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# New Zealand: Unique Experiences and Other-Worldly Surroundings

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by Andrea Doyle | March 02, 2016



Every New Zealand trip should include a jet-boat outing (pictured), like this one from Haast River Safari

Helicopter flights to remote locations, fly-fishing at top-tier lodges, tours of the glowworm-lined Waitomo Caves: New Zealand's offerings are just as special as the country itself.

"New Zealand offers the rare opportunity to enjoy unique experiences in beautiful and sometimes other-worldly surroundings," says Michael Some, president of East Hanover, NJ-based Achievement Incentives & Meetings, an incentive travel company. "This is made even more special by the incredibly friendly Kiwis with whom you are interacting along the way."

This is a country that prides itself on creating authentic experiences. It embraces its Māori roots and incorporates this connection at every opportunity.

"Underpinning everything we do are three core values: open spaces, open hearts, and open minds," says Sue Sullivan, CEO of Conventions and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ), a membership-based association of New Zealand's conference and business travel industry with more than 380 members across a broad range of sectors.

New Zealand is now also easier to get to. Air New Zealand has expanded its North American presence by opening a fifth gateway, in Houston, TX. Nonstop service is now available between Houston and Auckland, up to five times a week. Houston joins the four other North American gateways: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Vancouver, and Honolulu.

Plans for the building, opposite Te Papa Museum on the Wellington waterfront, include 64,500 square feet of exhibition space and six meeting rooms capable of hosting 1,100 people for conventions and 2,250 theater-style.

The New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC) and a new five-star, 300-room Hobson Street hotel in Auckland are in the works. SkyCity Entertainment Group and leading New Zealand contractor Fletcher Construction have announced a partnership to make this landmark development a reality. Fletcher Construction will build the new 345,000-square-foot convention center and hotel simultaneously, about a three-year project.

"Every aspect of the design, from an open, transparent, and welcoming facade, to fluid public spaces, and the use of natural materials, has been carefully chosen to reflect the essence of New Zealand," says Andrew Barclay, principal of Warren and Mahoney Architects and design director for the NZICC. "When it opens, this building will be an authentic New Zealand experience and a built embodiment of Kiwi hospitality for which New Zealand is famed."

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