

QUEENSTOWN

Our Memorable Experience



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Alan & I were invited recently to spend a few days staying with long-time friends in their new holiday home in Queenstown.

A brief history outlines that Queenstown is nestled on the banks of Lake Wakatipu. Its Maori name is Tahuna. The town is settled at the lake's edge surrounded by scenic mountain ranges in particular "The Remarkables". The Wakatipu Basin was created by glacial movement some 15,000 years ago. Maori presence dates back around 700 years. The treasures of the area were the huge, flightless *moa* birds and the jade rock known as *pounamu* or *greenstone* which was found there.



Queenstown nestled on the banks of Lake Wakatipu

The first European settler was Scottish born Nathanael Chalmers who arrived in 1853. A few years later William Rees and Nicholas von Tunzelmann settled on the shores of the lake. After two years of peaceful farming the Gold Rush turned the area into a shanty town; Rees was paid out handsomely by the ruling government to abandon his land to allow for the new settlers. Around 5000 Chinese workers settled in the district in the late 1800's. The old Chinese goldmining settlement of Arrowtown has been restored as an historical attraction.

By the early 1900's the gold was mostly gone & the miners 'followed the colour' to different fields. The population of thousands dropped to less than 200.

By the mid 1900's Queenstown had gained its reputation as one of New Zealand's favourite holiday destinations. The tourist industry boomed.

Upon our arrival in Queenstown we were taken to another historical mining town called Clyde. On the way, we saw many small hydro-electricity stations taking advantage of the ever-flowing water supply. These passed over the well known Shotover River. At Clyde there was a charming day spent at the 'food & wine festival'. It was a perfect day & the town although slightly isolated was full of music, lots of young people who were students from the local Polytech college, tasty food and lots of wine tasting from local vigneron. A touch of home for us Hunter Valley people.



Millbrook Golf Course clubhouse area

Over the next two days Alan and our host were privileged to play the beautiful Millbrook golf course. The girls spent the day at Arrowtown exploring the quaint historical gold mining cottages now enjoying the benefits of retail.

The following day the boys played golf at Jack's Point, which is unique as golf courses go. This area is now a 1200-hectare (3000 acre) settlement in one of the most spectacular landscapes in the world.

Set on the shores of Lake Wakatipu at the foot of the Remarkables mountain range it is just 15 minutes from Queenstown, New Zealand. Maori legend has it that initial explorers thought Lake Wakatipu was part of the sea but upon discovery of fresh water it was named Wakatipu-wai-maori (fresh water Wakatipu).



Jack's Point golf course set at the foot of the Remarkables mountain range

Another Maori legend has it that in 1862 Maori man Jack Tewa was sailing with two Europeans when their boat capsized due to a squall. Jack managed to rescue one of the Europeans and on foot reached a station 30 miles away to gain help. He was awarded a medal from the Royal Humane Society. The location of the capsizing was in the vicinity

of Jack's Point and it is believed to be named in his honour for his feat of strength and courage.

In 1999 Dickson Jardine sold 420 hectares (1000) acres to Jack's Point Limited as a future new settlement. In 2008 the 18 hole par 72 championship course was designed by Darby Partners, Queenstown.

This course presents a challenge afforded by few and probably conquered by even less. However, when the opportunity presents good golfers are not going to pass this one by.



Beautiful golf courses in spectacular scenery

The temperature was very kind with a high 19°C most days. We managed to fit in some of the top food spots and were amused at the never ending queue for a "Ferg Burger". The steam boat "The Earnslaw" was also a moving sight chugging over & back daily from Queenstown to a large sheep station & restaurant.

On our last day our hosts kindly drove us to Glenorchy where again we were mesmerized by the continuing scenic lure of a landscape surely befitting the movie from the novel by JRR Tolkien "The Lord of the Rings". The mountainous, snow-capped Franz Josef Glacier far in the

distance proved captivating. Majestic, mysterious, eerie & exhilarating are some of the adjectives that come to mind.

Short but so sweet, satisfying & uplifting. We felt very pleased and privileged to have this opportunity.

