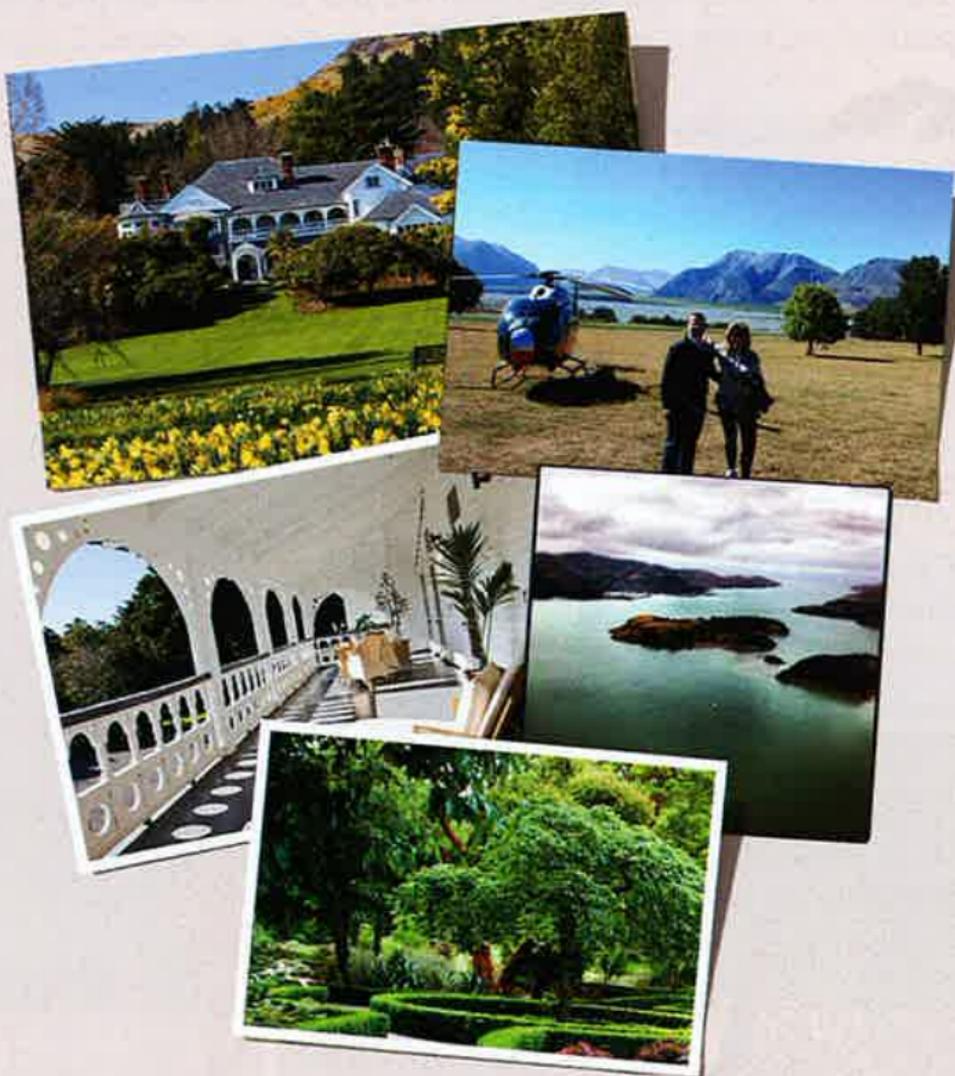


WISH YOU WERE HERE

POSTCARD FROM NEW ZEALAND

An update from Otahuna Lodge,
a seven-suite destination retreat in the
Southern Hemisphere.



Everyone knows New Zealand is famous for its lodges, but I just stayed at one that you absolutely must discover. Otahuna Lodge, 25 minutes outside Christchurch, on the South Island, is a spectacular Victorian mansion set in the middle of a 30-acre Garden of National Significance, as the New Zealand Gardens Trust describes it. One of the country's largest and most historic residences, the lodge was built in 1895 by an important local politician and horticulture enthusiast, Sir Heaton Rhodes. In the early 1900s, the property's gardens were overseen by A. E. Lowe, who had trained at London's Kew Gardens. Following Sir Heaton's death in 1956, the grounds fell into a state of neglect until 2006, when Americans Hall Cannon

and Miles Refo purchased the property and restored it to its former glory. Wow! is all I can say. Now the garden is a lovely walk of rambling woodlands, a hidden pond, an orchard and a vegetable plot. But it was from my balcony in the Rhodes Suite, the grandest of the house's seven suites, that I was treated to the greatest luxury: a view of the daffodil field, where 1.5 million blooming bulbs, arising from the originals planted years ago, paint the vista a solid yellow.

—CARLA SERSALE

DETAILS

The gardens are the best in the summer, December through February. The Rhodes Suite starts at \$1,285; 224 Rhodes Rd., Tai Tapu, Christchurch; 64-3/329-6333; otahuna.co.nz.