

Suite Spot: Hulbert House, Queenstown, New Zealand

By [Jeanne Cooper](#) Updated 2:17 pm, Tuesday, July 26, 2016



Photo: Marina Mathews



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Hulbert House, a newly restored Victorian villa in Queenstown, New Zealand, offers views of Lake Wakatipu from its garden as well as from several suites.

Long before Queenstown earned a reputation as New Zealand's adventure capital, and New Zealand gained fame from a cinematic quest for a golden ring, a 19th century gold rush brought a new sheen – and a few shady characters – to the South Island settlement. One gold receiver used his fortune to build an elegant villa overlooking Lake Wakatipu and Skyline Hill; after he landed in jail for embezzlement, his wife turned it into a guesthouse that eventually served other purposes. Now painstakingly restored and reopened as a boutique inn, **Hulbert House** hides amid all the detailed vintage-looking decor a trove of modern luxuries sufficient to make guests purr like Gollum, "My precious."

Setting: Just 1,500 feet from the lake and only a bit farther from the Skyline Gondola and Luge, the six-suite hotel lies a block from the shops and restaurants in Queenstown's central business district. Central Otago wineries and the private spas at Onsen Hot Pools offer indulgent alternatives to skiing, snowboarding, bungee jumping, hiking and other rugged exploits.

The appeal: "Downton Abbey" opulence, Down Under style. Hungarian goose-down comforters rest on Egyptian cotton linens. Guests receive a full breakfast, with fresh sourdough bread, free-range bacon and raspberry and chia seed pots, among other house-made dishes; the evening brings predinner drinks and canapes, with tempting snacks available all day. Concierge service can help with planning excursions; in winter (the current season), staff will keep the fire going.

Insider tip: Newer culinary treasures within easy reach include Bespoke Kitchen (9 Isle St.), which caters to fans of raw food and other healthy victuals; Toro, which serves tapas indoors and out at Queenstown's Mall (20 Ballarat St.); and **Smiths Craft Beer House** (53 Shotover St.), which offers a rich vein of craft beers to pair with burgers, po'boys and other casual fare.

Good to know: Hulbert House has two stories; specify at booking if you'd rather be upstairs or down. A lake view costs more, but all guests can enjoy the vista from the gardens.

Details: 68 Ballarat St., Queenstown, New Zealand. (011) 03-371 0251, www.hulberthouse.co.nz. Suites from \$664.

– **Jeanne Cooper**, travel@sfchronicle.com



Photo: Hulbert House



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A stay at Hulbert House includes breakfast, daytime refreshments and predinner drinks and canapes, served in the Parlour.



Photo: Hulbert House



IMAGE 3 OF 4

The Lake Suite at the newly opened Hulbert House, a Victorian villa restored by designer Neil McLachlan, overlooks Lake Wakatipu in Queenstown, New Zealand.



Photo: Hulbert House



IMAGE 4 OF 4

The gingerbread trim on the newly opened Hulbert House in Queenstown, New Zealand, reveals its Victorian origins, while modern garden furniture provides a place to gaze at Skyline Hill or Lake Wakatipu.