsite facilities include tennis and a day spa, where I enjoy one of the best massages I can remember. But the biggest drawcard is that golf course. I've never lifted a club in my life and make quite a spectacle of myself. Kinloch is regarded as a particularly challenging course, every lump, bump and sheep rub assiduously sculpted to challenge the most proficient of golfers. "This is a course that can break you," says amiable resident pro Tom Long, on hand to provide comfort to the vanquished.

Each morning, with cup of tea to hand, I prop on downy pillows and watch the sky dawn pink, cottonwool clouds drifting over the bay

We decide a venison pie in the clubhouse might be a more rewarding pursuit before grabbing a couple of the lodge's mountain bikes to enjoy a delightful lakeside ride. We coast downhill through forest and past little dells of tree ferns along paths of pine needles, springy as a trampoline, to the lake shore where there are more gorgeous views to snow-capped mountains.

We wind back via the tiny village of Kinloch, with a stop for coffee at the Topsy Trout and a stroll along the pretty beach. I'm told the swimming is "almost bearable" on a hot summer's day (that's 27C in local parlance).

But I'd not bother packing your togs. Marshal those hiking boots and thermal underwear instead (furs and swords optional) because New Zealand's lodges beckon and winter is coming.

Christine McCabe was a guest of Robertson Lodges and Kinloch Manor and Villas.

IN THE KNOW

Temporarily closed for annual maintenance, The Farm at Cape Kidnappers reopens on July 22. Until October 14, the lodge offers four nights for the price of three. From NZ\$2940 + GST a person, twin-share. Includes full breakfast, daily lunch, pre-dinner drinks and canapes, dinner and non-alcoholic minibar. Activities include Can-Am tours, beach picnics, and nighttime jaunts on the lookout for kiwis. There's also heli-fishing, mountain biking even shepherding.

robertsonlodges.com

Winter packages at Kinloch Manor & Villas from \$NZ1995 a night, twin-share (minimum two nights). Includes room upgrade, pre-dinner drinks and canapes, degustation dinner and breakfast each day plus your choice of two rounds of golf or a bottle of Bollinger champagne. Activities include trout fishing on the lake, white-water rafting, jet boating, exploring the otherworldly Taupo volcanic field or taking a soak in the mineral waters of the Wairakei Terraces.

kinlochmanor.co.nz

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