

THE EXPERTS... ADVICE



Q My husband and I are starting our New Zealand adventure in Auckland and would like to kick things off somewhere that's nearby but feels miles from a city. Any suggestions?

A You should definitely head to Waiheke Island in the Hauraki Gulf. The ferry takes about 40 minutes from downtown Auckland, just enough time to blow away the last traces of jet lag. Waiheke has glorious scenery, stunning vineyards and a reputation as a bit of an arty hangout. Stay at the Oyster Inn (www.theoysterinn.co.nz) in Oneroa (pictured above); it's small – there are only three rooms – but cute, with retro beachy styling. The mussel fritters in the restaurant are delicious and there's a great selection of New Zealand and Waiheke wines. You're perfectly placed to while away a few hours in the little cafés, bars and boutiques along the high street. Worth popping into is the Toi Gallery (www.toigallery.com) which features the work of well-established local artists; especially beautiful are the swirling fish and soaring bird sculptures by the gallery's owner, Sally Smith. At lunchtime, make for the small olive garden at the Kennedy Point Organic Vineyard (www.kennedypointvineyard.com) for the cheese and cured-meat platter with a glass of 2012 rosé. Dinner in one of the island's vineyards is a must, too; my favourite is Mudbrick (www.mudbrick.co.nz) with its brilliant views of the Auckland skyline across the water. Equally good is the smaller, more relaxed bistro at the opposite end of the lavender-lined terrace. The food is terrific – especially the goat's cheese



Paula Ellis
Deputy Art Director

ice-cream starter – and comes decorated with flowers and herbs from the pretty gardens. Before heading back to the ferry, make a pit stop at Island Gelato Company's pop-up ice-cream stall (www.islandgelato.co.nz), housed in a funkily converted shipping container. There are some superb flavours on offer, all homemade using local ingredients – my top tip is the liquorice.

Q I'd like to go on a fitness holiday, but I'm not really into gyms and I find boot camps terrifying. I'd also like some pampering spa treatments. Do you have any ideas?

A Try Flipper Camp, a five-day package launched last year at Cyprus's *grande dame* Anassa hotel (www.anassa.com.cy) – it's much more fun than a punishing gym regime. There are four days of water-based activities, with a day of treatments in the Thalassa Spa. You start each morning with an invigorating hydro workout in the spa's pool – the water creates natural resistance, making your muscles work at a higher intensity – then choose from all manner of watersports on the crystal blue sea. There's wakeboarding and wakeskating (for the latter, you're not attached to the board), windsurfing, paddleboarding, canoeing and snorkelling. Each day ends with hydro yoga, a great low-impact workout that's good for all levels of fitness. Your spa day – take it whenever you want it – is also dedicated to all things watery, with jet showers for tackling cellulite, thalassotherapy (seawater) baths for deep detoxing, salt scrubs and algae body wraps. Be sure to sign up for a sublime massage with Michaela, using seaweed oil.



Caroline Phillips
Contributor

Q We're staying near Faro this summer but want to venture off the beaten track when we go for supper. How can we avoid the tourist traps?

A Eating out in the Algarve can be a standard affair at best, but if you're willing to avoid the obvious choices I can recommend two really great restaurants. The first is Jorge do Peixe in Quarteira (www.restaurantedojorgepeixe.com), which specialises in delicious local fish, most of it fresh off the boat that morning. The decor might not be up to much, but the food is sensational – order the *cataplana*, a local stew packed with squid, prawns and mussels – and you'll probably be the only non-Portuguese here.



Matthew Buck
Photographic production

Booking is essential. My second choice, Retiro do Camponês in Vale Judea (www.retirodocampones.pai.pt), is a little harder to find, so you'll need a car. This homely village restaurant serves generous portions of unpretentious food to a clientele almost exclusively made up of local families. We ate in the garden several times, tucking into black pork and clams, chicken piri piri and slow-roasted lamb. Prices are fantastically reasonable and there's a great selection of Portuguese wines, so, in fact, a taxi might be a better idea.