



Jill Worrall Tours October 2020 Newsletter

Hi Everyone

A couple of days ago I took down my 2020 wall planner, cut off the last two months and unceremoniously binned the rest of it. Then I pinned up an even bigger 2021 planner and began marking up the first two tours I have scheduled for February and March.

So, in short, that's my philosophy – nothing fancy – just look ahead with optimism. I didn't buy any rose-tinted glasses at the same time though. No-one in travel can pretend there won't be challenges next year and beyond – but then again I've never minded being in for the long haul!

On the Home Front

My garden is reaping the benefits of having an almost full-time gardener over the last months (i.e. me). It's definitely been my sanity-saver. I've just killed off some lawn for my final garden extension. I sold the idea to Derek on the grounds he will now have even less grass to mow.

I've timed it so that Jono can dig it up for me as his and Emily's new house is due to have the framing go up any time soon so I'm making use of the extra labour while it's still living on site! I'm now helping them with a design for their garden. Rachel and Atkins are also on the move, they've just bought a bigger house just around the corner from their present first home. That garden is a blank canvas too so I will be on plant relocation duty soon.

Natey, who will be two in January, is with us two days each week. He's a vehicle enthusiast (diggers and trucks especially) and we're lucky that in Leeston we have so many friendly drivers who obligingly honk and wave when we're out on spotting missions. We go to a music and dance class one morning a week in a hall on our heavy truck bypass so he insists we stop whatever activity we're doing to admire any passing vehicles. He also has his own mini soccer goals at home too – with a father, uncle and step-grandfather all soccer enthusiasts that was inevitable!

Derek is fine. A number of tour members (especially the men!) have been asking lately how he is managing with me at home so much. He's fine, honestly. The twitching and babbling is now well under control with medication. He still runs an eye over my writing, including this newsletter. He sought me out to ask if I really was promoting "love on the wild side" (see the North Otago West Coast itinerary). It has now been changed but then I did wonder if in fact it might have been something of a marketing goldmine!

Where I am going next

Yes, I am actually going somewhere, and the first trip even involves a flight across the Pacific! By the time you are reading this I will be packing ready to head to the Chatham Islands with the first of two groups. There are 18 people (divided between a Christchurch

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and an Auckland departure) going with me to explore this far-flung part of New Zealand. I am beyond delighted that so many people are coming and that everyone is so enthusiastic about being on the move again.

One week after returning from those two tours I'm taking 13 more people on my Deep South tour to the Catlins, Stewart Island, Fiordland and the Mackenzie Country. Can't wait to get on the road again for that tour either!

I will be posting photos from these three tours on my Jill Worrall Tours Facebook page and any especially good shots on Instagram so if you want to follow us, do check those out.

And now to 2021

At the time of writing the situation overseas is at best uncertain and at worst, well, worse. However, as Moray, James and I are confident the New Zealand-Australian travel bubble will get sorted and quarantine-free travel will eventuate, I'm now in the process of finalising my 2021 Australian tour programme. I have five great tours planned, beginning in April. All the details about these tours will be announced in my November newsletter, including the rescheduled dates for the two tours I've already told you about – Tasmania and Western Australia.

February and March 2021

I have two tailor-made, exclusive New Zealand Jill Worrall Tours ready to go for 2021.

The first is the rescheduled Far North Tour, which originally was going to be run in 2020 but just as we started to promote this the second Auckland lockdown struck!

So, if the lockdown stopped you from booking last time, or the dates didn't suit you, do contact Moray for the Far North itinerary, which is now scheduled for February 16 – 25, 2021.



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The Far North Tour

The tour will take us on a loop around Northland, heading up the west coast via Matakoho and the Hokianga, right up to Cape Reinga and then back down to the Bay of Islands, down to Whangarei and even out to Kawau Island.



Tour highlights include:

The Kauri Museum at Matakoho

Tane Mahuta and a night-time kauri Waipoua forest tour

4WD trip on Ninety Mile Beach and up to Cape Reinga

The Kawakawa heritage railway and famous Hundertwasser loos

Kerikeri's historic Stone Store and Kemp House

Bay of Island Cream Trip Cruise

Guided tour of the Waitangi Treaty Grounds

Russell and the Secret Highway

Whangarei region gourmet food tour

Kawau Island Royal Mail Run cruise and Governor Grey mansion guided tour



The Central Otago and West Coast Tour

March 5 – March 18

This tour took weeks and weeks of planning and organisation as it's exclusively a Jill Worrall Tour and absolutely packed with highlights. Even if you have travelled through some of these locations before this tour will almost certainly show you places and offer experiences you have never done before.

Here's a brief outline of the day-to-day itinerary:

March 5 Christchurch to Ranfurly

En route we will visit Geraldine, Timaru's Te Ana Maori Rock Art Centre, see the wallabies of Waimate, Duntroon's Vanished World Centre for Fossils, cross Dansey's Pass in Central Otago and end the day in the Rural Art Deco capital of NZ, Ranfurly.

March 6 Ranfurly to Clyde

We have a full day among Central Otago's iconic landscapes. We'll start the day trying curling in Naseby, have a lunch break in St Bathans with its gold rush-era buildings, visit Oturehua's Hayes Engineering Works (home of 19th century inventor Ernest Hayes), see the Poolburn Viaduct and taste some Central Otago pinot noir before reaching Clyde.



March 7 Full day in Clyde area

There are options today for walking, biking (conventional or e-bike) along the famous Central Otago Rail Trail or a 4wd expedition into the Old Man Range.

March 8 Clyde to Glenorchy

After a visit to the Otago Goldfields Centre in the Kawarau Gorge, we will stop in Arrowtown, take a lunch break in Queenstown, and then head up to one of my favourite places in all of NZ, Glenorchy.

March 9 Glenorchy to Wanaka

We spend the morning on the Dart River Jet's Wilderness Experience – this is the only operator allowed to work on the Dart River and the boat ride will take us deep into the Mt Aspiring National Park. We'll then head back down the road beside Lake Wakitipu and cross over the Crown Range to Wanaka to visit the National Transport and Toy Museum – one of the largest private museum collections in the world.

March 10 Wanaka to Haast

We'll have a leisurely drive through the beautiful Haast Pass and then head down the road towards Jackson Bay to Waitotō River where a jet boat adventure into the Haast World Heritage area and a gourmet BBQ will be waiting for us.

March 11 Haast to Franz Josef

Heading right into Worrall family territory today! We will be driving up one of the most spectacular coastal roads in the world, stopping at Fox Glacier township to visit Lake Matheson (where those famous views of the Southern Alps with luxuriant rainforest in the foreground are often shot), then on to Franz Josef.



March 12 Franz Josef

We have a guided glacial valley walk today and the rest of the day is free for you to go birdwatching, take a scenic flight, go kayaking, or even Heli hiking on the glacier.



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March 13 Franz Josef to Punakiki via the Hokitika Wild Foods Festival

Today's the day for you to try wild pork, whitebait or, if you want to live on the wild side, mountain oysters and huhu grubs. There are local tipples on offer too and non-stop musical entertainment. We will have plenty of time here before we head north again to our resort accommodation right beside the Tasman Sea at Punakaiki.

March 14 Punakaiki to Karamea

We'll walk to the legendary blowholes and Pancake Rocks this morning, then go north to Westport to visit the Coaltown Museum and learn about the famous Denniston Incline before driving up to this sub-alpine plateau to see this historic mining area for ourselves. Our destination for the day is Karamea, the sub-tropical region almost literally at the end of the West Coast's state highway network.

March 15 Karamea

We have a full day in the area today to visit the Oparara basin and the stunning arches and caves along with the Kohaihai Bluff at the southern entrance to the Heaphy Track. Groves of nikau palm grow beside the river that empties into the tumultuous Tasman Sea.

March 16 Karamea to Reefton

We're bound for the West Coast's only inland town, Reefton. A former gold rush and later coal town, Reefton has had something of a renaissance in recent years. If you haven't been here for a while you will be amazed/ We're going to visit the Bearded Miners, this afternoon and possibly check out the new distillery shop.

March 17 Reefton to Christchurch

We head back to Christchurch this morning through the Lewis Pass with an extended lunch break in Hanmer Springs (there will be time for a quick dip in the thermal pools).

March 18 The tour ends in Christchurch after breakfast.

The tour includes several two-night stays (Clyde, Franz Josef and Karamea), and a well-balanced mix of included and independent meals. It's a cracker – so do join me. Contact Moray for the full itinerary and booking information. Numbers are limited on this tour, so don't miss out!

I'll be back in November with a report on the Chathams and more details on what's planned for the rest of 2021.

Stay safe and sane!

Jill