

travelnews

WHERE TO BE & WHAT TO SEE AROUND THE WORLD

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HOTEL OPENINGS

KIWI SPOTTING

Introducing New Zealand's prettiest new beach babe. **WAIHEKE ISLAND** It's Auckland's answer to Montauk: an island playground a short hop from the city where beaches, boatsheds and freshly minted millionaires' weekends share space with rolling farmland, wineries and olive groves.

And now there's The Oyster Inn, just open in Oneroa village and putting a contemporary spin on the humble "bach" – the Kiwi version of the coastal shack.

Owners Jonathan Rutherford Best and Andrew Glenn turned their backs on their high-profile London jobs (in events management and fashion PR, respectively) to travel the world. They clocked an abandoned restaurant in the heart of Oneroa, and the adjacent former offices of the *Gulf News* weekly newspaper, and hatched the plan to develop a restaurant/bar and inn in the spirit of the Hamptons – accessible and relaxed, yet still with a hint of edge.

"We were drawn to the beautiful beaches, the island's wonderful wine, and also the ease of getting to and proximity to Auckland," says Hong Kong-born Glenn. "Not many cities can boast such gorgeous islands on their doorstep. After leaving an often wet, rainy and cold London, Waiheke ticked all the boxes. And we love the island lifestyle."

The new inn is a multi-tasker: all-day restaurant and bar; cool boutique, and three very good-looking guest rooms, with a vibe that's warmly rustic and slightly retro.

Guests take the 35-minute ferry ride from Auckland to Matiatia Wharf, where they're collected in the Oyster's bright-yellow vintage Kombi.

Chef Cristian Hossack was coaxed back from Peter Gordon's *Providores* in London to head up the restaurant (and takeaway fish and chip shop), whose simple menu features beachside-appropriate oyster rolls and tarakihi sliders.

The guest rooms are likewise pared-back in mood – whitewashed boatshed rafters, kilims, reclaimed timber furniture – but with the luxury of underfloor heating, Aesop in the bathrooms and glorious views out across the harbour.

The beautifully compact shop carries swimming trunks from Orlebar Brown (as seen on Daniel Craig in *Skyfall*), Tom Binns jewellery, and yellow-and-white Havaianas, made from a 1962 pattern and re-released exclusively for the inn. *The Oyster Inn*, 124 Ocean View Rd, Oneroa, Waiheke Island, New Zealand, +64 9 372 2222, theoysterinn.co.nz; rooms from \$225.



Sunshine coast
Chef Cristian Hossack
at the Oyster Inn's Fish
& Chippery (left) and
the inn's vintage
Kombi (above).

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