

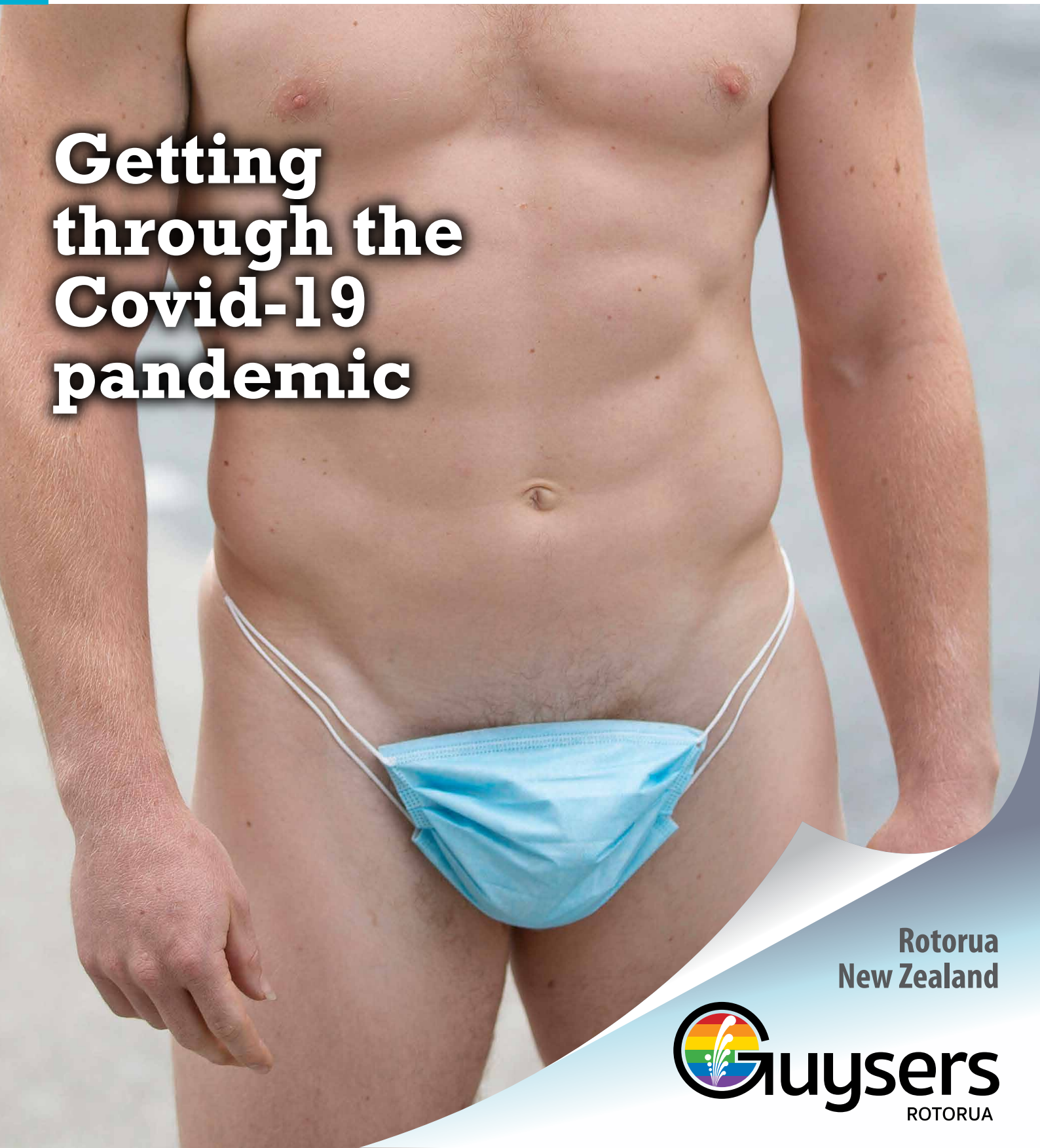
Guysers Gazette

Keeping busy during lockdowns

Ski trip to Mount Ruapehu

Getting back to nature

Rotorua's newest eateries



**Getting
through the
Covid-19
pandemic**

Rotorua
New Zealand

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Welcome

This is our first *Guysers Gazette* since July 2019. Sorry it's been a while, but Covid-19 as you know, threw a spanner in the works. We haven't had a lot to talk about or celebrate as we slowly watched our forward International bookings cancel and saw many of our tourism attractions struggling for business or closing for good.

In this issue we show you how we managed to stay sane through times of lockdown and what we've done with our time to get ready for when visitors return to New Zealand once again.

We tell you about our weekend skiing on Mount Ruapehu with friends, Mark and Sean.

Peter gets "back to nature" and goes exploring the forest at Blue Lake and swimming at Lake Tarawera *au naturell*, with naturist friend Mike Moore.

We tell you about the Maori legend of a Taniwha (legendary creature) living in the lake of Kuirau Park and the historic miniature steam train that used to be a main attraction at Kuirau Park in the good old days.

And we tell you about some of the great new cafés and restaurants that have opened in Rotorua recently. Something to look forward to as soon as you can visit us here at *Guysers B&B*.

Hope to see you soon!

Peter & Mike
Guysers, Rotorua, New Zealand

GUYERS B&B, ROTORUA, NZ

Hosted B&B for gay men

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facebook.com/GuysersGaystayRotorua



Guysers Rotorua is a member of **Gay Stay NZ**
New Zealand's LGBT
hosted accommodation
www.gaystay.co.nz

Getting through the Covid-19 Pandemic

When the World Health Organisation (WHO) announced Covid-19 an epidemic and a global health emergency on the 30th January 2020, the world was thrown into turmoil. Everyone on the planet has been affected, and now we are all hoping for some normality to life again.

On the 28th February 2020, New Zealand got its first case of Covid-19. On the 20th March New Zealand closes its borders to most foreigners (except for essential workers), and anyone returning must quarantine for 14 days in a Managed Isolation Quarantine Hotel (MIQ).

New Zealand's Tourism and Hospitality Industry which earned New Zealand around \$42 Billion dollars a year from International visitors, was suddenly reduced to a domestic market only and our national carrier Air New Zealand was losing millions and had to make huge cuts and changes across the board to stay afloat.

In Rotorua, 3 of the largest Hotels became MIQ Hotels, and 40 Motels (that's right 40!) became emergency housing for homeless people, who,

in a matter of days prior to New Zealand's first lockdown, were gathered up and placed into these empty Motel units which has now left Rotorua short of beds for visitors to the City.

Rotorua's tourism attractions have been hit hard. Most have had staff cuts, most have reduced hours or days of operation, and some have been put into hibernation or have closed permanently.

New Zealand had a growth in domestic tourism and expenditure for quite a few months only to be locked down again on the 18th August after the Delta variant found its way into the community which quickly spread into the hundreds.

Continued over...



Streets empty of cars during Covid Level 4 Lockdown restrictions



Some retail shops closed through lack of International visitors.

Keeping ourselves busy during closed border Covid times

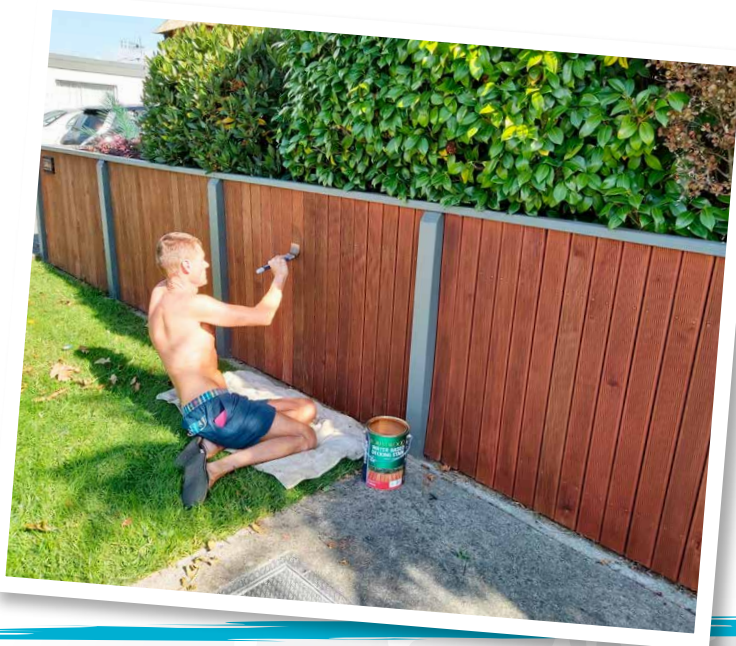
When New Zealand closed its borders to international visitors, within 3 days we lost around \$8000 of forward bookings at our B&B.

Not only that, but during times of Level 3 & 4 lockdown we cannot host domestic guests, hence we close for business. So we don't go crazy watching daytime television, getting fat on snack foods or becoming alcoholics through boredom, we made sure we had some projects lined up to keep us busy and to make further improvements to Guysers B&B.

Here are a few things we've been up to...

Re-staining the fence

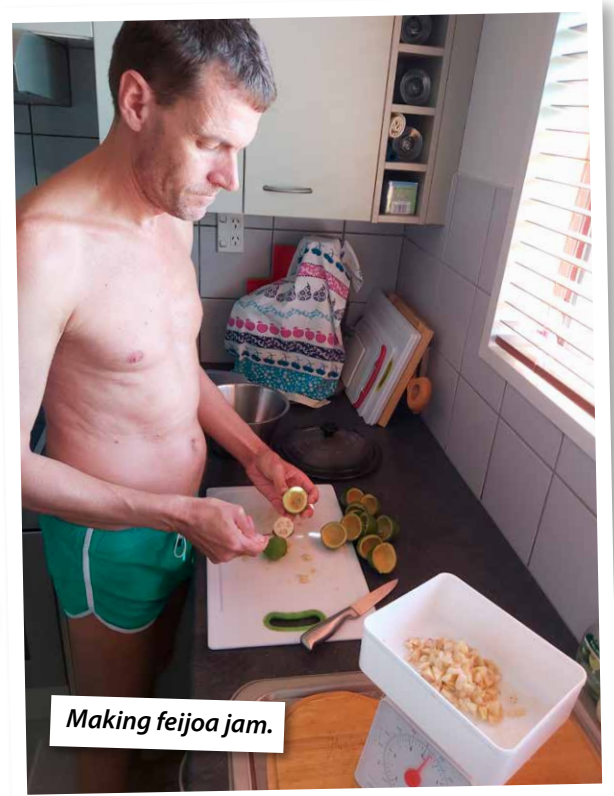
On the announcement of New Zealand's first lockdown in March 2020, we raced to the hardware store and picked up materials for several projects we wanted to do. One of these projects was to re-stain our fence. The fact it was summertime and it was nice and hot outside made doing this job pleasurable.



Making Jams & Relish

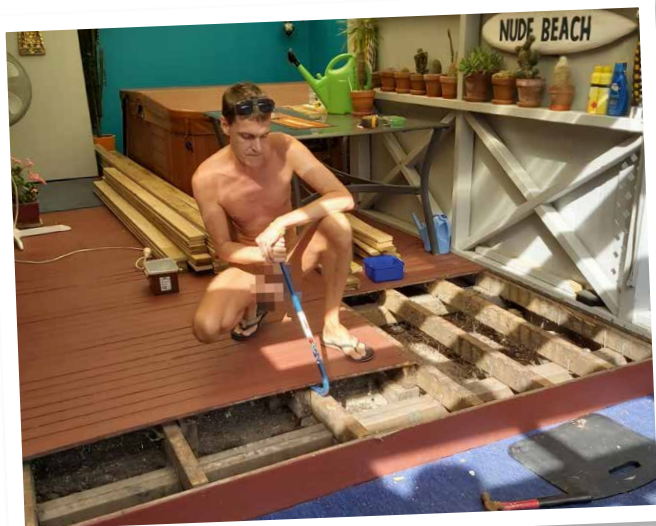
We were given a huge box of green and golden kiwifruit, so Mike made jam with them. One day at the supermarket they had 1 kilo bags of golden peaches for \$2, so Mike made jam with those and we made feijoa and ginger jam from the feijoa's growing on Mike's mother's tree.

Peter also made a delicious kiwifruit and chili relish – sweet and spicy!



Fix our back deck

We had several decking boards that had rotted and some of the foundations had gone a bit bouncy and needed strengthening, so we got stuck in by lifting up the boards (Peter taking full advantage of the gorgeous weather in our private back yard!).



Once the boards were up, we then had to strengthen some of the horizontal joists by attaching new pieces of wood to the sides of the old ones that had gone soft in places. Then we shored up the footings with new paving blocks so the deck was level and there was no more bounce on the deck when people walk on it.



Then we had to cut new pine decking boards to fit and nail those down.



Then Mike got busy painting the new decking boards to match the rest of the deck.



All finished and looking great.

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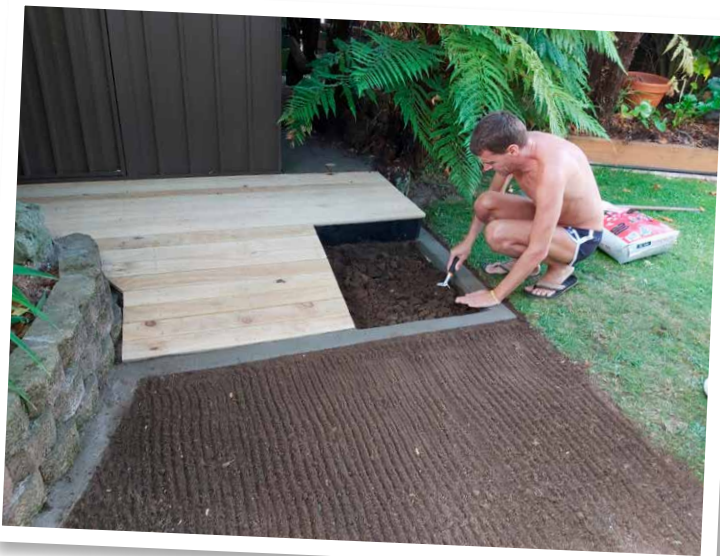
Build a ramp to shed

The shed where we keep our lawn mower had a dreadful ponga log step that was difficult to get the mower over so during the first lockdown we built a decking ramp.

First we had to construct the framework for the decking to be nailed to.



Then we nailed on the pine decking boards to the frame and created a small square garden with a concrete border/mowing strip on the corner. The dirt you see in the front was soon to have a concrete path leading to the ramp.



We planted a mixture of dark red and lime green Bromeliads into this small garden. This adds to the tropical-look garden we have tried to achieve throughout our property.



We then stained the decking boards in a rich golden brown colour. We did all the formwork for the new concrete path (see next page) creating 2 strips either side of the walkway leading to the wooden ramp which we filled with decorative black pebbles which adds contrast to the pale grey concrete. The final touch was a solar bollard light that gives off a nice glow around this area at night.



The finished result.

New concrete paths

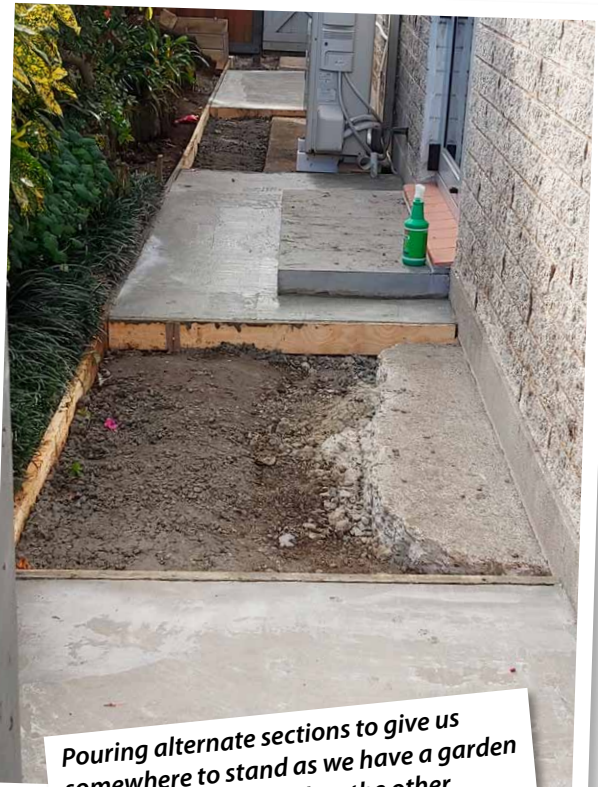
We had an issue with our old paths around the house that over many years they had slumped towards the foundations of the house, so instead of rain water running away from the house, the water ran towards the concrete foundation pad of the house.

So we had to create all new paths around the house that had a fall angled away from the house so water would run off.

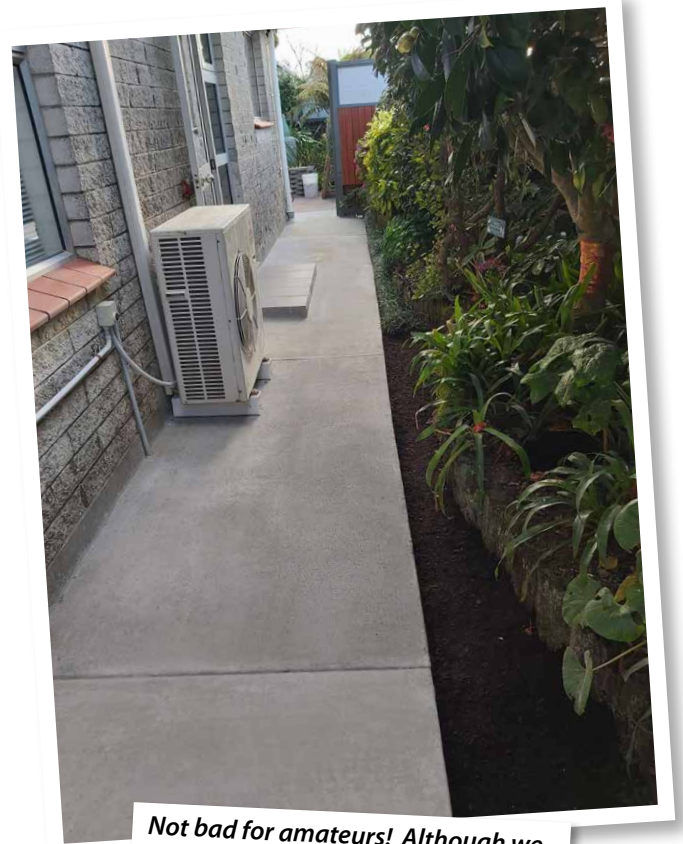
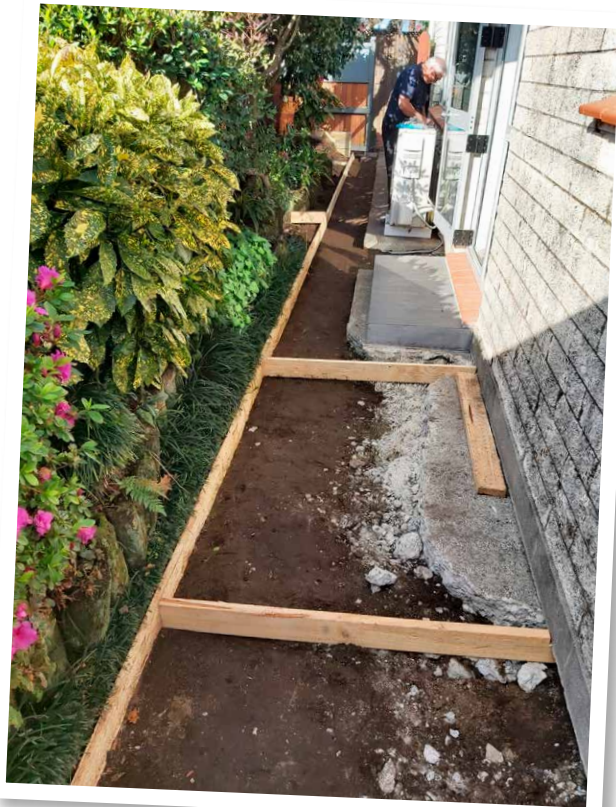
We had to start by jack hammering up the old path and disposing of all the old concrete, and creating all the boxing (wider paths than before to make it easy to walk on).

We had to do the concrete pour in two sessions, pouring alternate sections so that we had somewhere to stand to do the screeding.

Now the paths look great and are such a pleasure to walk on.



Pouring alternate sections to give us somewhere to stand as we have a garden on one side and a wall on the other.

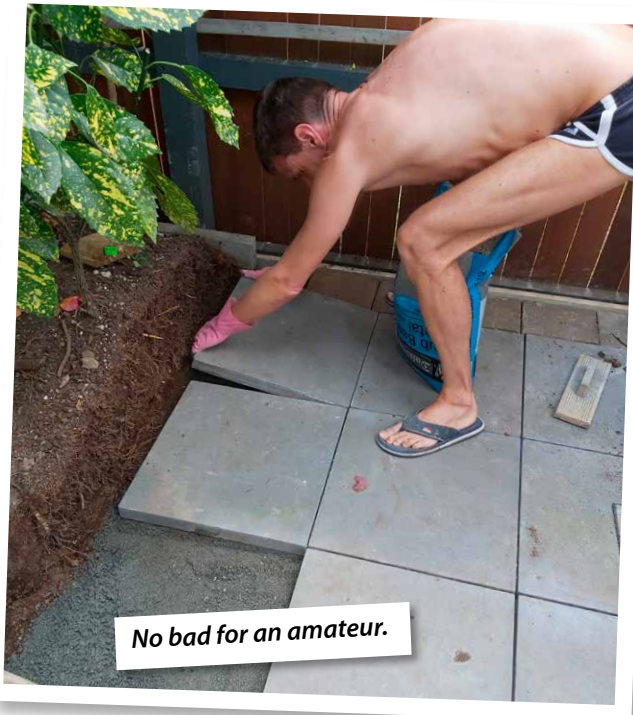


Not bad for amateurs! Although we never want to do that job ever again. Talk about hard work!

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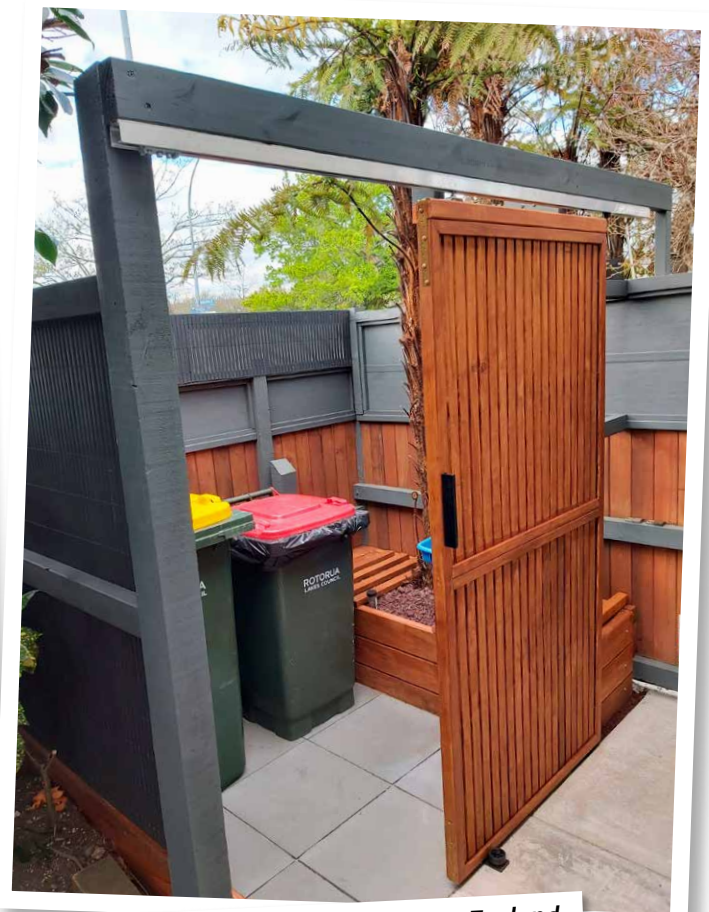
Hidden Wheelie Bin area

Wheelie Bins are really ugly aren't they? So we built an enclosed area where we can store the bins out of sight. We had to level the area by removing part of a raised garden bed, made a wooden frame, laid some paving stones, lined the framework with a plastic slat screen and built a garden box to retain the Ponga tree that was growing there.



We made a sliding door from two trellis panels and attached these to an aluminium sliding track at the top and guide rollers at the bottom.

The finished area is both functional and beautiful, hiding away those ugly bins, but still easily accessible when getting rid of rubbish or recycling from the kitchen.



LED strip light around spa pool

Our spa pool is now even sexier with an LED strip light that go around the back of the spa that shines coloured light up the walls. With a remote control we can select any colour we fancy. We now even have a shelf to place your cold drinks!



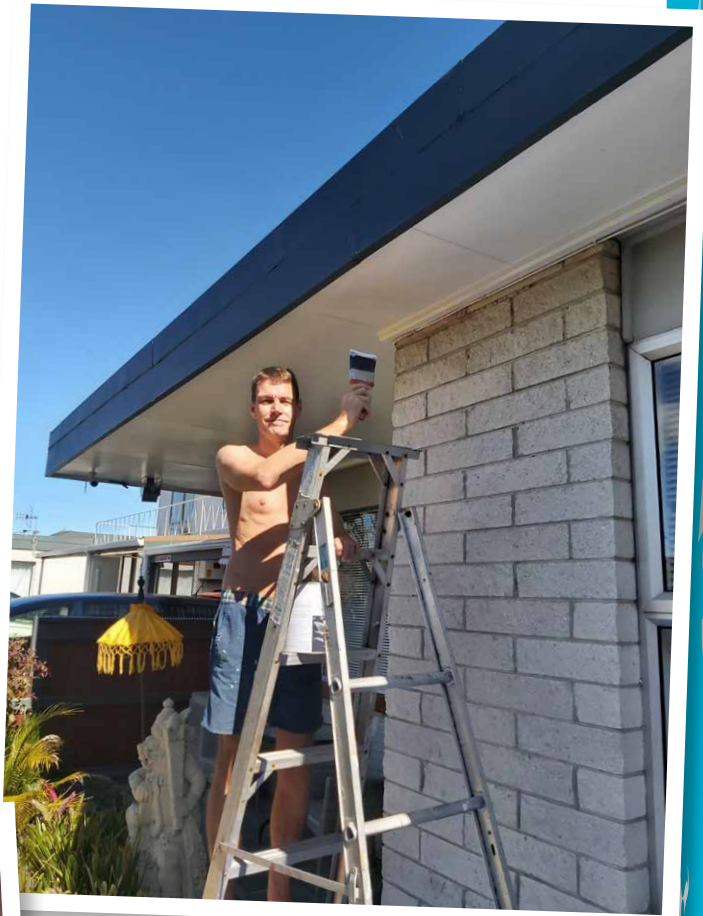
Jigsaw puzzles

On rainy days, or late afternoons, Mike's been finding jigsaw puzzles very therapeutic. They are a great time-filler and satisfying when you finish them.



Paint the eaves of the house

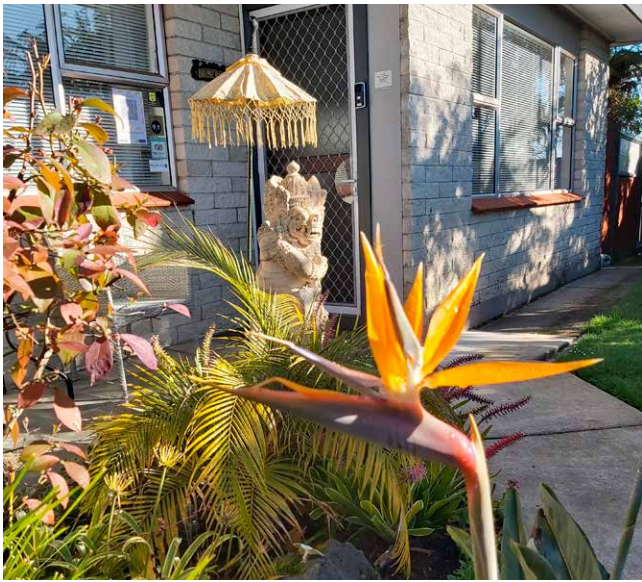
The white paint under the eaves of our house were probably last painted in the 80's, so they looked dull and grubby. So we gave them a waterblast to clean them up, then during lockdown we re-painted them with a Resene Semi Gloss white. Now they look fresh and clean and reflect a bit of light down.



So this just shows you that we've not been sitting on our arse's. We've tried to keep ourselves as busy as we can, for motivation, creativity, exercise and our mental health. Now we are just hoping the borders will open again so we can host men from overseas once again. Do come and stay as soon as you can. 🌟

Green Thumbs





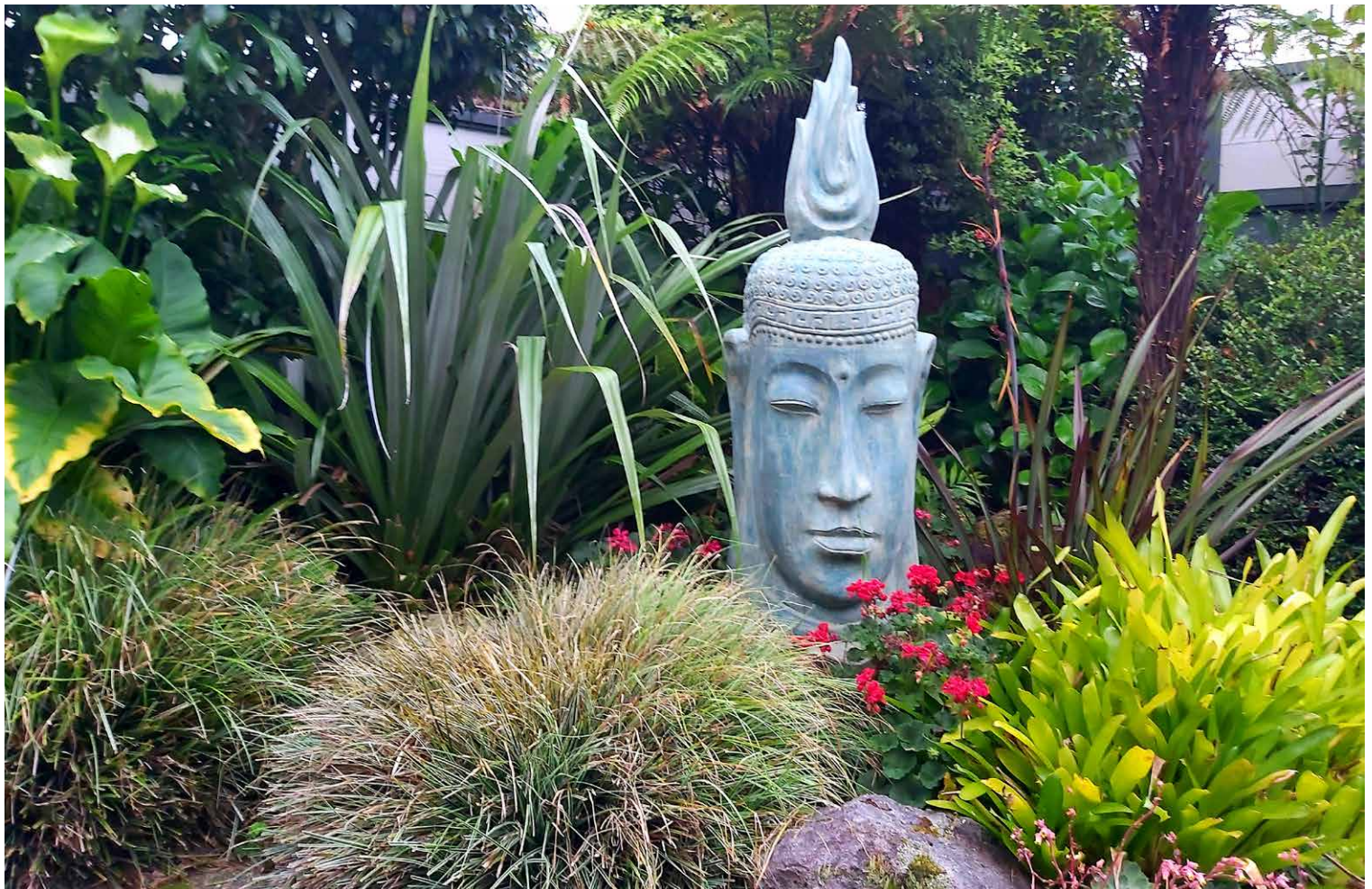
We only have a small garden at *Guysers B&B*, but what we have achieved on a small section we are very proud of. It's a tropical oasis in the centre of Rotorua!

When we bought our house in 2012, there wasn't much garden here, except for some over-grown trees, woody rose bushes and a back garden full of weeds.

Over the years, we built fences, privatised the back garden and planted numerous native and subtropical plants.

To fit with our Balinese theme, we have incorporated several Indonesian statues and Buddha heads that creates a Zen-like space and a Bali resort-like feel.

We love to work on our garden, especially in summer when things are coming into bloom. We hope that we can show it to you soon. 🌞



Tourism

Ski trip to **MOUNT RUAPEHU**





Mark and Sean, two good friends of ours from Rotorua, came with us on a ski trip to Mount Ruapehu at the National Park, Central North Island, in late July 2021.

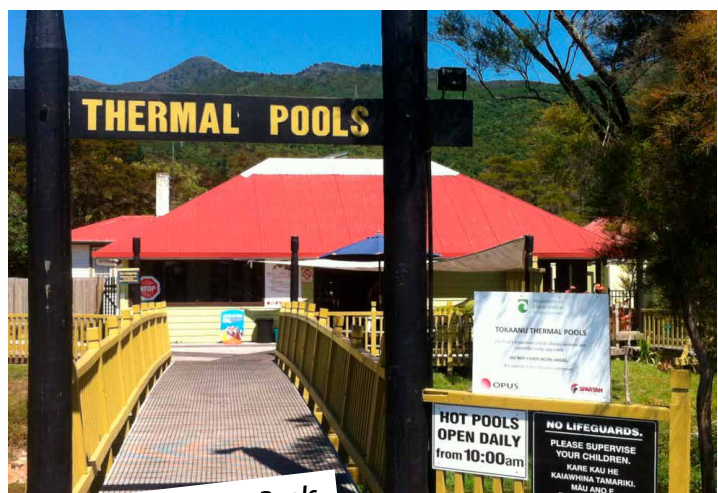
We set off early in the morning from Rotorua, taking separate cars, and met up in Turangi for a coffee in a café. The travel time from Rotorua to Mount Ruapehu is approx 2 hours 45 minutes.

Because it was still too early to check into our accommodation we decided to go to **Tokaanu Thermal Pools** which is just a 5-minute drive from Turangi township.

The pool complex has one outdoor communal pool and a dozen or so private pools of varying sizes. We've been there numerous times and always rent a private pool which means you can relax and bathe naked and not have kids splashing in your face.

A private pool is cheap at around \$10 per person for about 30 minutes, which is actually all the time you need because the water is hot and after 30 minutes you'll find you've had enough.

Continued over...



Continued...

Mark and Sean booked their accommodation at the **Skotel Alpine Resort** which sits just behind the Chateau Hotel. Mike and I got a great deal at **The Park Hotel** in National Park which is a 13-minute drive to the base of Mount Ruapehu.

We hired our ski gear from the Skotel Alpine Resort's hire shop (cheaper than on the mountain and no queues!).

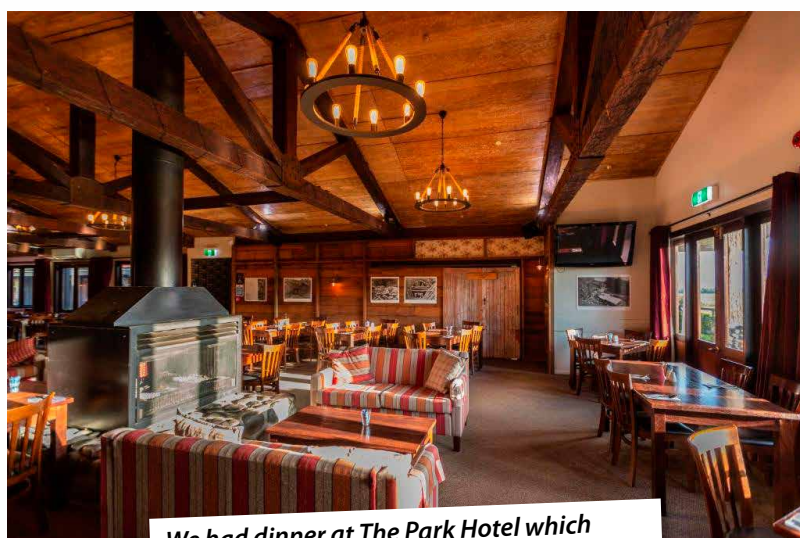
The weather on the day down at the base of the mountain started off with sleet and grey sky, but once up on the mountain it turned out to be perfect blue sky and not cold at all.

Mark and Sean organised for a 4-wheel drive bus to take us up the mountain to the **Happy Valley Ski Field** (otherwise known as the learner slopes!).

Once we got our tickets we headed down to Happy Valley, clipped on our skis and gave each other useless tips on how to ski, LOL.

Sean was not able to come skiing as he was recovering from a hernia, so he sat and observed us making fools of ourselves from the sidelines.

We all took things slow trying our best not to get too overly confident and end up breaking a leg, but we all managed several hours skiing and mastering getting on and off the chair lift and conveyer belt without any of us falling over, not even once! ❄️





SOME USEFUL WEBSITES:

<https://the-park.co.nz>

<http://edgetoedge.co.nz>

www.mtruapehu.com

www.skotel.co.nz

www.mtruapehu.com/sky-waka

www.chateau.co.nz

www.nzhotpools.co.nz/hot-pools/tokaanu-thermal-pools



VOLCANIC AIR

HELICOPTERS & FLOATPLANES



Lake Rotoiti & Thermal Hot Pools Tour with Volcanic Air

Based on the shores of Lake Rotorua, Volcanic Air offers the most comprehensive range of scenic flights and air tours in the region. Established in 1992, Volcanic Air operate a mixed fleet of both helicopters and Rotorua's only floatplanes.

The versatility of these aircraft allows us to visit remote destinations that are hard to reach by other means. Our region is unique, and the diversity of its landscape is quite remarkable. We combine spectacular scenery with informative and interesting commentaries about an area that is considered as the cultural heart of New Zealand. Look no further than Volcanic Air for the best scenic flights Rotorua has to offer.

As a result of closed borders to International visitors, we needed to come up with an affordable tour option that most Kiwi's could enjoy when they visit Rotorua. So we've come up with the *"Lake Rotoiti Thermal Pools Tour by Floatplane"* (Not mentioned on website!! - Ask for it and quote **"Tour 7A"**).

Embark with us on this relaxing 2 hour floatplane experience, departing from the Rotorua City lakefront. After taking to the skies from the water in one of our floatplanes, we'll fly you over Lake Rotorua and Mokoia Island, landing on the neighbouring lake of Rotoiti. Only accessible by water, the beautifully secluded thermal hot pools of Manupirua Bay await you.

Seemingly disconnected from the world, here you can simply relax and let your life stresses wash away. Take your time soaking, cool off in the lake, rest on a lounge, and repeat. After you have had time to relax and enjoy the thermal pools, we will lift off the water once more and bring you back to our centrally located floatplane base. 🌟



FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.volcanicair.co.nz

Current cost (as of September 2021) **\$185** per person (but confirm with Volcanic Air). Operates with a minimum of 2 people. Duration approximately 2 hours.

A STEP ABOVE





Redwoods Altitude



Looking for something exhilarating to do in Rotorua? The Redwoods Altitude is sure to please all the adrenaline junkies.

Redwoods Altitude is designed to showcase even more of the spectacular Redwoods Forest. From 25m up, you will be guided on an exhilarating journey up huge spiral staircases into the tress, along 25 Indiana Jones style jungle bridges and across 3 flying foxes!

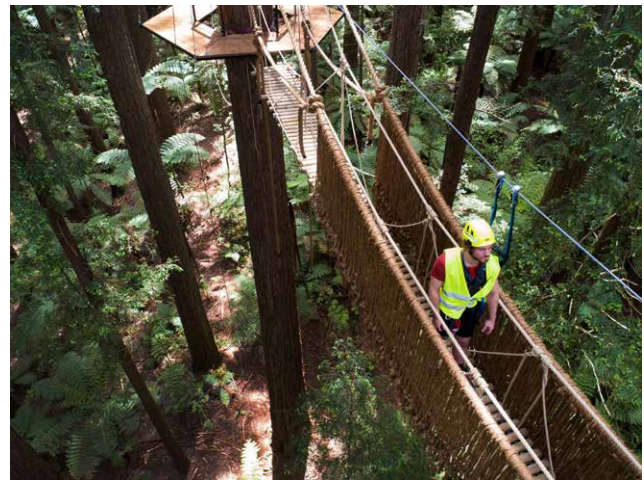
Using a continuous safety system, our professional guides will lead you around the 650m loop, ensuring your safety and comfort.

Join us as we share local knowledge and stories about the Redwood Forest history, native flora and fauna and Maori legends.

Participants must be between 30kg and 120 kg. Must be in good health, without high blood pressure, heart, back or neck problems, motion sickness, dizziness or other conditions that may be aggravated by the adventure.

Redwoods Altitude will provide you with all the safety equipment required for your trip. You should wear appropriate clothing: waterproof jacket for rain days, warm clothing for cool winter days, light layers for hot summer days, etc, and closed footwear.

Please allow 2-hours for the entire Altitude experience. 🌿



FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.treewalk.co.nz

Getting back to nature!



Plucking up the courage to take the plunge. Lake Tarawera.

On a warm summers day in 2020, Mike Moore (ex-Editor of the New Zealand Naturist Federation "Gonatural" magazine) and myself spent a lovely day at Tikitapu Nature Walk (near the The Blue Lake) and Lake Tarawera in Rotorua - *au nature!*

I've known Mike Moore for many years through friends we know in Wellington and from his time he was writing/editing and producing the New Zealand **Gonatural** magazine (for which I've also contributed articles over the years).

Mike came up to Rotorua from Te Horo and stayed with us at *Guysers* for a few days in late November 2020. It was a gorgeous sunny day, so we filled a backpack with some lunch and drinks and headed out to go exploring.

The first place I wanted to take Mike was the **Tikitapu Nature Walk**. It's a short 30 minute

loop walk and one that is relatively unknown or used (most people preferring to walk around the Blue Lake which 99.9% of people do). All the better for us, because we were able to do this beautiful native forest walk naked and really got to be one with nature!



There are beautiful trees growing in this forest.



Look out, here comes Tarzan!

This is a well-formed track over undulating terrain. It's steep in a few places but a relatively short loop that anyone with reasonable fitness can do. This track meanders through beautiful native bush alive with birdsong. Plant identification labels and story panels give detailed information about the area. Even though we walked this track naked, we did have a pair of shorts handy in the event we could any voices approaching in the distance, which never happened. Plus we were seeking seclusion, so not out to purposely offend anyone – and what a natural setting to be at one with nature!

Continued over...



You never know what flora and fauna you might see in this forest!

Bush Birds

Tawa, rewarewa and mangaro are the dominant canopy trees in this beautiful piece of indigenous forest, though you can see the occasional hinau and pukatea as well.

Feathered residents
If you are quiet and look carefully you might see some of these native birds

In the sub canopy there are karamahi, wheki, ponga, manioke and beneath them, pate, kanono, whaki, hangaranga and crown fern (on the ridges).

Grey warbler / *Pirorua*

Whitehead / *Pukatea*

North Island fantail / *Piwakaowaka*

North Island robin / *Toutoukahi*

North Island fantail / *Miromiro*

Woolly noddie / *Kereru*

Bellbird / *Kohekohe*

Department of Conservation

Environment Bay of Plenty

Department of Conservation

Continued...

Some of the birds you may see in this forest include the Tui, Bellbird, North Island Robin, Grey Warbler, NZ Fantail, Whitehead, Silver Eye, North Island Tomtit and NZ Wood Pigeon.

Then we drove down to The Landing at **Lake Tarawera**, parked the car and took the path to the left of the carpark that leads to the ancient Maori Rock Paintings (of unknown age, but were excavated in 1962).

Photo has been enhanced



Paintings depicting Maori Waka canoes during the Great Migration



Walking down a spring fed stream to a secluded beach at Lake Tarawera.



Looks like the trout got the worm!

Further around this path there is an opening in the bush that leads to a spring-fed stream that makes its way out to Lake Tarawera. We decided to strip off naked in here and walk through the shallow stream to the Lake. The sunlight coming through the trees was like a mirrorball effect and the lime green colour under the trees was vivid.

When the stream emerged at the lake we walked left until we could go no further. The final point is a secluded sand beach surrounded with foliage that provides seclusion. A nice little bay to enjoy a nude swim in the lake and a sunbathe and to eat our lunch that we had prepared.

Naturism – SUCH FUN! 🌟

History

The history of **KUIRAU PARK**

Maori Legend tells us that a beautiful young woman named *Kuirau* was bathing in the waters when a *Taniwha* (legendary creature) dragged her to his lair...

Lake Kuirau (the largest of the steaming lakes inside Kuirau Park) used to be called *Lake Tawakahu* and was said to be cool enough to bathe in.

According to Maori legend, a young lady named *Kuirau* used to swim in this lake. *Tamahika*, Kuirau's husband, said that the lake belonged to her; however, a large *Taniwha* lived in this lake in the depths below.



The *Taniwha* would watch the lady swim until he could stand it no longer, and one morning while *Kuirau* was swimming he rose up and seized her and dragged her down to his lair below.

Kuirau was never seen again, however, the Gods looking down on *Kuirau* were so angry at what just happened, they made the lake boil to kill the *Taniwha* forever.

From that day on, the lake was renamed *Lake Kuirau* in memory of the beautiful lady who used to swim in its waters.

A Maori carving depicting the *Taniwha* now sits next to *Lake Kuirau*.

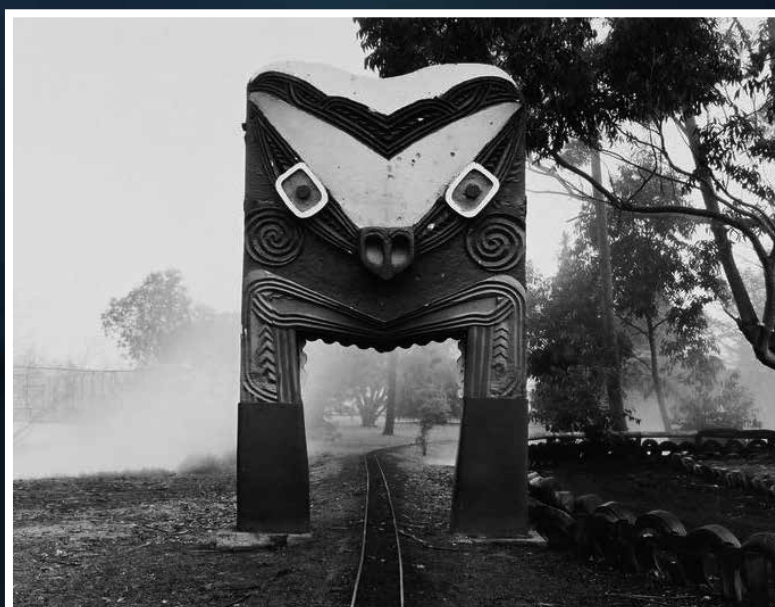
Train enthusiast J.R. Smale built and began operating the “Toot and Whistle Railway” in Kuirau Park, Rotorua, which opened on 22 October 1960.

In the good old days it was a real treat for kids and adults alike to go for a ride on the Toot-n-Whistle, one of Rotorua’s iconic tourism activities in the 1960s.

You would purchase your ticket at the little shop station, climb aboard and the train conductor would walk alongside the train, clicking your ticket with a big clicker! Then you were off, slowly at first, going under an overhead ramp where those who were left behind could wave goodbye (pictured top right).

The chugging tempo increased and the wonderful smell of the diesel steam engulfed you as the Toot-n-Whistle picked up speed. The train went past bubbling hot mud pools, and would chug along, taking its cargo of excited children (and adults) through brush and steam, past prehistoric concrete creatures and bathing hippos. The sound of the wheels alternated depending on whether you were on a bridge, on a slight rise or sailing past the station where you could wave gloatingly at the crowds as the train began its next circuit.

Oh how wonderful it was, even though it would breach a myriad of Health & Safety laws in today’s world. The train ran for 44 years at Kuirau Park before closing in 2004 due to the geothermal instability of the land. 🌋



Rotorua's Newest Eateries

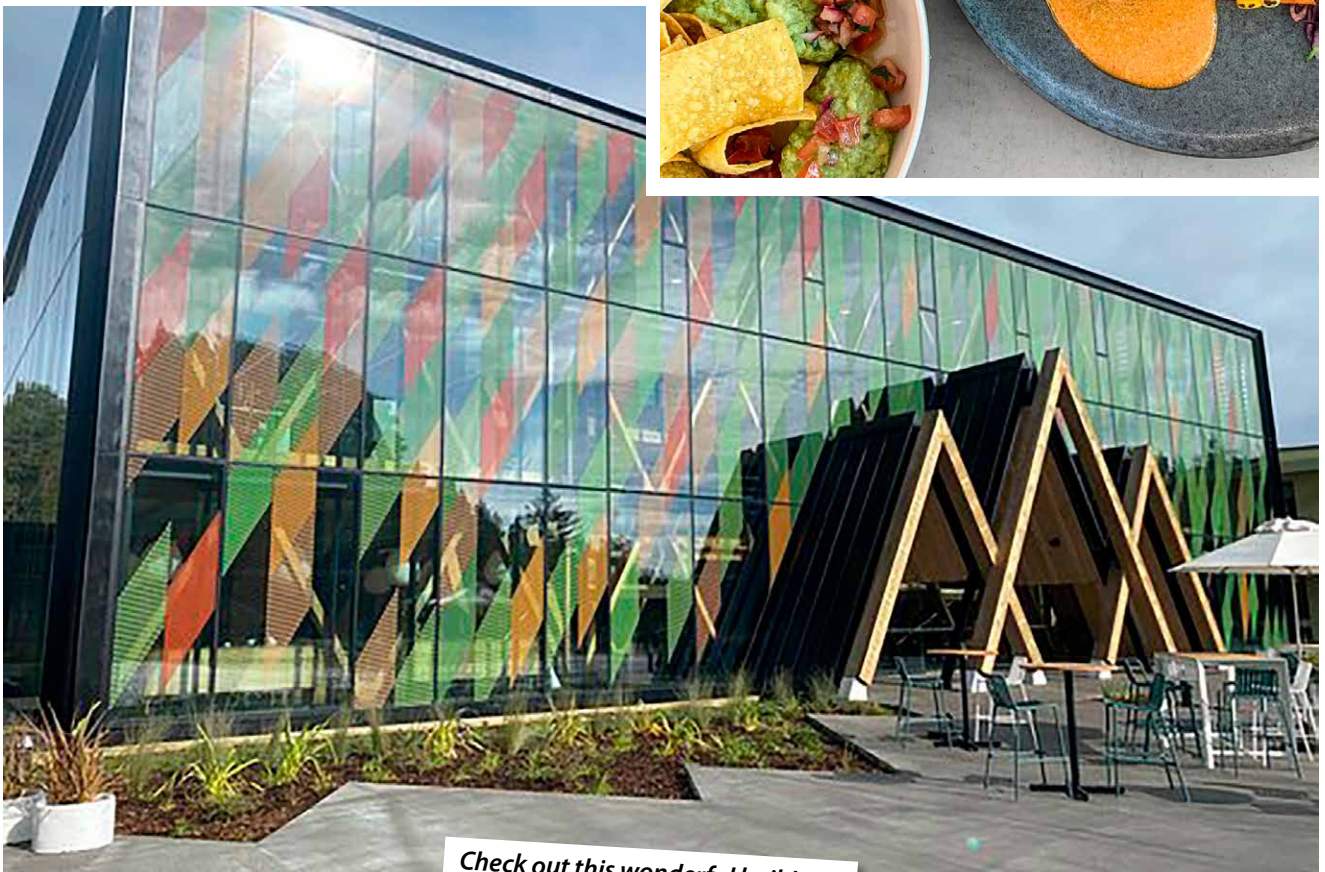
Despite the Covid Pandemic and lack of International visitors at this time, it has not stopped some business owners opening up new Cafés and Restaurants in Rotorua. Here are some new places for you to try when you visit Rotorua while staying with us at *Guysers*.

Eastwood Cafe @ Scion

This stunning building is the new entrance to Scion, our science exhibition & the delicious **Eastwood café**, serving cafe-style breakfasts, brunch, woodfired pizzas and great coffee.

Open 7 days. Access via Titokorangi Drive (formerly Longmile Rd) Rotorua.

www.eastwood.cafe



Check out this wonderful building!

Bird the Word - Fenton St

Bird the Word is a brand new, centrally located Café on Fenton Street, open Monday – Sunday 8:00am to 3:00pm. Their menu is a little limited at the moment focussing on all-day breakfast options (but that may be due to no international tourists around? Menu may change once they are busy with tourists).

<https://bird-the-word.business.site>



Located on Fenton Street.

Trail Kitchen - Waipa Valley

Located at the Waipa Mountain Bike Park, **The Trail Kitchen** is Rotorua's newest cafe/restaurant specialising in casual dining. Our food offering is a mix of gourmet sandwiches as well as *a la carte* options from our kitchen.

www.trailkitchen.co.nz



Popular with mountain bikers.

Continued over...

Continued...

The Beer Garden @ CBK

A relatively new addition to Rotorua's Eat Street complex is **The Garden Bar** which is part of CBK Restaurant. This is a wonderful place to come on a sunny day for drinks or dinner because the roof retracts right back. If the weather is not so great, the roof is closed so you can still enjoy this popular hot spot in Eat Street.

If you like your beer, The Garden Bar boasts around 60 Craft Beers!

www.cbk.nz/rotorua



Great beer, great food.



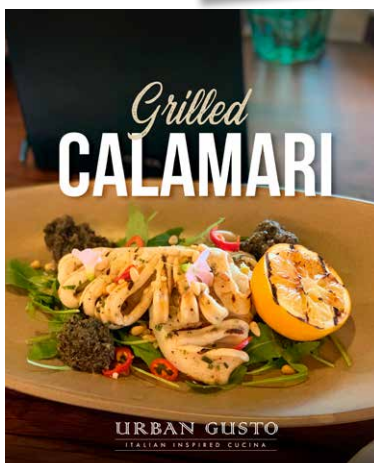
Nice atmosphere, friendly staff.

Urban Gusto - Eat Street

Urban Gusto has fast become a favourite amongst locals in Eat Street. Our concept is contemporary Italian with a touch of New Zealand. Our chefs take Italian cooking and fuse it with New Zealand flavours to create an exciting seasonal menu, delivering fresh, delicious food to your plate.

We have an extensive bar, a great pizza and pasta menu as well as delicious main options.

<https://urbangusto.co.nz>



The Fainting Goat

The Fainting Goat on Tutanekai Street opened just before the Pandemic all started, but still has a strong local following.

It's a chilled-out gastrobar that celebrates all things local. Wonderful sharing plates and platters, gourmet pizzas, cheeseboards, delicious desserts, chilled brews & a killer cocktail menu!

www.thefaintinggoat.co.nz



Number 8 Wire - Tutanekai Street

A new concept coming soon to Rotorua, **Number 8 Wire** Restaurant will be serving game meats and farm vegetables.

Irihi Walker was born and raised in Rotorua. He has extensive chef experience in hospitality. He likes to hunt and cook the game meat.

He has worked overseas for 6-7 years and has worked with some really good hospitality outlets including Novotel and Te Puia in Rotorua.

www.facebook.com/Number8wirerotorua/





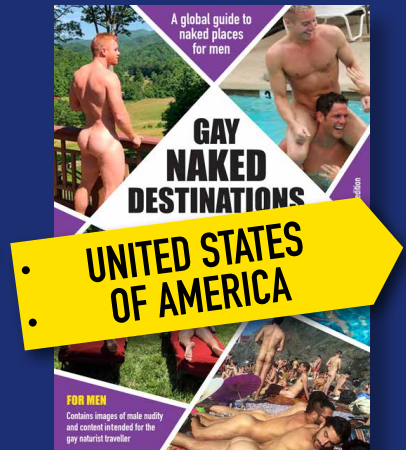
A global guide to
naked places
for men

GAY NAKED DESTINATIONS

**UPDATED
BIGGER &
BETTER!!**

GAY NAKED DESTINATIONS – a series of 5 e-books designed for gay men who like to travel light! These 5 e-books cover the world's best known travel destinations where gay men can get NAKED!


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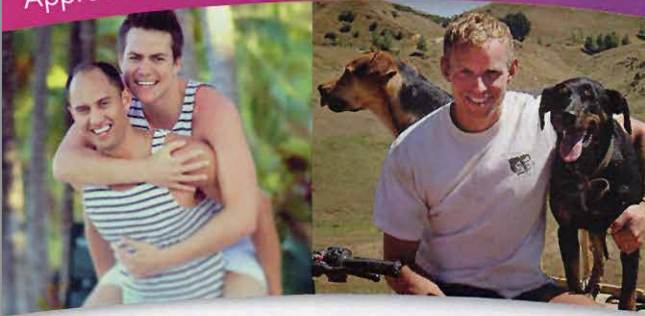


<https://gaynakeddestinations.com>




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Oh! **Naturist**

Oh! Naturist is dedicated to nature and naturism. More than 6,400 naturist friends from more than 100 countries meet, exchange and share experiences across the planet.

Oh! Naturist is truly multicultural and multilingual (English, French, Italian, German, Dutch, Bulgarian, Russian, Chinese), created by true lovers of nature and naturism who actively practice and promote the naturist lifestyle and its ethics.

The site is, and always will be free, to guarantee its independence, its quality and, most importantly, its friendly atmosphere.

ohnaturist.com



RAGS

Rotorua Area Gay Society (RAGS)
Rotorua's weekly gay men's social group

The RAGS group meets every Wednesday evening from 5 pm at a selected bar for a few drinks followed by dinner at a local restaurant. This social get-together is for both Rotorua locals and tourists/visitors alike who would like to join us.

To attend 'RAGS on Wednesdays' please email **info@gayrotorua.com** with your name and mobile number and we'll be in touch with details.



Fingers crossed we hope to host you
at Guysers B&B this summer and
throughout 2022 and beyond.

Keep safe, keep smiling
and we'll see you soon.



<https://guysers.co.nz>