



Room Check

Stephanie Holmes enjoys the luxury of The Glasshouse, Whangarei Heads

Location: Between Parua Bay and Pataua South in Northland's stunning Whangarei Heads. The Glasshouse is one of two properties along the steep, winding Harambee Rd, at the end of Kauri Mountain Point peninsula. You can't get much more secluded – or stunning.

Check-in experience: Paul Olsen from Ara Roa Private Accommodation met us at the gate and we followed his car down the incredibly steep driveway. He ran us through the house's features – we half-listened; the other half was taking in the incredible beauty of this stunning property.

Price: \$950 per night, for two. Yes, it's expensive, but you won't get a much better chance for a completely private, relaxing, luxurious weekend.

Room: Private house actually, if you please. The Glasshouse is an architecturally-designed beauty – two wings connected by a "breezeway", with all focus directed east, to the native forest enveloping the property and the ocean surrounding the peninsula. Three sides of each wing are floor-to-ceiling glass ranch sliders that open to give the height of indoor-outdoor flow. The bedroom is spacious and well designed, with built-in walk-through wardrobe behind the bed, and its position means you feel like you're sleeping in the bush. The breezeway has a large dining table, Weber barbecue, spacious deck and outdoor fireplace. The lounge and kitchen are comfortable and well-equipped.

View: Exceptional. Bream Head, Ocean Beach, pohutukawa and manuka trees, the sea, native birdlife and at night – if you're lucky – maybe some kiwi.

The bed: Standard king bed, with fancy hotel-standard white cotton linen. Full mosquito net.

Bathroom: It's called "the Longdrop" but this is no stinky DoC campground-style facility. It's an outhouse, sure, so you will need to walk 20 steps down a pathway to get

there but it's totally worth it. There's flushing toilet, vanity, hot running water and the shower has floor to ceiling glass on one wall, facing out to the bush and the sea beyond. The rainhead shower is powerful and luxurious, and there are two other showerheads so you and your loved one don't need to be apart for even one minute.

Toiletries: Eco-store hand wash, plus unmarked dispensers of body wash, shampoo and conditioner. I have no idea what brand, but they smelt delicious.

Food and drink: Caitlin lives locally in Parua Bay and has her own catering company. With at least one day's notice you can order from a menu and she will deliver a pre-prepared three-course meal you just need to warm up. There's an espresso machine, milk and juice provided, plus sparkling wine and snacks waiting on arrival. For the other meals, we stocked up in Whangarei and catered for ourselves. You could drive to the Parua Bay Tavern (one of the best pub gardens in the country), but I reckon do that on your way home – once you get to the Glasshouse you're not going to want to leave.

Exercise: Use the large deck for a yoga session, or follow the walking tracks around the cliff and the property's boundaries. At the Cove, you'll find kayaks and snorkelling gear free to use. There's access to other walking tracks in the area, and great beaches just a short drive away.

Noise: Birdsong, waves, the occasional purr of a motorboat passing by. The house has an excellent ipad-controlled sound system, with pre-programmed music, or you can airplay your own.

Entertainment: No TV, but you really don't need one – just sit back and look at that view.

Wi-Fi: Free, unlimited, fast. So upload the occasional brag-worthy pic to your social media, but other than that, just switch off and enjoy the solitude.

Contact: Book through araroa.co.nz.

Would I return? I'm hoping to move in.



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