

NEW ZEALAND

JANUARY 29 - BAY OF ISLANDS, END OF 5/6 DAYS AT SEA



Arrived just before dawn. A beautiful sight the islands. Anchored way out. Amazing area. Dolphins followed us into the anchorage. The pilot boat left. The orange pill boats were descending and heading into shore, Busy getting arrival dock set up.

We are up early as we have an early excursion. It should only last until about 11:00 AM and then we plan, and as a friend suggested, to take a local

ferry over to Russell Island.

They say the weather in this area could be four pronged, hot, cold, windy, wet so we tried to prepare for it all and that scenario pretty much happened in one morning.

We squeezed into the Viking tour bus and headed North to Kerikeri area, past lush beautiful manicured farm lands rich in kiwi fruit, grapes, cattle and other. It was green and pristine and not crowded, and endless beautiful rolling hills.



TOILET TOWN

Because we were on one of these stupid tours again, the first stop was a small town that the bus driver kept calling Toilet Town. I couldn't figure out if that was the real name or was he kidding. Apparently it is famous for their public toilets which an artist decided to take upon himself to make a name for himself. Unfortunately when two big buses of tourists stop to visit a toilet with what I was told was two stalls, the line was long and slow so we didn't venture in.

RAINBOW FALLS

We then headed further north and made a quick 10 minute stop to see Rainbow Falls and if you were quick enough you could use the public toilets and since we skipped the last ones, thought we'd better take advantage. I guess though we thought we were being quick we



weren't, as we were the last ones to get on the bus and everyone was staring daggers at us. The falls were beautiful though brief.



The next stop was to see the oldest building in New Zealand. I think it was a store, built of local lava stone by a land baron or something like that. I think we had another 15 minutes this time to run over and take a picture. We made sure we were back early on this stop.

SICK BUS

By the way, this bus had more leg room than Honolulu bus. So we didn't feel too claustrophobic. But we did have concerns as several people were coughing and didn't look well. One guy would cough and then put a cough drop in his mouth. I hope we don't all get sick or worse. Can't stand it when someone is

sick and exposes other unsuspecting people. Should get his own transportation. So we felt like we were in a stifling stuffy sick bus.

PAIHIA

We were glad to get back to our dock. This time Viking arranged or maybe the town arranged to run a shuttle bus for all of us to the nearby town of Paihia which they kept describing as a tourist town and almost didn't sound like it was worth going to. I thought it was a very clean, cute town with lots of shops but not in the negative way you would think when a place is called a tourist town. We immediately got off the shuttle bus and headed over to the ferry building and bought two tickets to the little colonial town of Russell across the bay.

The ferry boat was an old boat and groaned as it made it's way across the harbor. I think it secretly wanted to retire. We thought it must be fighting a strong current but, no, the caption, a young guy, said "no no current" and looked at us inquisitively wondering I'm sure as to why we asked such a question. The ferry drivers have a funny little leather shoulder purse that they use to gather and keep tickets in and also from it have the tickets to give you in another color for the trip home. They run every 30 minutes and take about 30 minutes to make their journey. We figured we had enough time for the ferry ride both ways and to find and have a nice lunch place in Russell.

RUSSELL

Russell reminds me of so many of my favorite places on the East Coast. Old colonial houses and buildings with lots of gingerbread trim. It also has the oldest church in New Zealand and its ground are filled with flowering plants and plenty of historical grave markers.

We found an old hotel right on the water front and had lunch on their veranda. We heard the fish and chips were really good so decided to treat ourselves. So good, better than that, they best we've ever eaten.

After lunch I took a little walk around. The waterfront has a nice walking path, though I saw a couple cars driving on it too. It is shaded and sheltered by these very old trees that resemble oak trees but I think they are called Australian Christmas trees which have, so I'm told, beautiful red blossoms around Christmas. I just loved this town and wished we had more time to explore but had to get back to the ship as the last orange pill boat was 5:00.

So back on the ferry, this time, with a blue ticket, (coming was an identical yellow ticket). We landed and immediately got on the shuttle bus back to the dock and onto the orange boat by no later than 4:30.





What a wonderful day and what a beautiful area. So special and love the people.

EVENING SAIL TO AUCKLAND

We were tired and headed up to the dining room later that night to have some dinner. We forgot it was surf and turf night. So we found a table out by the pool area next to the jazz band and enjoyed our dinner. Viking I have to say really does a great job to please it's passengers. All the staff is so nice and friendly and always thinking up new ways to make your trip more pleasant.

We slept like dogs again. We had another early morning.





AUCKLAND - JANUARY 30 -

The captain tip toed into the harbor, and not a sound did he make, as when we awoke, we could see a Hilton across the way. We were already docked and ready for the day.

We rushed down to get some food to hold us until lunch time and then came back and grabbed our gear and headed downstairs. It was a maze to get out of the harbor buildings: up one ramp, zig zag down another, down some stairs, down an elevator, walk the length of the building, show your ID's and then your spit out the tent to the the Viking people in red shirts with the tour signs carrying your tour number. Today we were number 2. Surprisingly everyone was in the bus already. We had followed a slow couple through the maze of getting out of the dock building and I guess it caused us to be late, again. I got in first and there were no seats except two in the very back and that was a problem as there were four of us. I thought to myself this is going to be another trip from hell on a tour bus. Larry wasn't at the bus yet and so I headed back the long length of the bus with everyone staring daggers at us presumably because we were late. I got to the back and there were only 3 seats, not four. I started to get the two that were together but it meant the other couple only had one.

STARING DAGGERS

Larry was up front of the bus and I could see him waving at me to come back and sit at the front. Forgot to tell you that two seats in the front were empty but had a reserve sign on them. I figured Larry was going to bully his way into those seats and I didn't want any more dagger stares. As by now on this trip, we've figured out that it's evident that there is a race to get the

front seats. And usually the same people get them because they make absolute asses of themselves running to be first to get them.

I could see Larry was giving me the evil eye and so I said to this couple, I have to go back, my husband is calling me. I could tell the woman was mad. She and her husband now were going to have to sit at the very back. She started to get in and banged her head really hard on the storage shelf above the seat. I asked if she was OK and she very irritatingly said "yes!" But I knew things weren't OK. So what could I do? Larry was waving to come back so I made my way back to the front and didn't dare look at anyone because now not only were we late, we also were getting the prized seats.

First stop today was a prominent hill Bastion Point owned by the Maoris with a monument to another Englishman. I could look up the history of it all and the treaty and land grab etc. but basically it's the same story everywhere, the white man got the land and then the Maori got it back in the end and now there is a monument there celebrating some white man. I was mostly



interested in seeing the view and watching the birds. We had a 20 minute stop which was generous.

Larry stayed in the bus. I think he's sick of getting in and then getting out and then getting in and then getting out of tour buses. But, actually he had a better view where the bus parked

than where the others walked too. I think more importantly he was guarding his prized seats maybe. Who knows. He would never admit it.



AUCKLAND WAR MUSEUM

Next the tour bus drive drove through downtown and to the Auckland War Memorial Museum. He was giving us history and interesting tidbits along the way but everyone in the bus was mad and yelling they can't hear anything over the motor. I guess besides good seats we got good acoustics too.

We were surprised we had an hour and a half there at the museum. It is a fabulous museum and we only explored the Maori artifact collection which is the largest in the world. They have an actual Te Toki a Tapiri, the last great Maori waka canoe. Made of a single log and measures 85 feet long. The whole collection was spectacular.

Time to get back to the bus again and head back to the harbor. We still maintained possession of the prime seats and still getting dagger stares.



“Gary”, Indian, from Punjab. He was a real character and drove us to the Parnell District which is right near where the museum even though we were just there. But there is no way to get off those buses so we just had to circle back.

Parnell is a charming area with restored colonial houses which are now upscale shops and cafes. We had lunch at a Persian cafe called Rumi. This area has all sorts of little brick paved walkway alley ways with flowers everywhere. We sat in a very narrow alley way with a nice cool breeze as it was a very hot day today. The food was so good. Spice lamb kebabs,



PARNELL DISTRICT

If you need a taxi, there are plenty waiting at the cruise ship so once we got off we got a taxi to take us to Parnell District. The taxi driver was named



rice, grilled tomato, cucumber tomato salad and for desert, saffron ice cream with crushed pistachios. So delicious!

IMPOSSIBLE TO CALL A CAB OR GET ON A BUS

After that, we walked around admiring the stores and their wares and then tried to call Gary, the taxi driver. The phone wouldn't work. We tried every which way to make to the phone work but no go. So I suggested we catch one of the city buses and just take the one that heads towards the waterfront. So we stopped at a bus stop and I asked a young guy that was waiting, "what bus we should get

to get us down to the waterfront?" Turns out he was from Toronto, Canada and has been living there for a year. He suggested the yellow line. And then off he went on the green line wishing us luck.

The yellow line bus arrived, (you have to know to wave them down or they don't stop - the guy from Toronto told us that) driver said in heavy Asian accent that we had to buy a ticket at the dairy store and pointed up the street. By now the weather is finally getting hot but not in a good way if you are wandering around not knowing where your next ride is or how you will get back to your ship. What happened to the days when you could just hail a taxi or get on a bus and give them the money right then?

I didn't see any store that said "dairy store". I poked my head into what looked like a small family run 7/11. I asked if I could buy a "bus ticket". I'm not sure what the heck the guy said



back to me but it wasn't good. He had another strong foreign accent and I couldn't decipher it. He kept pointing to his forehead motioning back and forth and then out the door. I still to this day wonder what he was trying to tell me.

This was getting exasperating and also concerning. How hard could it be to get a ride back? Larry is still fiddling with his phone trying to dial the number for Gary. I walk further up the street and into a pastry shop and explain the situation and where is the "dairy shop"?

They said I found it but apparently you have to buy a week ticket to get a bus ride and he doesn't sell those and they didn't know where to get one nearby. So much for convenient public transportation.

I told her we couldn't make our phone work and asked about dialing the country code. They didn't know but the very sweet girl offered to call our taxi guy on her phone which she did. Fortunately "Gary" remembered us and asked if we were an elderly couple. She acknowledged we were, I guess we are elderly, although I try not to think of us that way. He told her to

tell us he'd be there in 20-25 minutes.

She told us to stand by on the side street and she would text him as the time neared to tell him where we were. I bought a bottle of water and we waited and waited and waited, 45 minutes. I'm thinking he is not coming. Meanwhile the girl in the pastry shop had gone home. Finally, I see a taxi. It's not Gary but it a taxi so I do my best to wave him down. That is the first taxi I had seen in 2 hours. He turns the car around and I ask if he can take us to the cruise ship which he says yes. We get in thinking "Gary" isn't coming and just as we are in and turning into the traffic we see "Gary". He's looking for us. Gary waves the taxi driver over, they both are Indian and start jibber jabbering in Indian and obviously arguing, and the next thing is we

have to get out of the taxi and into Gary's taxi. What a circus. The girl in the pastry shop never told Gary where she told us to wait. So he was in one place and we were in another.

Anyway, thanks to Gary we got back. Larry told him the phone can't dial out so between he and Gary, they finally figured out that in NZ if a number has a + in front of it you have to hold 0 down with your finger until it turns into a plus and then you can call out. What a new world we

live in. If you don't have a phone or hook up to the internet you can't do a dam thing. I guess we will have to get with it. I still like the old days when we didn't have to be "connected" 24/7.

Gary dropped us off by the Maritime Museum as it was close to the ship. Thank goodness for Gary.

We bought tickets to see the Maritime Museum and explored that and afterwards wandered around the marina which is full of fantastic yachts and the home base to NZ Cup. It's a bustling place with lots of restaurants and people.

We finally made our way back to the cruise ship. We were hot and tired and everything hurt but we were glad that we did all that we did. We both are so impressed with Auckland, it is a beautiful city. We don't see any homeless, everything is clean and new and very up to-date, efficient and you feel safe. Everyone is friendly and nice. They are anxious to help and friendly and very energetic. I also like how active they are, everyone rides electric motor scooters. The University is right in the center of the city and is a beautiful safe campus.



JANUARY 31 - AUCKLAND - FERRY TO DAVENPORT ACROSS THE HARBOR- WEATHER PERFECT

We took our time getting up this morning as we had a long day yesterday. Our plans were not challenging, just going to take the ferry to Davenport, look around, have lunch and ride the ferry back. If we feel like it we can walk around the marina in Auckland again or just go back on the ship.

We made our way out of the ship again which is such a waste of energy for us. Out the hatch, down the ramp to the right 80 steps and then make a complete u-turn and down the ramp another 80 steps in the complete opposite direction. Then to the right quite a ways, down three flights of stairs (we took the elevator which is slower), through security check, and then a couple of football fields to finally, the street! Whew, tired before we even see anything.

We purchase ferry tickets for 32 dollars Australian and wait for the 10:00. I have had a few intestinal issues so taking it easy. The ferry across the harbor to the other side is a short 30 minute ride. It's impressive to see these modern fast ferries and how efficiently and swiftly the captains bring them in and out. Very impressive around here.

We pass Auckland's naval fleet which is pretty small and just the right size to protect probably not more than there Kiwi fruit. We walk down the long wharf, past cafes and tourist shops and to the main street that is anchored by the old Davenport Hotel. There are flower gardens everywhere and a nice tree lined park at the waterfront anchored with two very large banyan trees. It reminds me a lot of Sydney, BC.

DAVENPORT

We wandered past the little shops and eateries. Found a shop that I feel in love with and practically bought the store out. Then as the shop keeper was packaging my purchases we went to the little old hotel and had some curry, the special of the day, for lunch. Such a charming little town.

We met up with Ellen from St. George, Utah that we met days ago on the ship. Traveling by herself. Said she has been on the ferry system exploring all the little towns. I asked her what she used to do for a living and she answered she "used to put people asleep". I was taken aback and thought she meant that she euthanized people. We laughed when I





told her and she said she mostly did work on Indian nations who suffer from cleft palate. She said she has done many sex transition operations, men getting breast implants etc. Wow, that's a first for me. You just never know.

By now it was a hot 3:30 in the afternoon and decided to go back to the ship. We took a nap for a few hours and got ready for dinner. We wanted to get out on the back deck for dining tonight as the ship was scheduled to leave about 8:00 PM and it should be a beautiful evening. The sun will be setting as we leave behind the cityscape of Auckland. We also were rewarded with the sailors racing out on the harbor. Beautiful evening and ending to a great visit to Auckland.



**FEBRUARY 1 - TAURANGA, NZ -
EARLY ARRIVAL - WEATHER
PERFECT**

Got a notice last night that we would be docking early in Tauranga, about noon today and our tours will remain on schedule for tomorrow. So we have free day together to get off the ship and explore the nearby area.

The approach to Tauranga is impressive as a large volcanic projection greets you at the entrance channel. That along with two brightly color yellow and blue tugs. It's a narrow entrance for a large ship like ours and they watch you carefully, ready at any moment to push you in the right direction.

To the port side are some large buildings, probably apartment buildings and once inside the harbor entrance and to the starboard, are



pristine white sandy beaches with wind swept trees and multi color waters ranging from turquoise to deep blue defining the depths of the water.

Inside the harbor we are greeted with a long industrial dock, lined with several freighters unloading and loading. One large pile looks like lumber. The harbor goes a long way back but we are docked at the beginning.

As we come in the captain is going to make a turn to face the harbor entrance so an easy get away when we leave in two days. The tugs are busy helping, one with a line pulling us to the side on the front port-side.

We are docked now and sitting in the Explorer's lounge looking out at the magnificent volcanic peak that anchors the crescent shaped harbor. Many small sailboats are anchored out from the beach and just beyond are a row of beach houses. The shore is grassed covered with small dinghies sunbathing their bottoms on the shore. People dot the beach having picnics and enjoying a day out on the town. On the pier in front of us are several young boys having fun seeing who can make the biggest cannon ball as they jump off the docks and into the chilly water. It's like a glimpse back into time. Seagulls are floating by gliding on the winds current and surveying the setting, they don't have to make any effort battling against the winds, they just soar and float across the sky. Two little sparrows land on the bow area anxious to investigate. They first are drawn to the line of rope, a string line piled high for throwing the bow line. It almost looks like they are looking for nesting material. As one gives the line a thorough looking over the other is distracted by a nice juicy bug flying nearby. One of the birds immediately goes into action with great skill and snaps up the bug. The other looking for nesting material sees what is happening and decides to come get a bite but no the skillful hunter takes off up and over the railing and to a safe place on shore to enjoy it's meal.

I'm looking forward to going outside to walk along that happy shoreline with out the hustle bustle of tourism and city life.



We eventually leave the boat and go the short walk to the sea shore. Lots of locals out, getting fish and chips and ice cream cones and like I say many of the Maori boys are engaged in jumping off the pier to see who can do the biggest splash. We walk down the walkway along the shore and watch families out for the day, keeping a keen eye on their little ones playing in the waves. Seagulls are just as engaged and seem to enjoy the uplifting winds. The trees are large fir type trees, huge in fact, and I think are called monkey pods trees. You can hike the volcanic mountain at the end of the shore line or just enjoy the day.

Eventually we walked back and got ready for dinner. Today was my birthday and Larry made arrangements to have dinner at The Chef's table. It was a slant on spicy Chinese food with Peking duck and they made a special desert for my birthday with a champagne toast.

What a great day and beautiful place. We are looking forward to finally a private tour tomorrow. No buses.

FEBRUARY 2 - ROAD TRIP TO ROTORUA, NZ - WEATHER OVERCAST BUT PLEASANT

We were up early, grabbed some breakfast and made our way out the ship and down the dock. Today we had arranged for a private tour guide, no bus group today thank God. It will be interesting to see how this goes and if we like the guide. You have to walk a long way along the dock as usual to get past the security fence. All the tour buses for the day were lined up one after another on the dock. I felt relieved we did not have to get into one today. As we passed through the security gate our guide found us with a sign saying our name.

EH?

Not knowing what to expect, hiring someone off the internet to be guided around for one whole day, I was a bit nervous and hoping for the best. He was a tall, nice looking older man, Larry had described him as looking like Mark Harmon. Close. He showed us to his van and I could hear a radio playing. I asked what that was and he apologized and turned it off. He was listening to the news on his phone and didn't realize it was still on. He then said there is something we need to know and that was he was hard of hearing. Okay, I thought, of all the guides you could get we get the hard of hearing one. I said not to worry we were all hard of hearing so we can just talk loudly to one another.

We climbed into his roomy Nissan Van which was very comfortable and spacious compared to the buses and back of pickup trucks we've been riding in. Today he was taking us to Rotorua which is known for its geothermal pools, geysers and bubbling mud pools. Because of this natural phenomenon it's also a 19th century tourist center for spa treatments. It's also a hubbub of Maori culture. Should be interesting although we've seen a truck load of geysers in Yellowstone.

It's about an hour's drive inland from Tauranga and the drive is on their new expressway which puts our potholed highways to shame. In fact this whole area is very new and modern and clean. As we leave the city we head through lush green farming areas and grass covered rolling hills.

WHY THEY ARE CALLED KIWIS

We pass mile after mile of Kiwi farms which are very unusual looking. They are very sensitive to winds so all the kiwi fields are protected by enormously tall hedges to protect them. It is quite a sight. The kiwi's grow much like like grape vines or hops as they cling to lines and posts that the farmers have provided and it makes for one large tent like field. The structures include vertical poles with lines tied on top of the tent to the top in peaks where they train the next year's crop of kiwi to grow onto. At the end of this year's harvest the horizontal kiwi vines will be cut and the new ones climbing the tall posts will be let down to make another flat tent area and the process repeats itself year after year. They are very proud of their kiwi and will rather throw an imperfect fruit out than sell it. In fact before the fruit has halfway grown, they will remove half of it so the other half has a better chance to grow bigger and better.

CALIFORNIA PINES MAKE UP THE LARGE LUMBER BUSINESS

We begin to leave the kiwi area and slowly begin to climb in elevation passing forests of cultivated pine trees. These dense planted forests are grown to supply their large lumber



export business. As they are cut and new crop is planted with a projected 30 years span before they are cut. We passed numerous trucks carrying these large perfectly shaped freshly cut logs. The particular tree they use, he said, is from California and was chosen for its fast growing characteristics and that it also grows very straight and strong so perfect for lumber. Underneath the clerestory of tall pines is an understory of lush, enormously tall ferns.

As we make our climb through the pine forests we eventually come to the crater of the now dormant volcano which has now become New Zealand's largest lake, popular for fishing and kayaking. The surrounding area is also popular for rafting down their swift rivers that empty from it and wind their way through the hills. As we enter this area, it is not unusual to see pockets of steam emanating from the landscape which are from geothermal pools or bubblers. What we also notice is the very unpleasant rotten egg smell of sulfur that is from these geothermal pools.



TE PUIA - WHAKAREWAREWA THERMAL RESERVE AREA

Our guide has been pretty much non-stop talking during our drive and pointing out things along the way. So things are working out just fine. As we reach Rotorua area he takes us to, and I begin to cringe, a very touristy looking place. It is called Te Puia and the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute. Whakarewarewa Thermal Reserve area. We were there before the tour buses arrived so that was good.

The tour takes about 1 1/2 hr and really you are free to just wander around on your own. If you want to see what this area is about this is a good place to start. So our guide directed us in and we followed a new guide as he told us about the Maori history and influence on the area and lead us through the lush gardens. It was a bit of a walk to the geysers but first we got to

see an actual Kiwi. They are nocturnal animals so impossible for most people to see them but they had a room set up just for viewing a kiwi. It was pitch black and felt a bit like walking through a fun house, not knowing where you were walking and nor could you see anything. You have to be very quiet and turn cell phones off because any light from a cell phone will disturb them. It felt like being a blind person. We made our way through the maze of dark walls bumping elbows with strangers and then finally you came out to a very dully lit glass display where the single kiwi was. He is like the size of a round basketball but furry like a porcupine. Out of this strange little fur ball extends a long pointed beak that every once in a while he pokes around into the dirt and leaves on the ground floor, looking to find bugs.

SHOW MUST GO ON

As we made our way out of the black box building, we waited so all had their chance to see, and then headed down the path to the geysers. Fortunately or unfortunately depending on how you look at it after I tell you this part, they have a small train, like a long multi faceted gulf cart with plastic zippered side windows to protect passengers from the rain. It came up the path in connected segments much like a caterpillar and we all climbed on as it would save us the long walk to the geyser area. Larry was not even seated yet and the Maori guy driving jerked of to a start. Larry was kind of thrown into his seat but no injury but a lady ahead of us, two cars up, somehow fell off and onto the grown and the train went right over her. You could feel the bumps throughout the car as it went over her and you could hear as people screamed. I was afraid to look as surly she must be badly hurt, cut or something broken. Two people jumped out to see to her as she laid on the ground. Her pants were practically torn off. She was stunned as she laid there. They helped her up on a bench and I could not see any blood or obvious wounds. So I think she was OK, but stunned or in shock. Surprisingly, folks, the show must go on so without much delay, we were shuttled up the hill to see the next geyser blow out. And that was that.



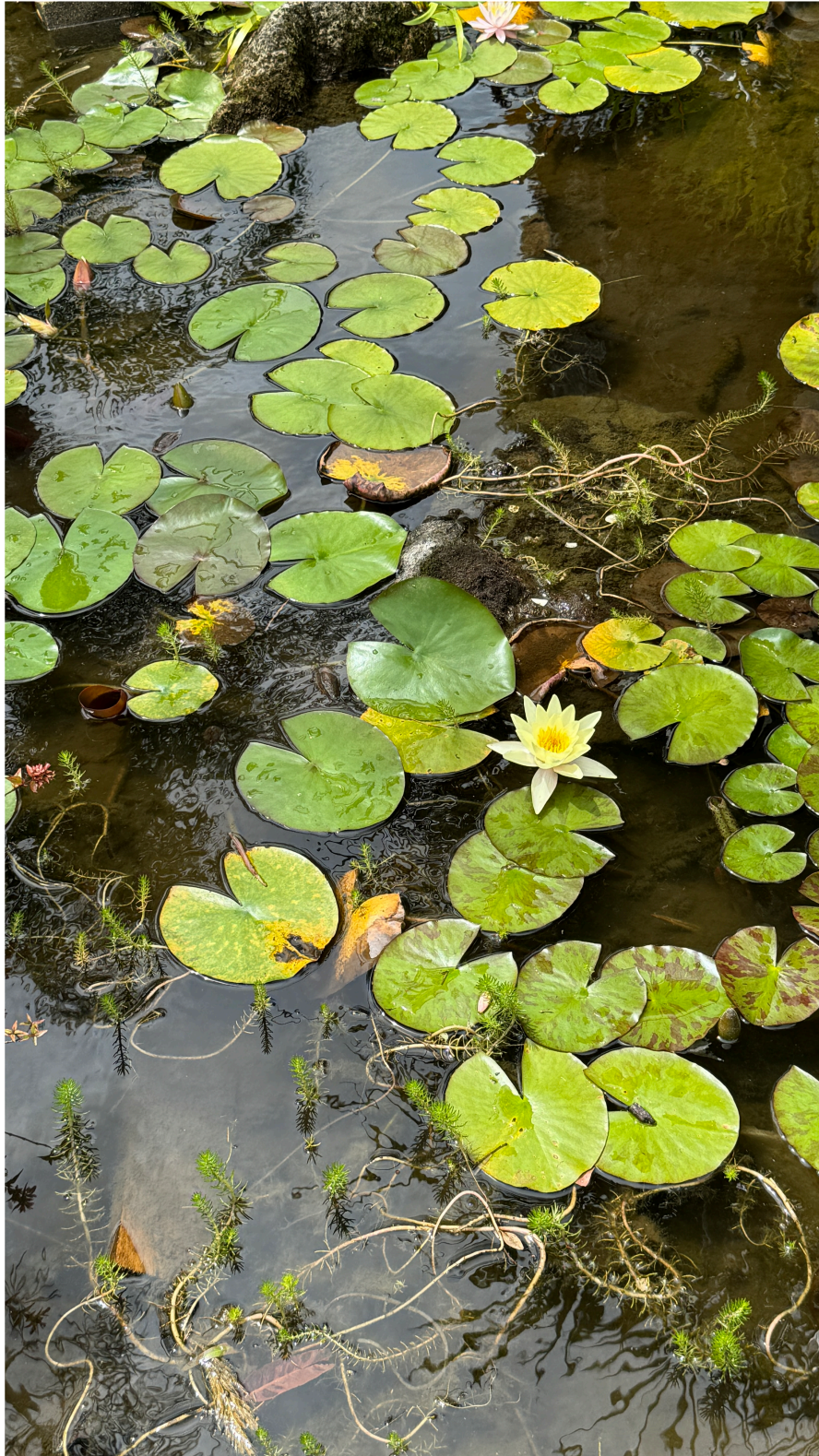
POHUTU GEYSER

The geysers, though we've seen much more impressive in Yellowstone, were still fascinating and fun to watch. They have many silica terraces and bubbling mud pools and their claim to fame is the Pohutu Geyser which is the largest active one in the southern hemisphere. After a suitable amount of time we hopped on to the caterpillar train, and this time, everyone being very careful, headed back to the entry of the park for demonstrations of the Maori crafts and later Maori dance ceremony. We headed out through the gift shop and met up with our guide who was supposed to have been waiting for us. I guess we skipped out early on the dance routine so he wasn't there at first. We had to hunt him down. He was surprised we were out so early but explained the situation with the woman falling off the tram and said things kind of went sideways after that.



LUNCH

Time for lunch. He said he wanted to take us to a little garden cafe that had good quick food so we didn't spend too much time eating. It turned out to be in a large local garden nursery



with a little cafe in the back part of the property. We were pleasantly surprised to see amazing pastries, quiches and sandwiches. It was such a great little place to go and I loved it. I had a very interesting quiche with spinach, chicken and apricots and Larry had egg custard muffin with a whole egg cooked within it.

WHANGAPITO THE “EVIL SMELLING PLACE”

Back in the van again and off to the Government Garden at the lake's edge. It's an interesting stinky area as the sulfur smell and steam from the pools permeates your skin and nose and yet contrasting the putrid smell there are green bowling lawns and gorgeous flower beds all anchored by the most amazing building, the Neo-Tudor Bath House built at the turn of the 20th century. The interior is currently closed and the locals are raising 80 million dollars to give it seismic strengthening.



Our guide gave us a drive through the town which they refer to as New Zealand Vegas but I did not find it that way at all. Looks like a charming town. He drove through various residential areas to show us that a thermal pool can and does occur all over this area, even in people's back yards. Some have taken advantage by hooking up a pump system and making their own private spa and others build concrete structures with metal grates to create cooking stoves where they put food on to stew for the day. Even driving down the road you will see steam coming up from a drainage grate

and where the heat has melted the curb.



ZORBE, THE AMAZING BUBBLE BALL

Time to head back this time on the other side of the lake. We do a quick stop to see the amazing Zorbe, a large insulated bubble plastic ball where you can climb inside and roll down the hillside.

BLACK SWANS

I spotted some black swans out on the lake and we stopped for a quick picture. The lake is actually over populated with black swans that they believe were brought from Melbourne in the 1860's. The conditions are so perfect for them they have over multiplied. It's quite the sight.

We also stopped to see some of the rafting rivers which are torrentuous, fast flowing, twisting and turning. These New Zealanders are adventurous.



Over all it was a great day. There is plenty more we could've seen in the area if only we had another day. New Zealand definitely has plenty to offer in the way of beautiful scenery.

