



of native bush and features waterfalls and three private beaches.

Room rates include pre-dinner drinks and hors d'oeuvres, gourmet a la carte dinners and full breakfasts. Dinners highlight Northland seafood and New Zealand lamb and beef. Lodge facilities include a fully equipped fitness room, tennis courts and a heated swimming pool.

Kauri Cliffs offers customised tours to various Northland wineries as well as jet boating, parasailing, horse trekking, four-wheel-drive adventures, sea kayaking, fishing, diving, pheasant and boar hunting, and various other less exhausting activities. There's an on-site health spa.

Suite prices start from \$NZ675 per person, with the owners' cottages starting from \$NZ3200 per night, although seasonal specials are offered from time to time.

For bookings phone (09) 407 0061 or see <www.kauricliffs.com>.

SAVOUR THE SKILL OF A MASTER CHEF

GEOFF Scott, one of New Zealand's leading chefs, visited Australia earlier this year to present at the Hilton Brisbane Masterclass Weekend and brush up on his knowledge of Australian wines. Diners can expect to see more of labels like Giaconda on the wine list at Vinnies, the Herne Bay fine diner where Geoff took over as owner and chef in mid-2005.

Geoff trained in London under Albert Roux and Nico Ladenis then worked in



Milan, Provence, Paris and in Monte Carlo for Alain Ducasse. He was executive chef at the Auckland Hilton Hotel's White Restaurant on Princes Wharf before achieving his "culinary dream" by taking over one of the city's leading lights.

"As chef my focus is naturally enough in the kitchen," he says. "Having cooked in some very famous European restaurants under some truly great chefs I am able to draw on knowledge of many traditional and modern techniques to take the fresh and vibrant flavours we are blessed with in NZ and deliver exciting flavour, texture, fragrance and colour."

Vinnies offers the choice of two menus, a seasonal menu featuring the finest local, seasonally available produce, and a degustation menu that interprets a regional or national food style.

Dishes may include the likes of smoked salmon parfait with warm brioche toasts

and citrus salad (\$22), or seared hapuku fillet with smoked marlin mash, slow-roasted fennel and pernod cream sauce (\$34).

Vinnies Restaurant is at 166 Jervois Rd, Herne Bay. It's open for dinner Tuesdays to Saturdays. For bookings phone (09) 376 5597.

TEMPTING TASTES OF THE FARM

MATAKANA is a small village near the slightly larger town of Warkworth. The pair are at the epicentre of the Matakana Coast wine region, which is about an hour's drive from Auckland. The region is known as Auckland's 'fruit bowl' and is also home to a weekly farmers' market that draws gourmets from far and wide.

It's a relatively small market with around 30 local growers and food producers selling fresh fruit and gourmet, organic and spray-free vegetables and myriad other products: Swiss organic chocolate specialities, eggs, jellies and preserves, chutneys and pickles, olive oils, breads, speciality meats, honey, and flowers.

There are stalls serving hearty country breakfasts and musicians perform on the riverbank. The market is open on Saturdays from 8am-1pm in summer and 9am-1pm in winter. Phone (09) 422 7503 or see www.matakanacoast.co.nz.

Left: Kauri Cliffs Lodge and Golf Course.
Centre & right: Vinnies Restaurant.
Below: Matakana Farmers market.

Opposite page. Above: Carrington Lodge.
Below: Mudbrick vineyard and restaurant.