



11 Feb 2018
Herald on Sunday, Auckland

Author: Stephanie Holmes • Section: Travel • Article Type: News Item
Audience : 83,574 • Page: 8 • Printed size: 1023.00cm² • Market: NZ
Country: New Zealand • ASR: NZD 11,838 • words: 777 • Item ID: 910845570
isentia.mediaportal

Lily & Louis

PMCA licensed copy. You may not further copy, reproduce, record, retransmit, sell, publish, distribute, share or store this information without the prior written consent of the Print Media Copyright Agency. Phone +64-4-4984487 or email info@pmca.co.nz for further information.

Page 1 of 3

ABOVE BY HEAD AND SHOULDERS

A weekend escape to a luxury lodge in Northland is magic, writes **Stephanie Holmes**.

The last time I saw Bream Head, it was after slogging my way along the 75km endurance test that is the Te Whara track, one of the toughest day walks in the Whangarei Heads region.

This weekend the outlook is very different. I'm gazing on the undulating rocky outcrop from the comfort of an oversized outdoor beanbag on a large wooden deck, glass of wine in hand and gentle background music complementing the evening birdsong. Bream Head is a few bays along the coast but from here, at luxury accommodation The Glasshouse, I have an unbeatable view.

It's early summer so the pohutakawa are starting to blossom – splashes of red brighten up the trees clinging to the Kauri Mountain Point cliff; the 180-degree ocean views beyond have me transfixed. We feel alone; so completely alone, and it's absolute bliss.

In reality, we're just a steep, winding driveway away from a second luxury property, Te Whara, but this architecturally-designed masterpiece makes us feel like we're the only people left on the planet. What a way to go.

The Glasshouse is the kind of place worthy of the superlatives thrown at it in the guest book. "Wow" is the word we involuntarily say as we

get our first glimpse of the house after swinging around the final bend of the driveway. Two wings have three-walls of floor-to-ceiling glass ranch-sliders that open up fully to the elements. They're connected by a "breezeway" in the middle, which opens to the exceptional deck and centrepiece outdoor fireplace. All around we're surrounded by native bush, with paths leading down to the cliffs

and ocean below.

The bathroom is affectionately known as "The Longdrop" but it, too, is luxurious. About 20 steps down the path from the deck, the small outhouse looks unassuming from the outside; inside there's a normal flushing toilet, hot running water and the most stunning shower I've ever seen. Its wall is floor-to-ceiling glass, nestled in the native bush with views out to sea. The glass opens vertically at the touch of a button, descending to halfway down, giving fresh air and birdsong as you perform your ablutions.

The sense of peace is soul-cleansing; just 10 minutes after arriving – a bit ratty from the Friday evening schlep from Auckland – we're relaxed on the beanbags, outdoor fire lit, breathing in the scent of woodsmoke and surrounding manuka trees.

There are walking tracks easily accessible from the house, leading down to the craggy rocks to the north, and The Cove – a private sheltered bay accessible only to guests of Te Whara and The Glasshouse – to the south. At the former, we float in the natural rockpools, filled with an irresistible combination of sea and rainwater warmed by the sun.

Kayaks and snorkelling gear are stashed at the Cove; I awake on our first morning to find Nathan has already headed out to explore. From the kitchen I see him in the distance, the smudge of his yellow kayak bobbing about on the water below. I stay sedentary; drinking coffee in bed, cocooned in the crisp white linen, the mosquito nets fluttering in the warm early morning breeze.

We cook our first dinner on the barbecue, simple steak and veges, which always taste better when cooked outside. We need not worry about our second dinner however; the Glasshouse's private chef Caitlin drops off a pre-prepared three-course dinner for two; all we need do is heat it up in the fully-equipped kitchen and serve.

A beautiful quinoa salad packed with



11 Feb 2018
Herald on Sunday, Auckland

Lily & Louis

Author: Stephanie Holmes • Section: Travel • Article Type: News Item
Audience : 83,574 • Page: 8 • Printed size: 1023.00cm² • Market: NZ
Country: New Zealand • ASR: NZD 11,838 • words: 777 • Item ID: 910845570
[isentia.mediaportal](https://www.isentia.com/mediaportal)

PMCA licensed copy. You may not further copy, reproduce, record, retransmit, sell, publish, distribute, share or store this information without the prior written consent of the Print Media Copyright Agency. Phone +64-4-4984487 or email info@pmca.co.nz for further information.

Page 2 of 3

fresh ingredients like pomegranate seeds, tomatoes and asparagus, followed by a rich, hearty Mediterranean-style chicken bake, and pannacotta topped with fresh strawberries keeps us well satisfied and as the sun sets, we take our place by the outdoor fireplace with full bellies and full glasses of red wine, growing sleepy as we stare at the flames.

On our final morning, I take a last look across the bays, glimpses of Ocean Beach and the winding track up to the summit of Bream Head. With the Glasshouse's powerful binoculars, I can watch walkers ascending the steep Te Whara track, the same way I did many months before. They're just a speck on the landscape, like a trail of ants climbing their hill in formation. This weekend, I know where I'd rather be.

FACT BOX

The Glasshouse is one of five secluded, luxury properties available to rent from Ara Roa Villa and Boutique Lodgings. For more information and to book, go to araroa.nz.

**For a video tour of
The Glasshouse, go to
nzherald.co.nz/travel**





11 Feb 2018
Herald on Sunday, Auckland

Lily & Louis

Author: Stephanie Holmes • Section: Travel • Article Type: News Item
Audience : 83,574 • Page: 8 • Printed size: 1023.00cm² • Market: NZ
Country: New Zealand • ASR: NZD 11,838 • words: 777 • Item ID: 910845570
isentia.mediaportal

PMCA licensed copy. You may not further copy, reproduce, record, retransmit, sell, publish, distribute, share or store this information without the prior written consent of the Print Media Copyright Agency. Phone +64-4-4984487 or email info@pmca.co.nz for further information.

Page 3 of 3



8

AT HOME

