

New Zealand Coastal Odyssey
on board HERITAGE ADVENTURER
3 - 14 March 2026



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Day 1
Tuesday 3rd March 2026
Queenstown

We began our New Zealand Coastal Odyssey expedition in the ‘Adventure Capital of New Zealand’ – Queenstown. After checking into our accommodation, the Holiday Inn Remarkables, we explored the town centre, taking in the stunning views of Lake Wakatipu and the surrounding mountains. That evening, we shared a relaxed dinner at the Holiday Inn Hotel's restaurant, a perfect chance to get to know one another before our departure the following morning.

Day 2
Wednesday 4th March 2026
Queenstown/Bluff

This morning, we enjoyed breakfast in Queenstown before some of us set out for Arrowtown and Ayrburn for an authentic Central Otago experience. After a tasty

lunch back at the Holiday Inn, we boarded our coaches with the rest of the adventurers bound for Bluff.

Following the shores of Lake Wakatipu, we were treated to spectacular views of the Remarkables range along its northern shore. Our journey passed through towns steeped in railway history, like Kingston and Lumsden, and past the fertile dairy-farm country bordering the Oreti River.

After passing through Invercargill, we arrived in Bluff, the southernmost town on New Zealand's mainland, and boarded *Heritage Adventurer*, our home for the next adventure ahead.

On board, our friendly crew and Expedition Team welcomed us and issued our ship ID cards. Expedition Leader Steve introduced the upcoming adventures in Fiordland, offering a glimpse of the exciting days ahead. After meeting our expedition team, we enjoyed our first dinner on board—a delicious meal served in the dining room as we glided through the unusually calm waters of Foveaux Strait.



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Day 3

Thursday 5th March 2026

Doubtful Sound/ Milford Sound

After a brief transit from Bluff, we entered Doubtful Sound before dawn and anchored at Blanket Bay. Following breakfast, the first of our optional helicopter excursions departed from the helipad at the Blanket Bay Hotel. With winds expected to pick up later in the day, an early start was essential—and the breathtaking views of Doubtful Sound made it completely worthwhile. At the same time, our group of enthusiastic walkers landed on the shores of Secretary Island, New Zealand's third-highest island.

Mostly predator-free, the island was alive with native birds, including New Zealand Fantails/Pīwakawaka and Tomtits/Miromiro. On the forest floor, small fungi, ferns, and Easter Orchids thrived, while towering Rimu, Beech, and Totara trees formed a majestic canopy above. The walk offered a wonderful introduction to the natural beauty of Fiordland.

Meanwhile, the rest of the group enjoyed a Zodiac cruise around the coastline. We explored the Poupou—carved wooden posts marking the boundaries of the Te Awaatu Channel (The Gut) Marine Reserve—and admired a stunning waterfall and a variety of seabirds before returning to the Blanket Bay Hotel. Once everyone was back on board *Heritage Adventurer*, we enjoyed lunch as our expedition vessel made its way to Milford Sound.

The steep, gneiss-lined walls of Milford Sound greeted us as we all emerged on deck. The Captain skilfully manoeuvred *Heritage Adventurer* to give great views of a towering waterfall, giving us a visceral sense of the power of this glacial valley. Before dinner, we took a brief expedition ashore to see the thundering Bowen Falls at the head of the fiord. As we dined, the spectacular scenery of Milford Sound unfolded around us—a fitting end to an unforgettable day.



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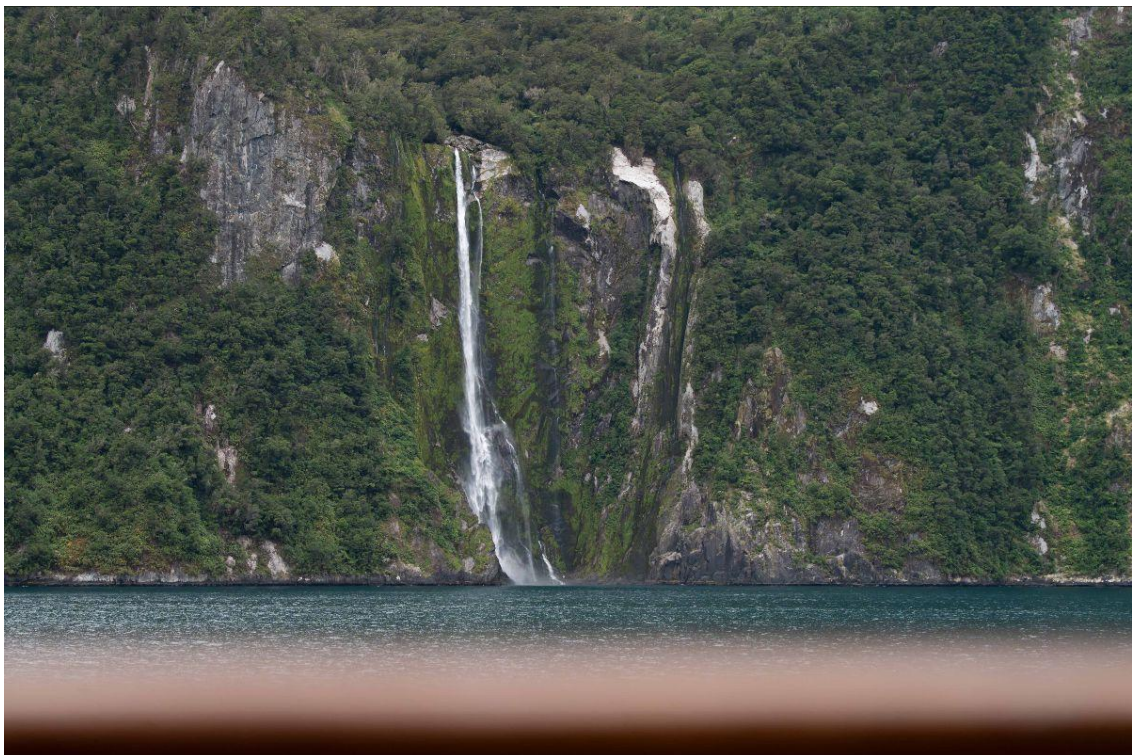
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Day 4

Friday 6th March 2026

Dusky Sound

After an overnight journey south along the coast of Fiordland, as winds and seas steadily rose from the north, we awoke to a wild and moody Dusky Sound. With gusts reaching up to 60 knots, we sought shelter in the lee of Resolution Island.

Our expedition team showcased their skills as we arrived via Zodiac at Anchor Island, once home to Richard Henry, a pioneering figure in New Zealand conservation. Back on board, we dried off after our encounter with the liquid sunshine and enjoyed lunch as *Heritage Adventurer* repositioned to Cascade Cove.

At Cascade Cove, we embarked on a Zodiac cruise to Astronomer's Point and Pickersgill Harbour, where Captain James Cook and the crew of *HMS Resolution* spent five weeks in 1773. A short walk brought us to the site of William Wales' observatory, once considered the most accurately known position in the Southern Hemisphere.

We continued by Zodiac to Cascade Falls, a beautiful waterfall immortalised in some of William Hodges' artworks from Captain Cook's visit. Along the way, Red-billed Gulls/Tarāpunga and White-fronted Terns/Tara were frequently spotted on the small islands scattered throughout the fiord.

By 1630 hours, we were back on board as the Captain navigated the Acheron Passage. Thanks to the heavy rain, the waterfalls were at their most spectacular, adding to the dramatic, untamed beauty of Dusky Sound.



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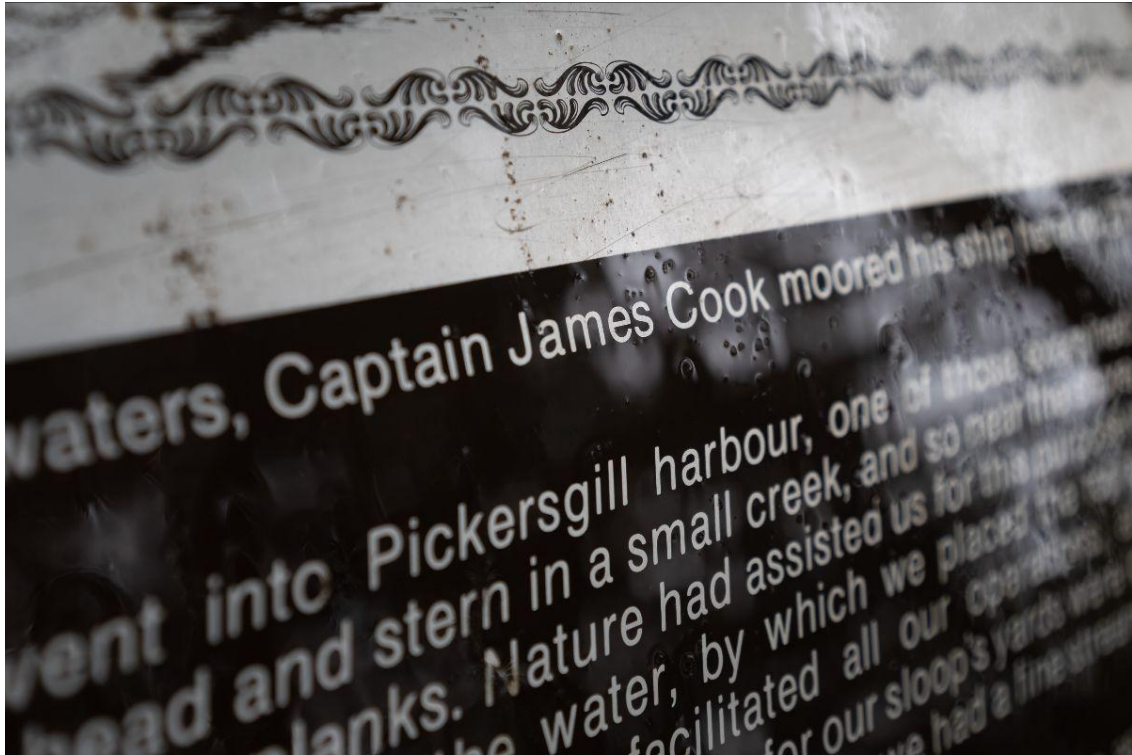
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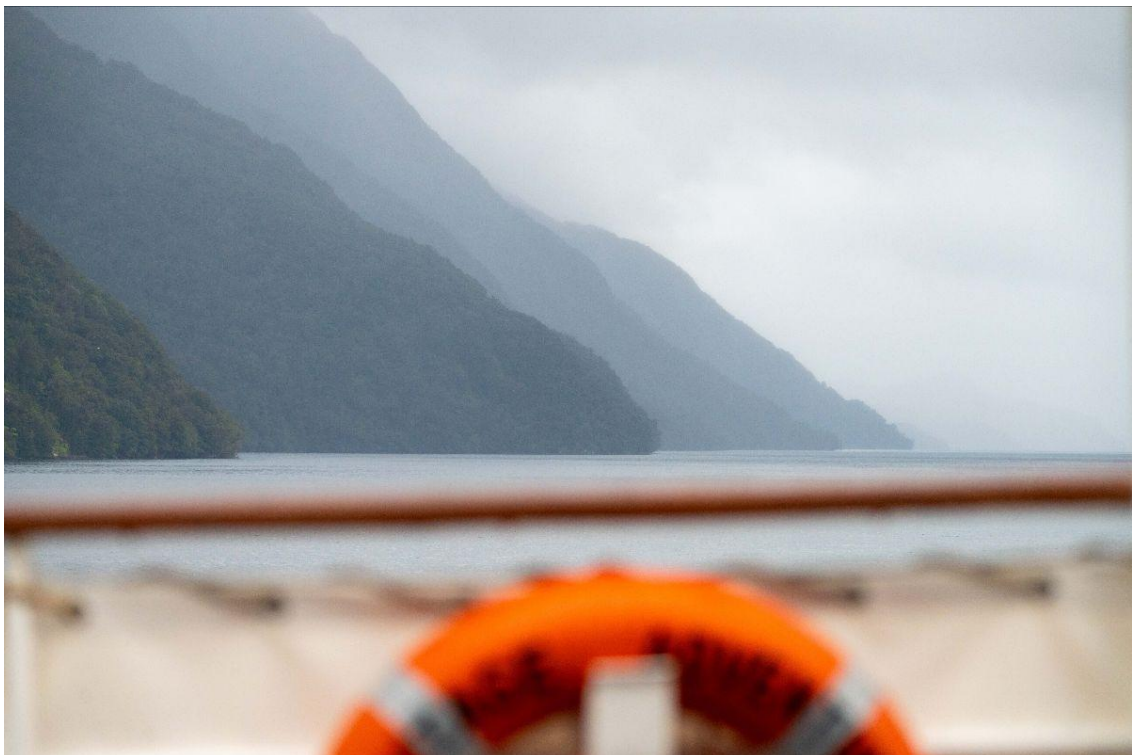
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Day 5

Saturday 7th March 2026

Ulva/Stewart Island

Early in the morning, we found ourselves anchored in the picturesque Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera. With the mist lingering and wind completely gone, the water was calm as glass—perfect conditions for our first activity of the day. Ulva Island/ Te Wharawhara, one of the few predator-free islands in the area, did not disappoint, presenting a spectacular display of native birds – with some even spotting a Stewart Island Brown Kiwi.

As we walked through the lush temperate rainforest, we had ample opportunities to learn about the local environment and history, from the first post office on Stewart Island to marine reserves, native bird translocations, and early sawmilling operations. Large groups of Yellowhead/Mohua and Kākā delighted us, while South Island Robins/Toutouwai, Bellbirds, and Fantails were constant companions along the trail.

After our walk, we returned to *Heritage Adventurer* for a tasty lunch before spending the afternoon exploring Oban, the island's small capital. With roughly 400 residents and just 25 kilometres of roads, it didn't take long to get a feel for the town. Some of us enjoyed a drink or did a spot of shopping, while all of us appreciated the charming seaside character that left a lasting impression.

Back on board, the evening's recaps led by expedition guides Oscar, Gen and Matt who kept us informed and entertained. We said farewell to *Heritage Adventurer's* pilots who had expertly guided us through the labyrinth of Fiordland, as we departed Stewart Island and set course for Dunedin.



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Day 6

Sunday 8th March 2026

Otepoti/Dunedin

After a night of smooth sailing up the coast of the South Island/Te Waipounamu, we began the day by entering the long, winding channel of Otago Harbour, part of an extinct volcanic field. We arrived in Dunedin/Ōtepoti, the 'Edinburgh of the South', greeted by the city's characteristic Scottish-inspired overcast weather.

Following breakfast, we disembarked via the gangway for the first time on the voyage, splitting into three groups, each with a unique itinerary to explore this wildlife-rich, Scottish-influenced city.

The first group enjoyed a scenic bus ride along the Otago Peninsula, culminating at Taiaroa Head/Pukekura, home to New Zealand's only mainland breeding colony of albatross. The Northern Royal Albatross/Toroa were a spectacular sight, with chicks and adults showing off their three-metre wingspans in the freshening southerly wind.

Along the way, we learned about the area's history as a World War II army barracks before it became the albatross sanctuary. Afterwards, we savoured a decadent lunch at Glenfalloch Gardens, exploring its stunning grounds before visiting the New Zealand Marine Studies Centre. Here, our knowledgeable local guides introduced us to marine research and local wildlife. Feeding Seahorses in the touch tanks and experiencing starfish and Sea Cucumbers first-hand was especially memorable. On the way back to *Heritage Adventurer*, we passed the photogenic Dunedin Railway Station and enjoyed a short stop in the city centre.

The second group spent the morning at the Dunedin Botanic Gardens, followed by an afternoon at the Orokonui Ecosanctuary. Inside the predator-proof fence, enthusiastic local guides introduced us to the native species, including Kākā, native Long-fin Eels/Tuna, the ancient Tuatara, and various lizard species. A highlight was seeing a family of four Takahē, a species once thought extinct, now thriving thanks to dedicated conservation efforts.

Our third group boarded the Taieri Gorge train for a journey into Dunedin's hinterland, enjoying dramatic landscapes and a tasty lunch before returning to *Heritage Adventurer*.

To conclude the day, expedition guide Bill shared insights into what makes

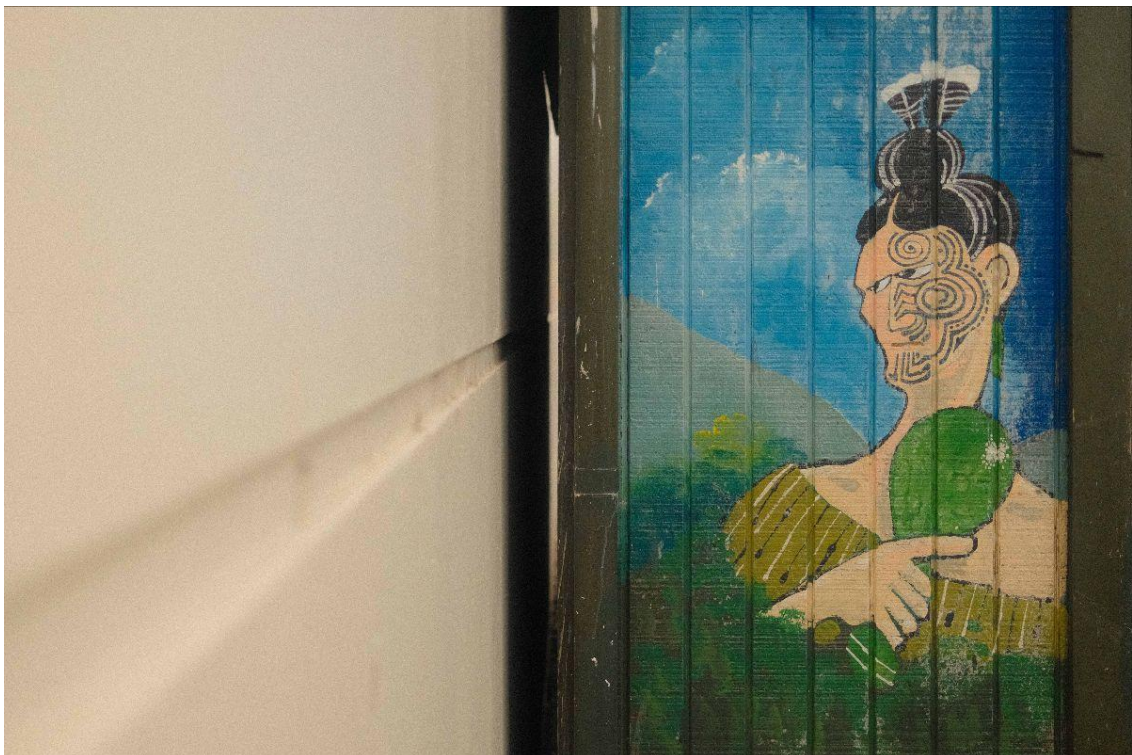
Dunedin unique, followed by an animated talk by Mat on the breeding behaviour of Pink-footed Shags. As we sailed out of Otago Harbour, we paused at the Taiaroa Head Albatross sanctuary, watching the majestic Northern Royal Albatross in flight before enjoying another delicious dinner on board.



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Day 7

Monday 9th March 2026

Akaroa

Thick clouds, mist, and rain greeted us as we entered Akaroa Harbour at dawn. Banks Peninsula, the eroded remnant of a shield volcano complex, provided a dramatic backdrop. Once anchored, we made our way to the Akaroa wharf on Zodiacs, where our knowledgeable walking tour guide, Marie, met us to explore her hometown.

As we strolled the charming streets of Akaroa, we learned about its rich French and Māori history, hearing stories of whalers, early French settlers, and the intricacies of colonial politics. Some of the more adventurous among us even headed out to swim with Hector's Dolphin/Tūpoupou, the world's smallest dolphin.

Back in town, boutique shops and inviting cafes offered a relaxed afternoon. Many picked up souvenirs or gifts for friends and family. We then hopped on shuttles to the hillside overlooking Akaroa and visited the Caldera Vineyard Estate, where we enjoyed panoramic views of the township and harbour. Here, we sampled local

wines alongside a delicious platter featuring local cheeses, meats, and fruit.

Later in the afternoon, we were departing Akaroa Harbour, enjoying sightings of Hector's Dolphins, White-capped, Salvin's and Southern Royal Albatross, all while sampling some of the exquisite Barry's Bay cheeses presented by Seb.



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Day 8

Tuesday 10th March 2026

Wellington/Te Whanganui a Tara

At dawn, we arrived in Wellington/Te Whanganui-a-Tara under clearing skies and minimal wind—a rare exception for the city famously known as ‘the windiest in the world’.

After breakfast, we split into groups to explore some of Wellington’s highlights. A visit to Te Papa, the National Museum of New Zealand, offered an immersive experience of the country’s rich history, culture, and art. Highlights included exhibits on the Treaty of Waitangi, the canoe collection, and reconstructions of New Zealand’s extinct birds.

Another small group toured the New Zealand Parliament, gaining fascinating insights into the workings of the New Zealand Parliamentary system and admiring the regal architecture of the Beehive and surrounding buildings.

Amid the bustle of Lambton Quay, we took the cable car above the city, enjoying sweeping views of Wellington and the harbour. At the top, our coach whisked us to Zealandia, a 225-hectare fully fenced wildlife sanctuary. Here, many of New Zealand's rarest birds, reptiles, fish, insects and plants thrive in a predator-free environment, demonstrating how conservation in an urban setting can enrich both wildlife and the lives of nearby residents.

Many of us chose to have dinner ashore in Wellington before returning to *Heritage Adventurer*, while others enjoyed a delicious meal in the comfort of our home away from home. By 2200 hours, we had set sail for the Marlborough Sounds, ready for the next stage of our adventure.



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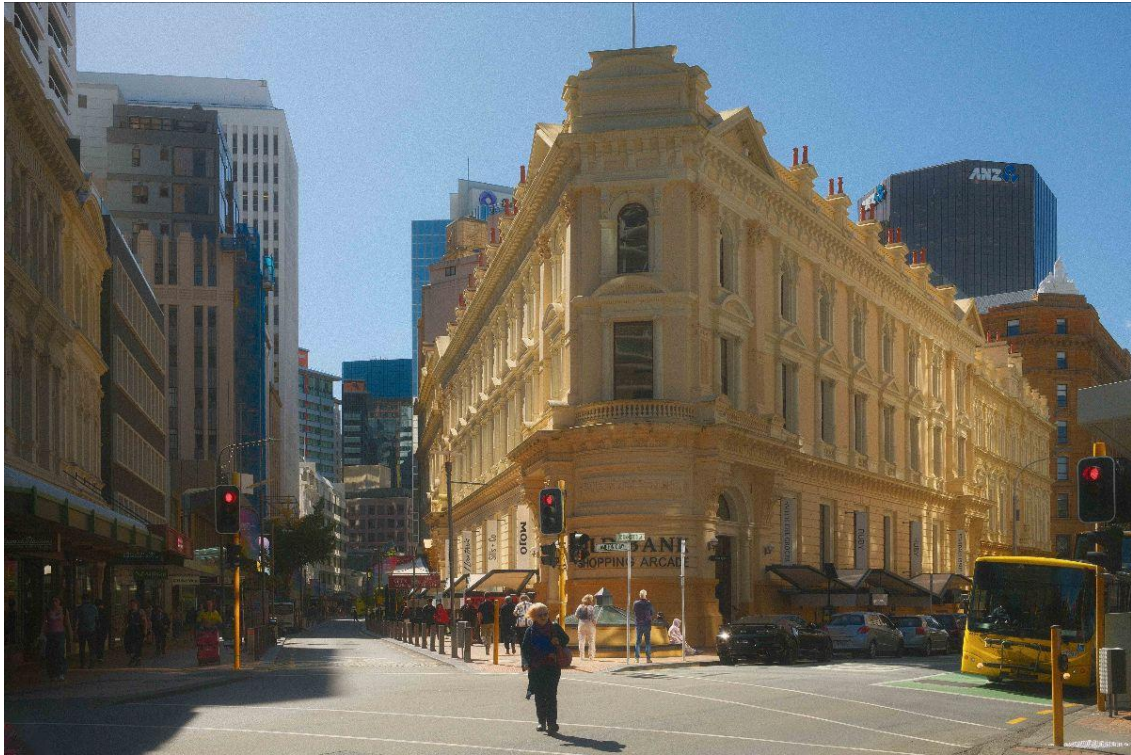
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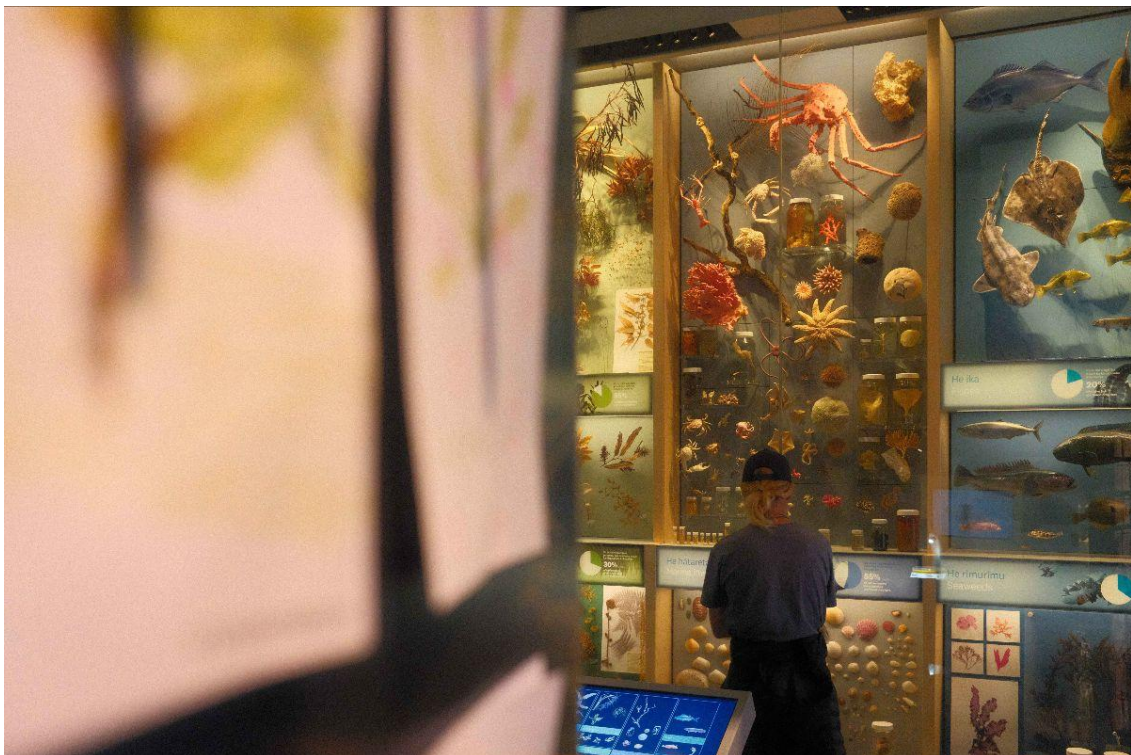
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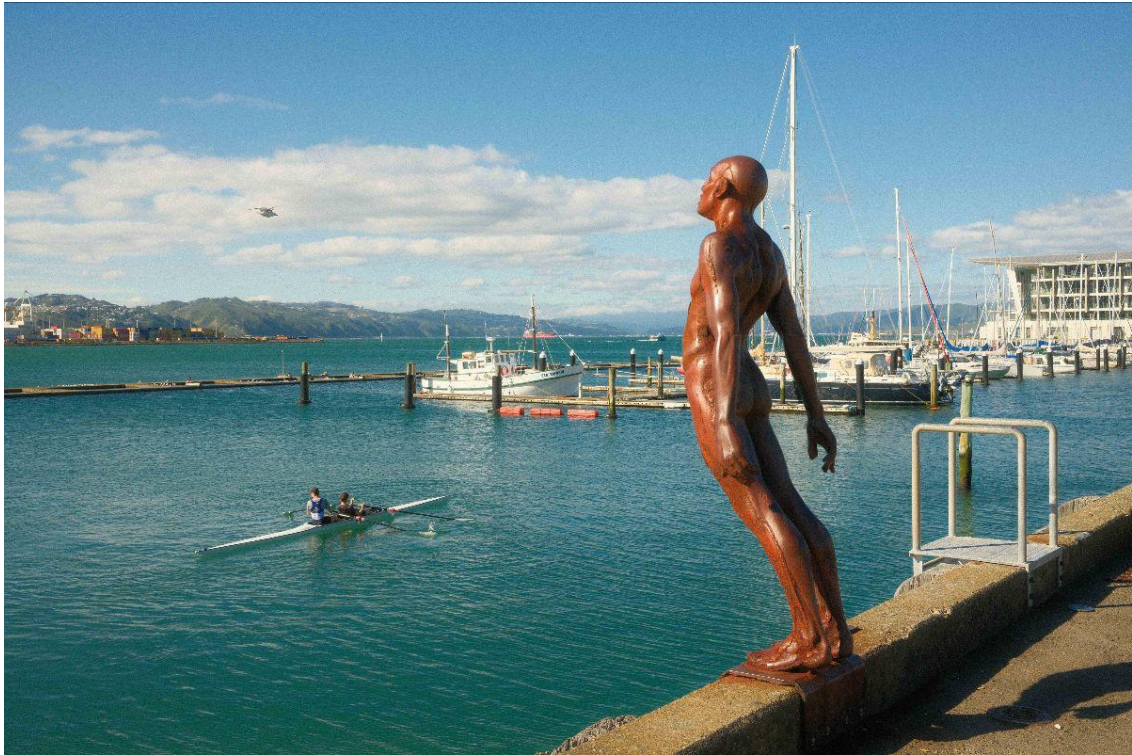
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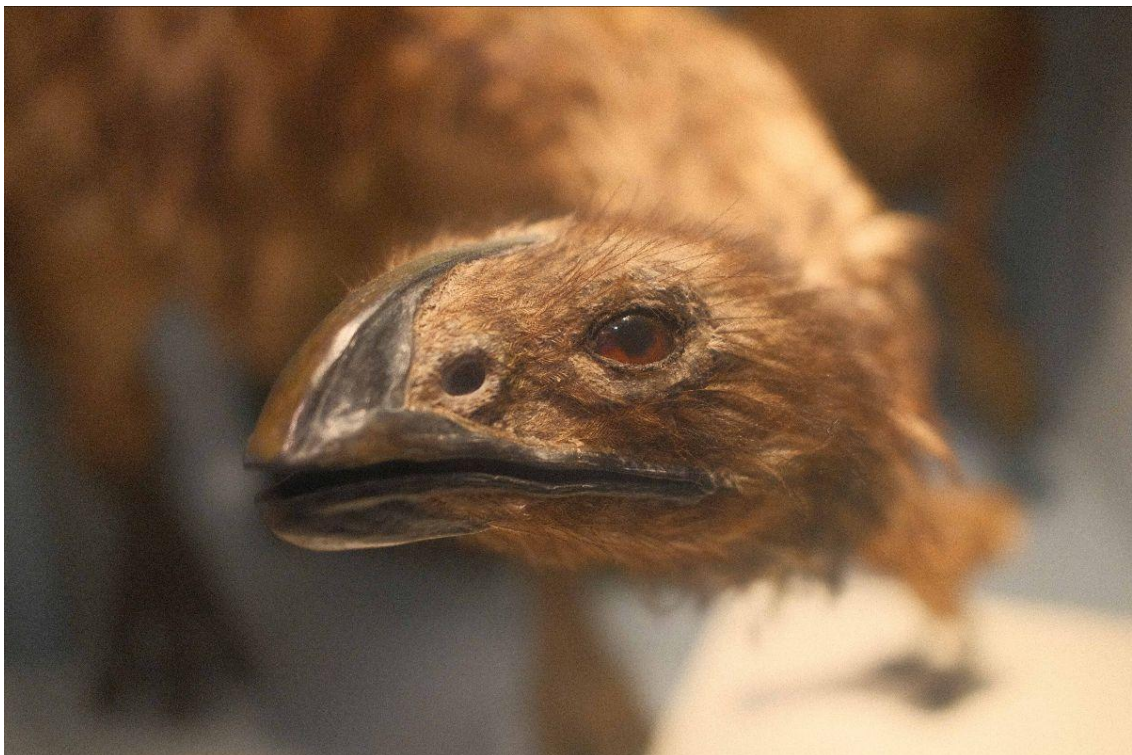
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Day 9

Wednesday 11th March 2026

Queen Charlotte Sound

Our morning began in the sun-drenched Queen Charlotte Sound/Tōtaranui, where we anchored near Ship Cove/Meretoto. After breakfast, we went ashore for a walk on the predator-free Motuara Island. Some of us chose to stay near the base of the track by a small pond, spotting a variety of native birds, including Yellow-crowned Parakeets/Kākāriki and Bellbirds.

Others climbed to the top of the track, where a lookout rose above the canopy, offering panoramic views of Queen Charlotte Sound. From here, we saw the significant Captain Cook monument and the site where the South Island was claimed for Great Britain.

We returned to the jetty and cruised by Zodiac to Ship Cove, swapping with the other group. Here, walkers could choose between a longer hike along the Queen Charlotte Track to a serene lookout or a shorter stroll to a lovely waterfall.

Back in Ship Cove, we learned about the area's rich history, including Captain Cook's visits and the exploits of the great Polynesian explorer Kupe. With the fine weather, many of us enjoyed relaxing onshore, while a few adventurous souls took a refreshing dip in the ocean.

Returning to *Heritage Adventurer* for lunch, we began our journey out of the Sound. Expedition guide Oscar shared commentary over the PA as we passed a colony of King Shags/Kawau Pāteketeke, New Zealand's rarest shag.

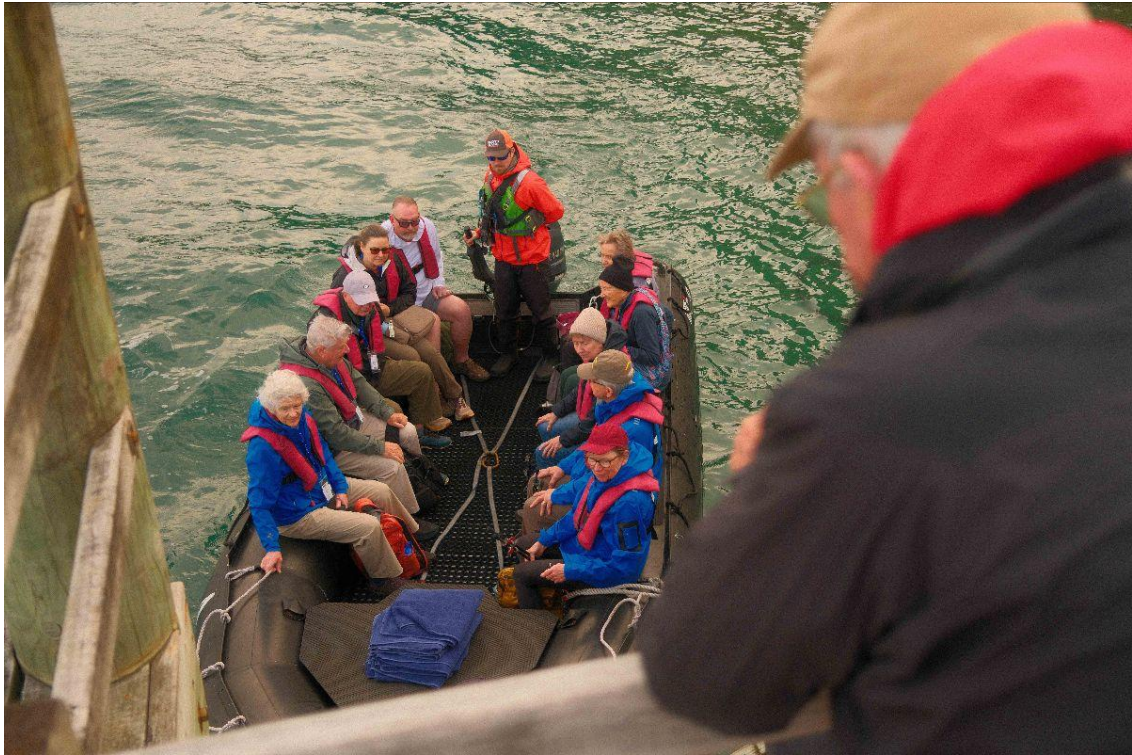
As we entered the Cook Strait, Duncan gave an insightful presentation on the geology behind the dynamic landscapes we had visited, followed by Rod, who shared fascinating perspectives on the dispersal of species across the Pacific. Before a beautiful BBQ dinner on the back deck of *Heritage Adventurer*, a large pod of Common Dolphins escorted us through the strait, a perfect finale to a memorable day on our New Zealand Coastal Odyssey voyage.



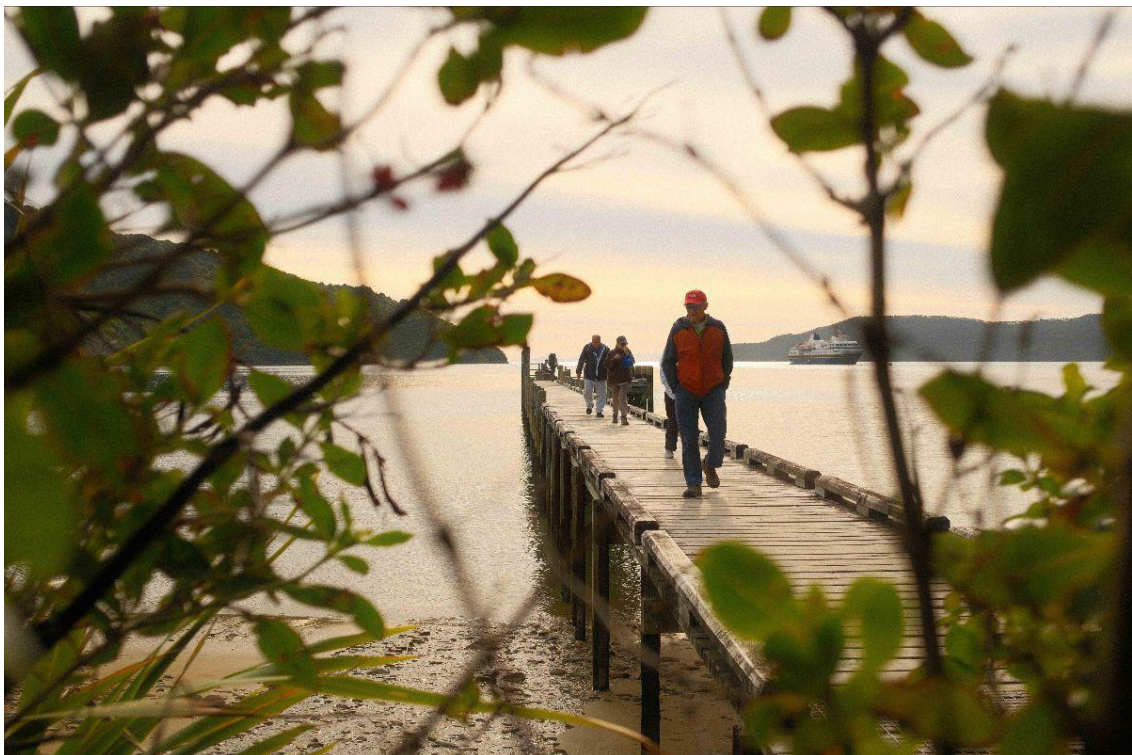
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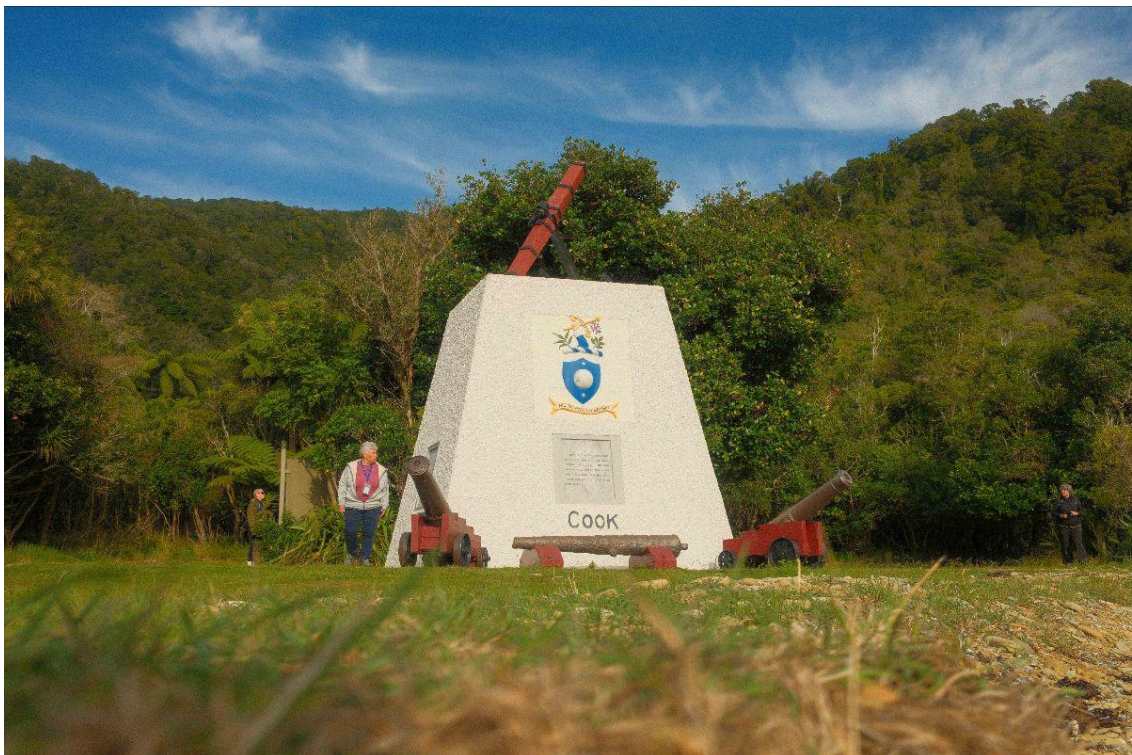
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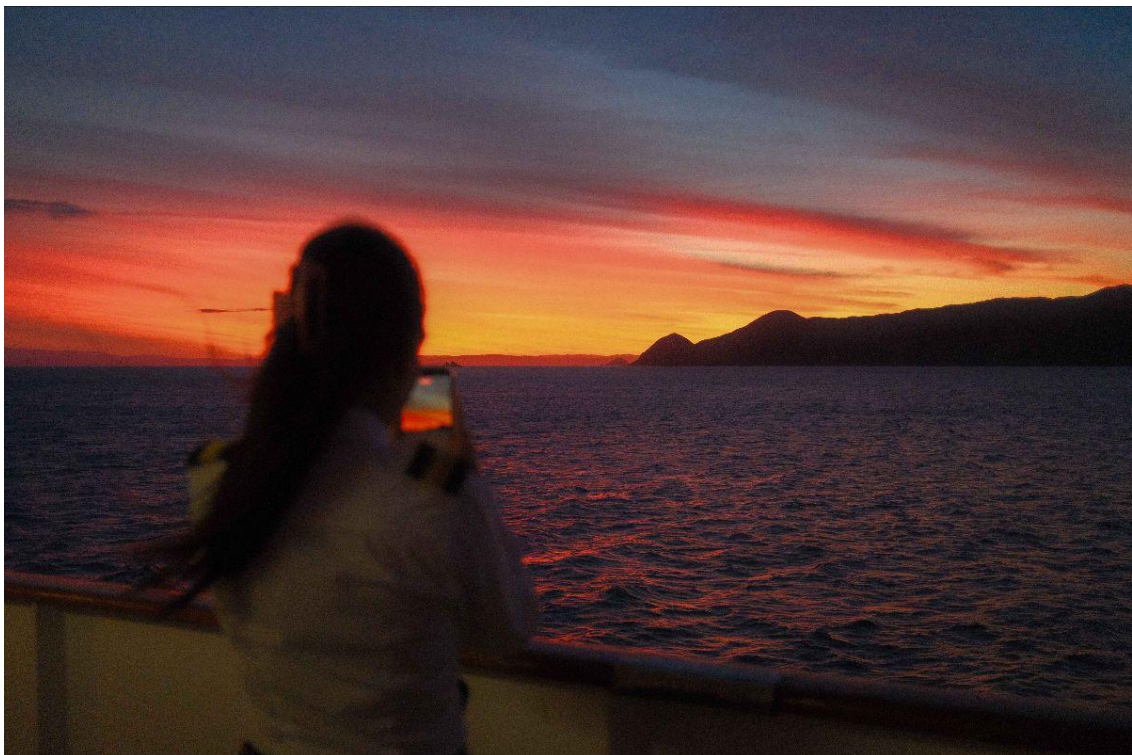
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Day 10

Thursday 12th March 2026

At Sea

At dawn, *Heritage Adventurer* cruised off the coast of Napier, making her way north. Some guests made the most of a later start, followed by a leisurely breakfast.

At 0930 hours, Rod delivered an excellent presentation titled *Afraid of the Light*, exploring the strange behaviours of New Zealand fauna and their adaptations to this ancient environment. After seeing so many of these unique species throughout our voyage, it was fascinating to connect the dots and understand why they are so special.

By 1045 hours, we settled in for a movie morning in the lounge, watching the environmental drama *Blue Back*. After lunch, the afternoon offered free time to relax and take in the stunning scenery of the North Island's east coast. Seabirds were abundant, and we were fortunate to encounter a large pod of Common Dolphins, including calves and juveniles. At 1530 hours, afternoon tea was served in the lounge and bar area, complete with a tempting array of delicious treats.

The day of presentations concluded with Bill's talk, *All Hail the Hybrid*, which explored how New Zealand wildlife has adapted to the human-modified landscapes. After dinner, Bill and his band delighted us with an impromptu musical performance in the lounge, rounding off a perfect day at sea.



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Day 11

13th March 2026

Tauranga/Rotorua

After an enriching day at sea yesterday, this morning we berthed in the Port of Tauranga. After breakfast, we boarded our coaches for a day trip to Rotorua, at the heart of the North Island's geothermal zone. At Te Puia Geothermal Valley, our enthusiastic guides welcomed us, beginning with a traditional Māori welcome at the Wharenui, where we were challenged to express our intentions. Inside, we were treated to performances of traditional songs, Poi, Haka and a haunting rendition of Pōkarekare Ana.

We then split into groups to explore the nocturnal Kiwi house, observing the North Island Brown Kiwi in its active night phase. From there, the bubbling mud plateau showcased the raw heat and power of the geothermal landscape, while the Pohutu Geyser continuously erupted, sending steaming water cascading down the terraces.

Lunch was a buffet feast featuring New Zealand delicacies and a traditionally cooked hangi. Afterwards, we had free time to explore or do last-minute shopping for gifts and mementoes. A short coach ride took us to the shores of Lake Rotorua, where we visited St. Faith's Church, one of only four Māori-Anglican churches in New Zealand. Its exquisite architecture, intricate detailing, and the surrounding steaming landscape created a truly surreal experience.

Back on board *Heritage Adventurer*, we departed for sea. Expedition Leader Steve and Captain Jacek hosted a final briefing and recap, and the crew and staff took the stage to express their gratitude. The evening concluded in style with the Captain's Dinner and a fabulous slideshow by Matt, a perfect finale to our New Zealand Coastal Odyssey adventure.



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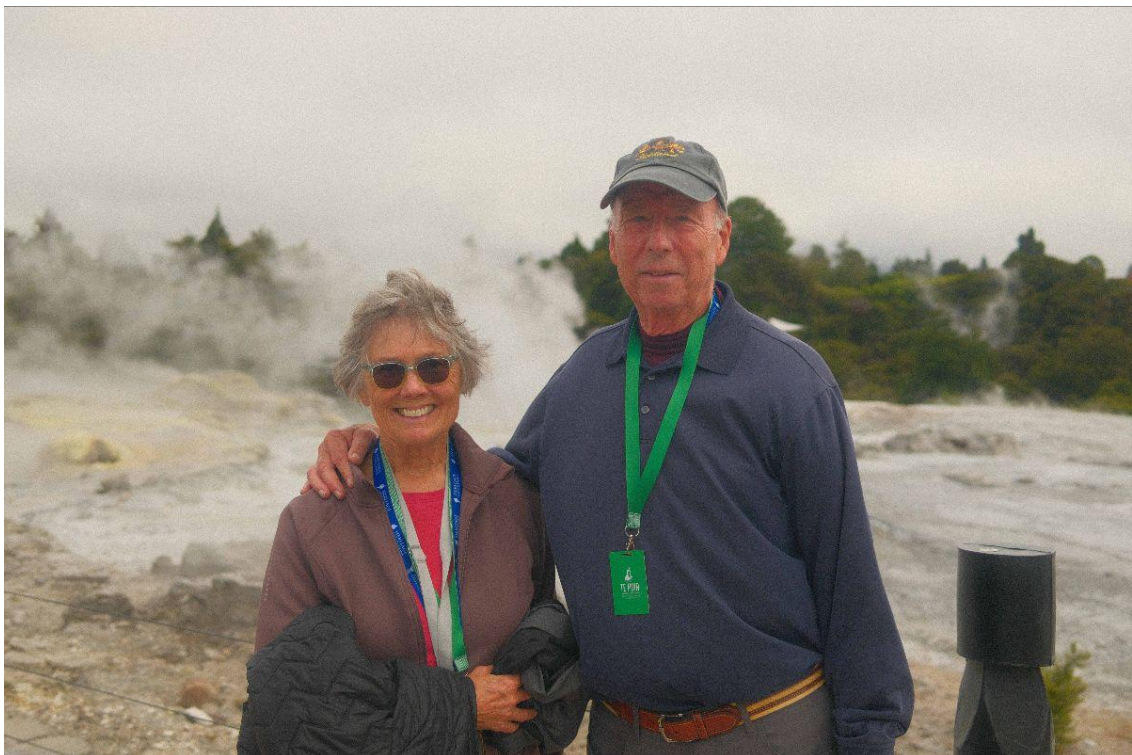
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Day 12

14th March 2026

Auckland

This morning, we arrived in New Zealand's largest city, Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau, while enjoying breakfast and taking in our final views of New Zealand's stunning coastline. We exchanged contact details along with promises to share photos and stay in touch. Once our luggage was unloaded, it was time to say our goodbyes and disembark what had been our home away from home for the final time—at least for this voyage.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the entire team and crew on board, who made every moment of our journey so memorable on *Heritage Adventurer*. Over the course of this incredible adventure, we not only explored breathtaking landscapes and witnessed remarkable wildlife but also learned so much about New Zealand's history, culture, and natural wonders.

This New Zealand Coastal Odyssey voyage has left us inspired and eager for the

next journey, wherever it may take us, and with a deep appreciation for the beauty and diversity of Aotearoa.



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