


LIVE WELL

Find respite in body, soul and spirit
at these luxurious New Zealand resorts.

By GRACE MA



New Zealand may be more well-known for its adrenaline-pumping adventures, but it also has a quieter side where you can release negative vibes and recuperate in mind and body. Strolls into stunning sunsets? Check. Delicious fine dining without the sinful calories? Definitely possible. Soothing

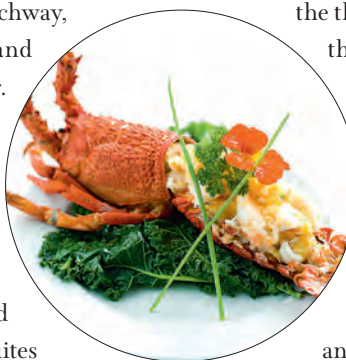
therapeutic treatments? But of course. Ground the hassle of planning even nearer to zero by engaging an efficient travel planner to arrange the ground transfers.

My trip to Helena Bay Lodge and Split Apple Retreat, for example, was arranged by luxury tour operator Lightfoot Travel (www.lightfoottravel.com).



SPLIT APPLE RETREAT

Step through the ancient temple archway, up a foliage-lined pathway and sound the gong at the front door. Thus begins the journey to well-being at the Japanese-styled home of American doctor Lee Nelson and his Thai wife chef Anne Pen Lee, located on the northern coast of South Island. Zen moments abound in the three beautifully furnished suites and cosy nooks decorated with items from the couple's personal artefact collection. Pen's culinary magic makes every dish a guilt-free gourmet trip, from organic yogurt and fruit-filled buckwheat crepes for breakfast to a five-course dinner tasting menu that includes Moroccan-style lamb chops. After



Split Apple is renowned for its gourmet Asian-Mediterranean fusion cuisine.

the three-day Taste of Wellness programme that included daily meditation sessions, spa treatments and a hike in Abel Tasman National Park, I emerged glowing from well-kneaded tendons, a clearer head, and – if the scales in the sauna room are to be believed – 500g lighter. Tip: save the massage for after the hike. Remedial therapist Emma is an expert in a wide array of treatments and I fell into a deep slumber under her deft hands. Sweat it out in the infrared-red detox box, then take a cold shower and jump straight into the outdoor heated pool to enjoy a breezy soak with panoramic views of the shimmering Tasman Sea – the perfect salve for weary souls. splitapple.com

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