

# New Zealand 100% Pure



Geographically disadvantaged yet rich in cultural heritage, New Zealand has had to develop a strong tourism destination brand to increase the numbers of international visitors to its shores. Sue Warren and Wendy Thompson show how it was done.

In early 2000, New Zealand retained the America's Cup, the international grand prix of yachting. For months during the contest some of the world's most affluent individuals enjoyed the delights of the country and particularly its waters.

The America's Cup 2000 and the promise of new adventures led to the Auckland Waterfront Village hosting what was the largest fleet ever physically accommodated in one location, comprising pleasure vessels and super yachts. The staging of the event stimulated the largest urban renewal in New Zealand's history. Auckland's Waterfront Village not only takes in a mass of berths for the visiting super yachts, but also large public spaces, the bases which were home to the 11 challengers for yachting's biggest prize and an enticing mixture of facilities for visitors, including restaurants, bars and souvenir shops. Adjacent are new hotels and luxury harbour apartments, 690 in total when the development is complete.

The Village, with its innovative expression of a unique maritime heritage relooked in contemporary urban design, is currently New Zealand's most visited attraction. It attracted over three million visitors during the Cup races alone.

Through the America's Cup event itself, New Zealand demonstrated its David-fighting-Goliath ability to unite behind a cause and put together a defence against well-funded, powerful international competition.

Then there was all the associated America's Cup activity. From the start, tourism and trade interests made an effort to work together to exploit commercial opportunities. Both took advantage of the event's slipstream and the personalities at the helm of 'The Black Boat'. The Government even appointed a Minister for the America's Cup in recognition of the promotional opportunity presented to New Zealand by the staging of the event.

The results on-shore were dramatic – an upbeat mood and a reinforcement of the best of Kiwi culture. The event also gave rise to an astonishing range of new facilities, stimulated by the motivation to give visitors the time of their life as well as to capture as many discretionary dollars as possible.

## Brand development

Taking a lateral approach to destination promotion, as demonstrated through the America's Cup episode, is vital for New Zealand. Tucked away at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean, New Zealand appears a mere speck on the globe although it is about 266,200 km<sup>2</sup> (103,735 square miles), about the size of Japan or California and slightly larger than the UK. New Zealand's distance from its markets is the trouble, the one stumbling block for its marketers.

A decade ago the New Zealand Trade Development Board and the New Zealand Tourism Board (NZTB) sought to develop a definitive image for New Zealand which could be a powerful force for both trade and tourism internationally.

Research revealed that people thought New Zealand was a nice place to visit: clean, green, remote and environmentally unspoilt, with friendly people, a casual lifestyle and lots of outdoor experiences on offer. It was, however, also perceived as boring and old-fashioned, with sheep eclipsing all other features (and creatures) in the mental picture.

'New Zealand Way', a new destination brand to position the country in the global tourism market, was launched through a promotional campaign. A fern logo was developed as a new icon for New Zealand. With a clear focus and vision, the carefully co-ordinated brand promotion engineered a contemporary, exciting and alluring image of New Zealand.

New Zealand remains a small player in the increasingly competitive global tourism market, of which it accounts for a mere 0.2%. Last year the NZTB built on the initial success of the 'New Zealand Way' brand campaign, launching a new global positioning initiative called '100% Pure New Zealand' in the ongoing quest to build a clear, consistent and unique image.

The '100% Pure' campaign is now the glue for the NZTB's marketing activities under the umbrella brand 'Destination New Zealand'. The NZTB has identified the primary target audience for New Zealand as 'interactive travellers' – people who are young in body or in heart and who love travel, seek new experiences and enjoy the challenge of new destinations. Although interactive travellers constitute a tiny proportion of the world's total tourism market, their passion for travel influences the travelling habits of those around them and so, the NZTB believes, they become a highly effective word-of-mouth mechanism for the New Zealand brand.

## Blending tourism, leisure and culture

Through '100% Pure', the NZTB highlights New Zealand's natural, social and environmental diversity to appeal to a wide range of visitors. On its website, [www.purenz.com](http://www.purenz.com), the NZTB categorises the country's attractions under five headings: Wilderness, Thrill Zone, Heartland, Kiwi Spirit and Chill Out.

**Wilderness** is pitched at the nature lover. With more than a quarter of the country protected in national parks, the wilderness is always close. New Zealand's separation from other land masses for more than 100 million years has allowed many ancient plants and animals to survive and evolve in isolation. There are no dangerous animals, and with a population of only 3.8 million people, it's easy to leave the crowds behind and go mountain climbing, sailing, kayaking, skiing or volcano-watching.

New Zealand is the home of bungee-jumping and jet-boating. In Thrill Zone, extremists and thrill-seekers can experience the ultimate in these sports along with others such as abseiling, heli-skiing and caving.

**Heartland** New Zealand is for visitors interested in meeting real New Zealanders. New Zealand is a multicultural society. Many New Zealanders are of European descent, with a large proportion of these of British stock. Their forebears came to New Zealand to build a new Britain – arguably without the mistakes of the Britain they chose to leave. Indigenous Maori make up 14% of New Zealand's population. Auckland, New Zealand's largest city at 1.2 million, is the largest Polynesian city in the world.

As the Professor of New Zealand History at Auckland University, James Belich, says, 'The best of contemporary New Zealand comes from a tradition of innovation, idealism, ingenuity and adaptation that both Maori and Pakeha (of European descent) displayed.' Visitors to New Zealand can stay in 'homestays' in towns, on farms, or at a traditional Maori



community on a Marae, where they can learn about the Maori culture.

*Kiwi Spirit* is for visitors wanting to immerse themselves in Kiwi culture, be it yachting, rugby, barbecues or tasting internationally acclaimed New Zealand wines and fine dining.

*Chill Out* is the experience for those wanting a relaxing break with luxurious accommodation in a landscape that contains an unrivalled variety of landforms. In New Zealand it is possible, on a two-day drive, to witness everything from mountain ranges to sandy beaches, lush rainforests to glaciers, fjords to active volcanoes. Visitors can tramp through deep, secluded forests, test their golf or skiing skills, or fish for trout and salmon, to name but a few activities.

## Remoteness with connection

The internet is integral to the NZTB's global campaign, complementing its advertising and public relations efforts, and giving people round the world fingertip access to information about New Zealand, from exploring suggestions for potential travellers to communication opportunities for old friends wanting to hook up Down Under. The internet is also of vital importance to the travel industry, in its efforts to gather information and make bookings.

The internet's power is demonstrated through one of the South Pacific region's largest aggregated travel sites, [www.jasons.com](http://www.jasons.com). The site, Jasons South Pacific Travel Channels, contains detailed listings of operators and accommodation guides for the region, as well as a vast destination and events information database. Such is the success of the site, launched four years ago off the back of a successful publishing business, that each month the site has 200,000

user sessions, three million page views and nine million hits. Not surprisingly, the site's Travel Channel for New Zealand won the 1999 NZTB award for Media, Technology and Communications.

## Branded products, services and experiences

As a sign of its growing maturity, two years ago New Zealand opened the doors of its first truly national museum, Te Papa Tongarewa, a \$317m taxpayer-funded development on the Wellington waterfront. Te Papa is a bi-cultural museum, which tells the great stories of New Zealand in ways which are accessible and appealing to a huge cross-section of the public, both from New Zealand and overseas.

A recent article in a New Zealand magazine describes Te Papa as 'a forum – a place of pleasure and learning which tourism experts call "a destination in the new experience economy" – a paradigm shift which gives the stuffy, traditional museum image a much-needed kick up the exhibit'.

Te Papa has exceeded predicted visitor targets, clocking up 3.5 million visitors since opening in February 1998. Just under half of these (41%) were domestic visitors and a quarter were from overseas. Te Papa takes visitors inside the recurrent themes of the contemporary New Zealand brand positioning: Te Marae, the vibrancy of Maori culture brought close in a living Marae; Time-Warp, state-of-the-art time travel and virtual reality thrills, from the prehistoric to the future, from sheep-shearing to bungee-jumping; Bush City, a place for contemplative time out or high adventure; and Discovery Centres, with hands-on, interactive spaces where visitors can try

*The '100% Pure New Zealand' brand encapsulates the island's natural, cultural and sporting offers*



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*The America's Cup brought with it a host of on-shore benefits for the Auckland Waterfront*

weaving, search national collections and peer down microscopes at flora and fauna. Te Papa boasts a first-class website, [www.museum.org.nz](http://www.museum.org.nz).

For the more traditional museum-goers there are a wealth of superb regional, local and specialist museums, visited by more than 4.5 million people annually. The best of these is the stunningly refurbished Auckland Museum in the Auckland Domain.

The '100% Pure' brand conveys the image of New Zealand as a place and an ethos shaped by its inhabitants over time, and communicates the quality of leisure, culture and heritage products and services it offers. This brand provides a powerful platform for marketing the country as a tourist destination for the new millennium.

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*Te Papa Tongarewa, offering visitors a taste of all elements of the 100% Pure brand*  
Pictures courtesy of New Zealand Tourism Board

