



Morris Arboretum
& Gardens

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA



Gardens, Wine, and Wilderness

A Tour of New Zealand

JANUARY 10-28, 2026



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Take the trip of a lifetime by traveling to New Zealand with friends and members of Morris Arboretum & Gardens. Leave winter behind and head into the Southern Hemisphere for long summer days to experience stunning gardens and some of nature's most spectacular scenery. The partnership between Morris and Garden Adventures began in 1997, and this will be our tenth trip together.

ABOUT YOUR TOUR GUIDES



Richard Lyon, RLA ASLA
Garden Adventures Ltd. – Tour Leader

A native of New Zealand, Richard is well-known throughout southeastern Pennsylvania and northern Delaware where he has designed and managed installations of many fine home landscapes with Wallace Landscape Associates. For 30 years, Richard has been leading tours of New Zealand that highlight the gardens, natural wonders, and wine of this remote destination.



Alison Thornton
*Senior Associate Director of Development,
Morris Arboretum & Gardens – Tour Host*

After receiving a BS in horticulture, Alison joined the development staff at Morris in 2003. She is an enthusiastic home gardener who is always up for travel to gardens, whether near or far. Her travels have taken her to New Zealand twice on the Gardens, Wine, & Wilderness tour, making her a knowledgeable resource leading up to and during the trip.

Day 1

Saturday, January 10 Depart USA

In order to meet up with the group on Monday, January 12, select a flight with a US departure date on January 10 (or earlier). Overnight flights to New Zealand depart from many cities within the United States.



Day 2

Sunday, January 11 Travel Day

Cross the International Date Line during your flight. You lose a day, but don't worry, it will return when you cross the date line on your way home.

Day 3

Monday, January 12 Auckland (B,D)

Welcome to New Zealand! Flights coming from the US will arrive in the morning. After collecting baggage and clearing customs, a private shuttle will be waiting to transfer you to our hotel, where you are pre-registered for an early arrival. The rest of the morning is free to unpack, rest, and experience first impressions of New Zealand. In the afternoon we will visit Auckland War Memorial Museum to view Māori and Pacific Island exhibits as an introduction to New Zealand's early history. Leaving the city, we visit a true plantsman's garden, the home of Dr. Keith Hammett, who is known as a leading amaryllis, clivia, dahlia, and sweet pea breeder. We will learn and appreciate the familiar and exotic flowers in this subtropical setting. Heading inland, we then complete our day at Mincher, an expansive country garden with diverse planting styles. Here we'll enjoy a welcome dinner and become better acquainted with our fellow travelers.

Day 4

Tuesday, January 13 Pacific Coast (B, L)

Our first stop will be north of Auckland at Wenderholm Regional Park where we will experience New Zealand's wonderfully unspoiled natural scenery along the Hauraki Gulf coast. Then we'll continue traveling north to the Takatu peninsula and arrive at Omaio, the Māori word for "place of peace and tranquility." This unique venue offers stunning views, diverse native plants, and fascinating gardens. After a leisurely garden luncheon courtesy of our gracious hostess, we will stop enroute for a stroll through the subtropical Kauri Forest, where we can appreciate the native forest that once covered this land. We'll return to Auckland with time to explore New Zealand's largest city with its parks, waterfront, and restaurants. Another option for your free time is a short ferry ride to Devonport to enjoy its quaint Victorian villas and waterside cafes.



Day 5

Wednesday, January 14 Waiheke Island (B, D)

Enjoy a relaxing morning on your own. This afternoon we will take a short ferry ride to Waiheke Island, where the microclimate produces some of New Zealand's finest red wines. Our first stop is a private garden richly planted and full of sculptures by New Zealand artists. After a short bus tour of this charming island, we arrive at Mudbrick Vineyards for a wine tasting and dinner. The day draws to a close as we return to downtown Auckland by ferry.



Day 6

Thursday, January 15 South Island (B, L)

Leaving our downtown hotel, a bus ride takes us to the Auckland Botanical Gardens, designed for the gardeners of Auckland to appreciate the diverse array of plants that can be grown in this subtropical climate. After a guided tour and lunch, we head to the airport. There are dramatic differences in geology, climate, and, to some extent, culture between the North and South Islands. A direct flight from Auckland has us landing in Queenstown in the South Island. Upon arrival, we pick up our luggage and board the coach to Queenstown. We settle into this dramatic alpine resort nestled in the Southern Alps on the shores of Lake Wakatipu.





Day 7

Friday, January 16 Queenstown (B)

Today is your opportunity to explore Queenstown at your own pace. Take an exciting trip by jet boat up the Dart River into Mount Aspiring National Park—authentic “Lord of the Rings” country—or a quiet steamship ride across Lake Wakatipu, or a romantic gondola ride to enjoy stunning alpine views. Other possibilities include a visit to a spa, whitewater rafting, hiking, golf, bus tours, bike riding, and fly fishing, not to mention abundant shopping and dining options.

Day 8

Saturday, January 17 Doubtful Sound (B, L, D)

This morning, we head to Fiordland National Park in Southland, where we will take a ferry ride across Lake Manapouri. Carved by glaciers and surrounded by ancient temperate rainforests, this lake is stunningly scenic. After our ferry ride, we cross over Wilmont Pass, an incredible natural habitat that receives over 20 feet of rainfall each year. We then board the well-appointed *Fiordland Navigator* yacht for a cruise of serene Doubtful Sound, surrounded by towering peaks, cascading waterfalls, and abundant wildlife. After dropping anchor for the night, we dine on board under the stars.

Day 9

Sunday, January 18 Te Anau (B, L)

Leaving Doubtful Sound, we will return by ferry across Lake Manapouri to board our coach. Shortly we will be arriving at the charming town of Te Anau, overlooking New Zealand's second largest lake. Following lunch, we will have a guided tour through the native bird sanctuary dedicated to protecting and breeding New Zealand's most endangered species. Later, we board our coach for the return journey to Queenstown and one more night in this magical alpine resort.

Day 10

Monday, January 19 Lake Tekapo (B, L, D)

Leaving Queenstown, we head into the rugged landscape of Central Otago, passing abandoned gold fields and lush groves of apricots and grapes. Our first stop is the garden of Jo Wakelin, set into these awe-inspiring surrounds and harsh dry climate. We learn of Jo's story and her philosophy of developing a "zero watering garden." A short trip takes us to a private vineyard for wine and olive oil tasting, followed by lunch. Next, we head northeast toward Mount Cook, New Zealand's highest peak, where an ever-more dramatic landscape unfolds. Tonight, our hotel nestles on the shores of Lake Tekapo, known as the bluest lake in the country. After dinner at the hotel, relax and stroll along the water's edge.

Day 11

Tuesday, January 20 Mount Cook/Tekapo (B, D)

Today we offer you an abundance of choices, stay in Tekapo to enjoy the opportunities available, including relaxing in the thermal hot pools. Alternatively, hike the alpine trails at the foot of Mount Cook. There are many choices in hiking, and we will make recommendations based on your level of fitness. Tonight, we gather for a home-cooked meal at a charming private residence overlooking the lake. Later we take you to the nearby summit of Mount Saint John for the "Dark Sky Star Gazing" experience. Come share the stories and the science of the southern skies.

Day 12

Wednesday, January 21 Canterbury Plains/ Christchurch (B, L)

Leaving Tekapo, we descend to the Canterbury Plains, New Zealand's largest expanse of flat land, rich in European history and farming traditions. Our first stop is the homestead gardens of Akaunui, where we will learn about the farm's rich colonial past, explore the wonderful gardens surrounding the house, with lunch to follow. Next, we head into Christchurch, known as the Garden City for its wonderful parks and charming cityscapes. The evening is free to explore on your own.





Day 13

Thursday, January 22 Akaroa/Christchurch (B, L)

Departing the city, we head toward Akaroa, a quaint seaside village at the end of the Banks Peninsula. We have time for a leisurely stroll, shopping, and coffee. Our next stop is the Giants House, the home and terraced garden of artist Josie Martin. Her self-described “seriously playful” sculptures and mosaics perfectly accent the equally eye-catching plantings throughout the grounds. Leaving Akaroa, our next stop will be Fisherman’s Bay Garden overlooking the Pacific, where we will enjoy lunch. The eclectic garden features a wide variety of New Zealand native plants, particularly hebes. Upon returning to Christchurch, continue to discover this delightful city at your own pace.

Day 14

Friday, January 23 Blenheim (B, L, D)

Leaving Christchurch, we again cross the Canterbury Plains before joining the spectacular coastal highway as it hugs the Pacific shoreline. We stop for lunch at a coastal cafe, just steps away from the sand and maybe some seals for company. Winterhome, our next stop is a perched clifftop just across the road. This historic rural homestead is surrounded by magnificent trees for shade and shelter; formal gardens, avocado orchards, and a swing bridge that all add character to this wonderful setting. As we leave the coast and head inland, the landscape changes and we begin to experience the vineyards that have made this region world-famous for the sauvignon blancs and chardonnay it produces. After checking into our hotel, we will sample the local food and wine of this region.



Day 15

Saturday, January 24 Marlborough (B, L, D)

Today we experience rural hospitality and diversity of garden styles as we continue to explore this region. Our first destination is Longfield, a grand formal garden inspired by a diverse range of European influences. Our lunchtime destination is Paripuma, a stunning garden filled with native plantings and spectacular ocean views. Tonight, we continue to sample the finest wines and fresh produce of Marlborough at a local restaurant.



Day 16

Sunday, January 25
Wellington (B)

Our day begins with a visit to Welton House. This historic homestead is surrounded by wonderfully quirky gardens nestled among the world-famous sauvignon blanc vineyards of the region. A short coach ride has us arriving at the delightful port town of Picton. Here we depart on the inter-island ferry, first passing through the protected waters of Marlborough Sounds and then into Cook Straits. As we sail into Wellington, New Zealand's capital, we begin to experience this wonderful, cosmopolitan city that will be our home for the next three nights.

Day 17

Monday, January 26
Wellington (B, L)

Government House, home of New Zealand's Governor General, is our first stop today for a tour of the grounds that were extensively redesigned in 1990 to include many native plant species. We will learn about the historical role of the Governor General and how that has transitioned into today's political landscape. Then we'll head to Wellington's wonderful windswept coastline for lunch while enjoying the dramatic views. Returning to the city, we will go to Te Papa, the museum of New Zealand. Our guided tours there will focus on Māori history and culture. Spend the evening relaxing or exploring Wellington on your own.

Day 18

Tuesday, January 27
Wellington (B, D)

Today you are free to explore this enchanting city from your harborside hotel. Return to Te Papa to finish your exploration or visit the city's many museums. Ride a cable car to the top and stroll down through the botanical gardens, visit Zealandia bird sanctuary or the wild Wellington coastline. Shopping and dining abound close to our hotel, or simply stroll by the waterfront of the magnificent harbor and enjoy the city. Later today we gather for a farewell dinner to celebrate adventures shared and new friends made.

Day 19

Wednesday, January 28

Auckland to USA (B)

After breakfast you are free to explore the waterfront, relax and catch up on some last-minute gift-buying. Later, make your way to Wellington airport for a reconnecting flight to Auckland and home to the USA.



COST AND BOOKING DETAILS

TOUR PRICE: \$12,885 per person (based on 20 participants)

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$3,245

Tour price is based on 20 participants at an exchange rate of \$1NZ = \$0.65 US and includes:

- Exclusive visits to private gardens, public landscapes, national parks, cultural centers, and wineries
- Accompaniment with Richard Lyon and Alison Thornton for the full extent of the itinerary in New Zealand
- One internal NZ flight per the itinerary (coach class)
- Breakfasts (17), lunches (10), and dinners (8) per the itinerary
- Inter-island ferry service per the itinerary
- All cruises, activities, and admissions per the itinerary
- A \$1,000 donation to Morris Arboretum
- Taxes and gratuities

Price does not include:

- Airfare to or from Auckland
- Meals not listed on the itinerary
- Items of personal nature – laundry, alcoholic drinks at provided meals, excursions not included in the itinerary, etc.
- Travel insurance

To learn more or request a booking form, contact Alison Thornton via email at alisonth@upenn.edu or by phone at 215-247-5777 ext. 105.

Tour price is based on 20 travelers at an exchange rate of 0.65 USD to NZD. Tour can run with less than 20 participants but will incur a higher price per person (PP). Final price will be determined 90 days prior to departure based on group size and exchange rate at that time. Tour price includes a \$1,000 donation to the Morris Arboretum & Gardens and includes all land activities in NZ as per itinerary and one domestic flight between Auckland and Queenstown. Price does not include airfares to and from NZ or departing Wellington. Does not include travel insurance, which is highly recommended.

While no revisions to this itinerary are anticipated, Morris Arboretum & Gardens of the University of Pennsylvania, Garden Adventures Ltd., and its travel partners reserve the right to make adjustments, with or without notice, that may become necessary.