



WHAREKAUHAU

PALLISER BAY EST. 1844

## 'Travel Deeper' – Wharekauhau Country Estate

*Last reviewed by Richard Rooney 16 July 2023*

***Travel Deeper* is a concept that means taking a moment to slowdown and scratch beneath the surface and understand at a much deeper level how the property fits within its ecosystem and its community. Wharekauhau Country Estate is deeply committed to, and invested in, ensuring an experience that is highly memorable, yet low impact on our natural resources**

As a company we recognise we are in a unique position to be role models, leaders and ambassadors in the community. We have the potential to inspire and strengthen our community, which is our core foundation. In addition to being role models we have the privilege of being the current guardians of this remarkable whenua (land) known as 'Wharekauhau'. We acknowledge and respect those that have come before us, and those that will experience this in years to come. We wish to be the absolute best 'runholders' of the land we can be, and to ensure all those that visit become engaged in helping us continue this legacy.

### Our Natural Environment

The natural environment that makes up Wharekauhau Country Estate is in itself a core asset to the continued growth and desirability of the destination. We proudly conduct a hands-on, and invested approach from ownership, right through to every staff member, and contractor. The property has a detailed, and ever evolving, Conservation Plan that plays a vital role in helping steer decisions and ensure we have a sustainable business model, and can continue to always stand proud and tall as guardians of the land.

- Every year we review our Estates Conservation Plan and ensure we are following the most up-to-date best practices, and ensure we are being as innovative as possible. This review is a very inclusive session that brings in members from all departments at the lodge with the one simple goal - “Always be better”
- The property schedules a minimum of one day per year, per fulltime employee, to complete tasks that benefit the environment or community
- The property operates a robust predator control plan with a focus on minimising, and ultimately eliminating species that are damaging to the natural environment, and birdlife, such as possums, stoats, rats, feral cats, hedgehogs and rabbits.
- Every year we set out to plant in excess of 500 native, or food producing, plants
- Wharekauhau is an active contributor to ‘Friends of Onoke Spit’ a group dedicated to helping preserve the bird and plant life on the Onoke sandspit located on the beach below the estate.
- All of the estates water is drawn from a natural spring that surfaces on the estate. This water is tested monthly and considered some of the purest water in New Zealand. We encourage all guests to use reusable water bottles and enjoy this amazing resource. We also operate weekly monitoring of the quantity used, and have a number of initiatives that span the farm, lodge, private real estate and staff housing in reducing water wastage, and reusing water, where possible, for irrigation.
- The property operates its own firewood programme in the winter, using fallen trees, and the removal of non-indigenous trees as a source. This provides heat at the lodge, staff housing and private residents. We then encourage residual ash to be put back into the gardens and around the orchards trees to promote growth and a better soil acid balance
- For fresh cut flowers around the estate we opt to produce and cut ourselves with plants we know grow in a sustainable quantity.
- Recycling has been a longstanding part of the Wharekauhau operation and we recycle glass, tin, aluminium, plastic and cardboard. We do not use single use plastics throughout the property. All suppliers are made aware of our initiatives, and given options to assist in reducing their disposable packaging where viable. Our glass items are crushed down to a sand-like powder and put back onto the earth where it originated

- We donate larger older, unused cans of paint to community initiatives
- The estate operates a small plant nursery where we propagate and grow native, and fruit producing trees, grasses and shrubs. Guests are encouraged to take the time to plant a tree and build their own legacy at the estate, whilst ensuring we meet our planting commitments.
- Our gardeners produce their own compost, mulch, and 'seaweed tea fertiliser' for gardens
- In-Cottage guest amenities (shampoo, conditioner, bodywash and moisturiser) are all displayed in recyclable packaging, which are refilled as needed as part of the daily housekeeping service.

### **Food & Estate Produce**

- Our culinary philosophy has core values around 'estate-to-plate' and understanding the land, and community to best reflect it in the dishes.
- All of our chefs spend 1 day per month in the garden and on the estate assisting and learning about the garden, and our produces providence.
- All of our fulltime chefs are trained in foraging the estate for non-garden item. Examples can include: Seaweed from the beach; Sea salt from the ocean; Wild herb; Wild mushrooms; Wind-felled woods to fire-up the smoker.
- Items that we cannot grow onsite are rigorously vetted to ensure they are of the highest quality, AND these suppliers have a sustainable business model. We work closely with companies such as 'Ocean Spear' & 'Tora Collective' who actively go spear fishing, diving to catch only the quantity of fish that we require from areas that are well stocked.
- Wine bottle corks and caps are recycled through local initiatives
- Vegetable oils from fryers are collected and recycled offsite
- An extensive vegetable, orchard and herb garden keep the kitchen well stocked with organic produce. Produce that cannot be used immediately is added into our preserving programme for use at a later date, or distributed amongst employees and local community.
- The property has free-range pigs and chickens, that assist in the disposal of food scrapes. These chickens also provide incredible fresh eggs to our kitchen.

- The property partners with a local beekeeping operator meaning we are producing honey from the property, and assisting with the pollination of a number of native trees

*“Be able to use such fresh produce off the land is one of the highlights for me as a chef. It strips it right back to a raw understanding of the produce, and healthy, quality raw products are a sure sign that we are doing right in our role of guardians of this land”*

*- Norka Mella Munoz (Executive Chef)*

## Our Local Community

As a company we recognise we are in a unique position to be role models, leaders and ambassadors in our small regional community, as well as the wider tourism, hospitality and farming communities. We have the potential to inspire and strengthen those that surround us through a number of give-back initiatives.

- Wharekauhau takes great time in all areas of procurement to ensure we support local suppliers and place specific emphasis on working with ‘neighbourhood’ businesses that share similar community, environmental and ethical values. Some examples of this include: Locally roasted coffee; Martinborough wine emphasis; Local family business that produces all of our crockery; Olive oil from Martinborough; Our gift shop sources products from small suppliers in the Wairarapa.
- Our uniforms are designed and handmade by ‘Mavis & Osborn’, as a sustainable New Zealand based creator and supplier of bespoke clothing that only makes only to-order, uses NZ made, and natural fabrics, and where possible recycled items such as buttons and zips, and puts a real focus on long-life sustainable clothing e.g. instead of replacing a garment they repair and re-ship – *Quality over quantity*.
- When advertising for new team members we first look to source locally, even if that means additional training.
- Wharekauhau will annually sponsor local community initiatives with a particular focus on local youth education, and culinary education.
- Wharekauhau, as a company, actively participates in, and encourages staff to participate and support, various nation-wide annual charity drives such as Daffodil Day, Pink Ribbon Breakfasts, Red Nose Day.

- Wharekauhau has been a long-time supporter of the charity 'Life Flight Trust' through annual donations, and 'on-behalf' collecting
- We collect our orchard and the local community's un-picked tree fruits (apples, lemons, feijoas, oranges etc) in late summer and produce a 'community preserve' that we gift back to the local school for them to sell to assist in their annual fundraising efforts.
- We take our community guardianship role seriously and ensure we meet regularly with the National Civil Défense organisation to ensure we can respond to assist our isolated local community during a natural disaster (Being coastal and on a fault-line we are extremely well trained in earthquake disaster assistance for our community). This also include pre-planned and trained helicopter evacuation and community food, water, shelter support in the event of. Natural disaster.

## Our People

Our team are our greatest strength, they are the beating heart of the property. The Wharekauhau Country Estate team is small and close-knit, attracting hospitality professionals from far and wide to create a remote family. Wharekauhau encourages the team to dive deeper into the property and understand it from this same Travel Deeper perspective.

- Wharekauhau Country Estate supports the growth and development of the New Zealand tourism industry by offering internship positions to students studying in the fields of culinary, hospitality and tourism.
- We set short and long-term goals that take into account not only the company's interests, but the staff members interest to encourage personal development, and longevity with the Foley companies.
- Where possible we encourage sharing our staff amongst our partner Foley properties in the US, and New Zealand.
- We pay, at minimum, the living wage to all employees of the company, and annually adjust salaries with a minimum 3% cost of living increase before we even start performance based increases.
- We have an employee that every year has the title 'Sustainability Champions' attached to their role. They are responsible for ensuring we are consistently doing our best, and looking at new ways in which we can deliver on 'always be better'. They present to

the leadership team at every meeting on how we are meeting our sustainability promises.

## Our Culture & Heritage

'Kaitiaki' is a powerful and diverse word in Te Reo Māori, meaning to care and protect, to look after people and place. Some of the earliest New Zealand records detail Cape Palliser, and Wharekauhau as bountiful food-basket areas of New Zealand with local settlement being from one of the first Waka (canoes) to arrive here in Aotearoa (New Zealand). It is our absolute promise to ensure the stories that start here, and travel forward through our farming and tourism heritage do not get lost.

- Wharekauhau is deeply committed to ensuring the 'art of storytelling' is well and truly alive to make certain that the stories, legends and traditions of those before us are never lost
- As part of our annual Conservation Plan review we bring in an outside representative of the local Māori Tanga Te Whenua (people of the land), who helps educate our guides, and hosts in traditional Māori customs and legends of the area. At the same time they help educate our culinary and garden teams in traditional growing, harvesting, preparing, cooking and preserving methods, that in turn become part of the culinary journey.
- Wharekauhau's chefs strive to incorporate traditional Māori cooking methodology, and produce, to create a sense of place and a link to the original guardians of the land.
- The rich, multi-layered history of Wharekauhau and the many characters that have spent time working the land are characterised and brought to life in the stories and legends that are told by our guides and hosts so we keep the legends alive!

***"The footsteps we lay down in the past create the paving stones of where we stand today"***

***- Maori Proverb***