

# Check-In



**HOT**

## Riwis' alpine cleanser

New Zealand's reputation for extreme activities now includes a detox spa retreat with the opening of Aro Ha, a 40-minute drive from Queenstown, just outside Glenorchy.

Based in the Southern Alps and on the shore of Lake Wakatipu, expect organic food (that's sprouted avocado benedict with cucumber lime juice cleanser and sushi cheese hand rolls), sub-alpine hikes, yoga, massage and strength training during a five or seven-day stay.

It's the small group size of about 14 on a firm schedule of activities and meals - minus caffeine and alcohol - that provides the physical and mental boost, according to Chris Madison, who with friend Damian Chaparro is behind the luxe retreat that's in the spirit of The Ashram in California.

"To look at this experience as a

little bit of yoga, a little bit of healthy eating, a little bit of massage and a little bit of hiking sounds holistically hokey and does not explain what someone takes from this," Madison says.

"There's no fluff to the bodywork, it's medicinal... if you don't get your hour on the massage table you will struggle to get through the next day of three to four hours of hiking in the mountains."

The eight-hectare property, with 11 buildings, includes a spa with hot tub, cold plunge and sauna. Retreat at day's end is in a monastic single or private eco suite kitted with New Zealand woollen rugs, natural dyed blankets and hopefully a touch of zen.

A five-day, all inclusive stay costs from NZ\$4850 (\$4230) a person. See aro-ha.com.

Jane Reddy



**EVENT**

## JAIPUR KITE FESTIVAL (MAKAR SANKRANTI)

JAIPUR, INDIA

**Why go?** Because the spectacle of colourful kites flying high above Jaipur, India's Pink City, is simply superb.

**Who goes?** Locals and tourists, plus expert kite flyers who compete for showmanship and in aerial combat

**Details** Makar Sankranti, Jaipur Polo Ground, January 14. See culturalheritagerajasthan.com/jaipur-rajasthan/kitefestival.



**DOWNLOAD**

## Q&A

**Geoff Law is a veteran Tasmanian wilderness campaigner.**

### HOTEL

I like any accommodation booked by my partner, Amanda, who has a knack for finding airy, pleasant places with friendly staff. When I book, no matter how hard I try, I end up with an over-priced, dingy room, reception staff who disappear at 5pm and a malfunctioning airconditioner.

### AIRLINE

They all seem the same at 3am - for some reason, every international flight I take is an overnighter. Are there any planes flying in the daytime? I congratulated myself recently for getting a seat with extra leg space only to find myself sitting next to a couple with an infant. But we all made friends after I let the little boy play with my empty drink bottle.

### RESORT

Stewarts Bay Lodge, Port Arthur. Magnificent views, glorious unspoilt beaches close by, an extraordinary scenic boat trip among seals and dolphins at the foot of the tallest sea cliffs in the southern hemisphere, modern cabins, and a nice restaurant.

### LUGGAGE

I use an Antler carry-on bag. It accommodates my notebook, novel, travel documents, electronic gadgetry, earplugs and toiletries with space left for clothes to help pad the laptop.

### ACCESSORY

The orange Pro-Tech earplugs are small and block out almost all unwanted noise, even the irritating "tsk tsk tsk" emanating from people's headsets.

### NEXT ADVENTURE

My next adventure will be on Tasmania's legendary Franklin River in February, where I'll be a guide on an 11-day trip with Tasmanian Expeditions on Australia's wildest river. On the way, I'll talk about the history of the epic battle to save this outstanding natural environment.

Jane Reddy