



LOWER SOUTH TOUR INCLUDING BLUFF OYSTER FESTIVAL

Tour Departs: 16 May 2021
Tour Length: 11 Days

TOUR COSTS
 Twin/Double – per person
 NZD\$5,250.00
 Single Supplement
 NZD\$1,300.00

Join us as we explore some of the most beautiful parts of the South Island! Our first two nights are spent in the popular resort town of Wanaka before we move on to Gibbston Valley, also known as “Valley of the Vines”- one of the most scenic wine growing areas you’ll ever encounter. Vineyards are sandwiched, sometimes precariously, between rugged schist mountains and the rocky Kawarau River gorge. A perfect base as we explore Queenstown, including a cruise aboard the historic TSS Earnslaw across to Walter Peak High Country Farm. Then, it’s on to Te Anau – gateway to Fiordland National Park for an overnight stay, including a tour of the glow-worm caves, before making our way south to Invercargill.

During our 3-nights in Invercargill, we set off on a day tour to Stewart Island, New Zealand’s 3rd largest island and a haven for brown kiwi or Tokoeka, which outnumber humans on the island. We also visit the Bill Richardson Transport World, a wheeled collection that has taken nearly 50 years to amass, as well as a day trip to Bluff where we enjoy the festivities of the world-famous Bluff Oyster Festival – a day full of fun and food! We carry on through to Dunedin, where the tour concludes. A wonderful tour!

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ 2-nights Wanaka, including Jet Safari & 4WD tour
- ❖ 2-nights Gibbston Valley, Queenstown including TSS Earnslaw day trip & lunch
- ❖ 1-night Te Anau, including Glow-worm Caves tour
- ❖ 3-nights Invercargill, including Bluff Oyster Festival, Stewart Island Day tour & Entry to Bill Richardson Transport Museum
- ❖ 1-night Dunedin, including tour of Larnach Castle, Olveston Historic House & tour of the Royal Albatross Centre

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SUNDAY 16 MAY**QUEENSTOWN – WANAKA****(D)**

This morning meet with your tour group at Queenstown Airport. Departure time from Queenstown 12.00pm.

Set off by coach via the Crown Range Road to Wanaka, enjoying the spectacular scenery en route. The road over the range is the highest main road in New Zealand, reaching an altitude of 1121 metres.

Enjoy lunch (own expense) at the iconic Cardrona Hotel; Established in 1863 it is one of the oldest, most-photographed and legendary hotels in New Zealand – and well known for their scones! It is one of only two remaining buildings from the Cardrona Valley gold rush era. Its' rustic charm, dramatic mountain setting and rich history make it a must-see while in Central Otago.

Travelling on, we stop at the nearby Cardrona Whisky Distillery located in the valley of picturesque snow-capped mountains. Every aspect of Cardrona's products is of the highest quality, from the pure Cardrona Valley alpine water, the rich malted barley, the foraged ingredients to the handpicked oak casks from Spain and America. Discover the secrets to Cardrona's artisan spirits, see where the malt is milled, mashed, fermented, distilled and matured before tasting the wares with a tutored spirit tasting!

On arrival into Wanaka this afternoon, we are transferred to the Award-Winning Edgewater Resort for the next 2-nights, Wanaka's only accommodation located directly on the shores of Lake Wanaka.

Tonight, we dine together for the first time.

MONDAY 17 MAY**WANAKA****(B)**

After breakfast, we drive by coach to West Wanaka, passing Glendhu Bay to meet with the River Journeys team at the West Wanaka Bridge.

Here we board a jet boat for a trip up the Matukituki River. Travel at speed over shallow braids, drift into turns and stop in deep pools to enjoy the magic landscape & hear stories of our land from your local guides. Return to the banks of the Matukituki River to enjoy morning tea, before then setting off on a 4WD safari, travelling the private back roads of West Wanaka Station, a 30,000-acre deer farm steeped in history and bordering the majestic snow-capped peaks and glaciers of Mt Aspiring National Park.

At the conclusion of the tour, we return to Wanaka where you can enjoy lunch at the one of the many café's lining the shores of Lake Wanaka.

At 3.00pm we meet again for an afternoon cruise on Lake Wanaka. Relax in comfort as you cruise up the arm to Stevensons Island where we will make a beach landing. Your guide will take you ashore for a short hike to the summit to view the Minaret Peaks with some excellent photo opportunities (optional).

Return to Wanaka approx. 5.00pm. The evening is at leisure.

TUESDAY 18 MAY**WANAKA – KINROSS****(B, L, D)**

Following breakfast, we depart Wanaka and travel to Cromwell, situated on the shores of beautiful Lake Dunstan. Sit back and relax as you travel past well-known New Zealand vineyards such as Akarua, Pisa Range Estate Lochburn, Ata Mara, and more. We make a brief stop at the Höglund Art Glass Gallery to admire the works from Ola Hoglund and Marie Simberg-Hoglund. Their glass artwork has earned them world-wide praise and is internationally renowned and highly sought after by both public and private collectors.

When the Clyde dam was completed in 1990, Cromwell's main street disappeared under Lake Dunstan. Some of the historic buildings dating back to the gold rush of the 1860's were saved or rebuilt on higher ground, creating the Cromwell Heritage Precinct. Step back in time to the gold rush and explore heritage buildings, many with artisan businesses in them.

Lunch today will be at the world class Mt. Difficulty restaurant and Cellar Door, where you can enjoy spectacular panorama views of Bannockburn and the Cromwell Basin while enjoying a delicious meal.

We continue through the Gibbston Valley, also known as the 'Valley of the Vines' and of the most scenic wine growing areas you'll ever encounter, through to our accommodation for the next 2-nights, Kinross Cottages.

Kinross Cottages are located on the old Kinross Station in Gibbston Valley, established in the late 1860's by pioneering Otago farmer, Thomas Kinross, who ran a thriving Trading Post, farm, and gold agency on the site.

Kinross is the official cellar door for six high end, boutique Central Otago wineries - Coal Pit, Domaine Thomson, Hawkshead, Kinross, Valli and Wild Irishman. This afternoon we enjoy a private wine tasting and discover why Kinross rose to be a finalist in 2019 NZ Cellar Door of the Year Awards.

WEDNESDAY 19 MAY**KINROSS – QUEENSTOWN – ARROWTOWN****(B, L, D)**

Departing Kinross this morning, we make a visit to the Chantecler Gardens, a 40-acre property that includes 12 acres of mature gardens and nestled in the heart of the Wakitipu Basin.

At midday today, we set off on a cruise aboard the historic TSS Earnslaw across to Walter Peak High Country Farm (approx. 45-minutes) for lunch. Once at the lakeside Colonel's Homestead Restaurant, savour the delicious aromas as the chef has the best of local produce sizzling away on the grill.

Overlooking Lake Wakatipu and Queenstown's alpine scenery, the Colonel's Homestead at Walter Peak High Country Farm is the perfect place to spend a few hours. Its colonial architecture and sweeping grounds evoke the elegance of a bygone era. An entertaining farm demonstration is also included, or you can explore the beautiful lakeside gardens.

Before returning to our accommodation, we make a brief visit to Arrowtown (time permitting), a historic New Zealand treasure. Quaint and charming, the town gained a name for itself in the 1860s following the discovery of gold in the Arrow River. The heart of its history is Buckingham Street, a succession of more than 60 small-town heritage buildings and miners' cottages stretching across the tree lined avenue.

Remainder of the afternoon is at leisure before we enjoy dinner again together this evening.

THURSDAY 20 MAY**KINROSS – TE ANAU****(B, D)**

We depart Kinross this morning with a leisurely drive through to Te Anau, the gateway to the Fiordland National Park – it is 1,250,000 uninhabited hectares of stunning wilderness. Fiordland has a primeval rugged landscape, largely untouched by humans apart from incursions by tourists at Milford and Doubtful Sounds and a few fishermen in other fiords. It was declared a World Heritage Area on account of the outstanding geological features and exceptional beauty, the jewel in the crown being Mitre Peak in Milford Sound. We arrive early afternoon where we join a tour of the Te Anau Glowworm Caves. The tour begins with a cruise to the western shores of Lake Te Anau - at the entry to the caves at Cavern House, view the informative displays and learn about this geological wonder before we join our guide underground. On the tour of the caves, our friendly guides will point out the highlights and share their knowledge of the caves and its history. Deep inside the caves, beyond the roar of the water, you will be taken by small boat into a silent hidden grotto inhabited by hundreds of glowworms, unique to New Zealand. In the subterranean darkness, they produce a glittering display that is nothing short of extraordinary.

(NB: Some bending is required at the caves entrance and steps are involved)

Before dinner at a lovely local restaurant we see the Ata Whenua – Shadowland movie at the Fiordland Cinema. A 30-minute film show casing the unique beauty and remote wilderness of Fiordland from the air to the screen for all to enjoy!

Our accommodation for our overnight stay is Distinction Te Anau Hotel & Villas.

FRIDAY 21 MAY**TE ANAU – INVERCARGILL****(B, D)**

After a hearty cooked breakfast, spend the morning exploring before we depart Te Anau and rejoin our coach continuing our drive along the Southern Scenic Route. Enjoy stops at Riverton Paua shop, Tuatapere and more before arriving in Invercargill mid-afternoon and are transferred to our accommodation for the next 3-nights.

Tonight, we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

SATURDAY 22 MAY**INVERCARGILL – BLUFF (OYSTER FESTIVAL)****(B)**

This morning we travel approx. 30mins to the salty township of Bluff - home to this winter festival event, proudly brought to you by the locals of Bluff. Complementing the sumptuous Bluff Oyster is a variety of sea food - crayfish, paua (abalone), scallops, salmon, blue cod and whitebait in abundance. Local fare that will tempt any taste buds, sought after mutton bird, venison, lamb, beef and pork, which can be washed down with a great southern ale or one of the fine selections of New Zealand wines. So, grab your hat, scarf and a winter coat and join us for an event filled day, with live music and oyster competitions.

At the conclusion, we return to our accommodation in Invercargill.

SUNDAY 23 MAY**STEWART ISLAND DAY TOUR****(B,D)**

This morning we travel back to Bluff, where we join the 9.45am ferry to Stewart Island – New Zealand's third largest island! Over 85% of the island is National Park and it is a prime destination for birdwatchers and those wishing to catch a glimpse of the famous Aurora Australis which often appears in these southern skies.

We enjoy a day tour of the island, encompassing the history and beauty of the area. Don't forget to try the world-famous fish and chips for lunch! Mid-afternoon, we return to Bluff via ferry and back to our hotel in Invercargill. This evening, we dine at a local restaurant.

MONDAY 24 MAY**INVERCARGILL – CATLINS – DUNEDIN****(B, D)**

No visit to Invercargill is complete without visiting the Bill Richardson Transport World, a wheeled collection that has taken nearly 50 years to amass. Starting out as one man's passion and further developed by his family, it now includes two world class automotive museums which house hundreds of classic cars, vintage trucks and motorcycles.

After our visit, we depart Invercargill and travel the route through the Catlins, and onto Dunedin. See Curio Bay, Fossilised Forest, the Lost Gypsy Caravan, Purakaunui Falls, Owaka and more. We arrive in Dunedin this afternoon and are transferred to our accommodation for the next 2-nights. We enjoy dinner at the hotel tonight.

TUESDAY 25 MAY**DUNEDIN****(B, D)**

Today we explore Dunedin and pay visit to some of the well-known attractions including Larnach Castle and Gardens and Olveston Historic Home. We also tour the Royal Albatross Centre, the only mainland breeding colony of Northern Royal Albatross in the world. Witness the fascinating social and family life of the breeding colony, devoted parents guarding their chicks; adolescents posturing and displaying as only juveniles can, courtship proceedings, nest building and interplay. Nowhere else in the world can you enjoy the privilege of viewing these majestic seabirds in their natural environment!

WEDNESDAY 26 MAY**DUNEDIN – HOME****(B)**

Sadly, all good things must come to an end. Bid your fellow tour members farewell today as you transfer to Dunedin airport to join your flight home.

BOOKING CONDITIONS:

Deposit of NZD\$1,000.00 per person is due upon confirmation of the booking.
Final payment date: Monday 22 March 2021

COSTS INCLUDE:

Superior accommodation throughout
Meals as indicated in the itinerary
First-Class air-conditioned coach transportation for all touring
Sightseeing and entrance fees as indicated in the itinerary
Baggage handling of one suitcase per person
Gratuities and tips to local guides, coach drivers and cruise staff
Fully escorted by a Maher Tours Leader (subject to minimum numbers)

COSTS EXCLUDE:

Any meals and sightseeing tours not specifically mentioned
Travel Insurance (assistance and advice will be offered)
Items of a personal nature such as laundry, room service etc

***Flights are additional – the best available airfare will be quoted at the time of reservation to combine with this land package.**

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