

Thank you, again, for providing such a lovely place. I can honestly say this was our best family vacation ever, and we've been traveling a lot lately. ...

We've just returned home from our month-long stay in the Karaka cottage and I can speak for our entire family when I say it was the perfect place for making lifelong memories. I'm so glad we stayed in one place rather than try to see the entire island, and I feel fortunate that we found your cottage. I have so many images of the kids walking down the drive with a bowl of apples they'd just picked or armfuls of wood for the wood stove; kayaking in the beautiful estuary with the mountains all around; feeding the chickens; romping around the yard and climbing trees. It was all so sweetly simple and I miss it terribly. For me, I could have spent many more weeks just sitting and watching the changing tides and light. The shifting clouds and water created one beautiful image after another and every time I looked up, I felt compelled to grab my camera to try and capture it. Whenever we turned down the road to the cottage, I was just awestruck by the view. True, this happened often in New Zealand, but suffice it to say (and I'm sure you already know this, Elspeth), you have an amazingly special slice of paradise.

Mapua was the perfect base for our excursions to the National Parks and to Golden Bay. And one of our favorite memories was our mornings sitting at The Naked Bun Patisserie while the kids did school work at the cottage. We ate waaaay too many fish and chips from the Smokehouse and had delicious meals at the Smokehouse and the Gothic in Motueka. Evenings at Rabbit Island as the sun was setting were also especially memorable. We felt like it was our own private island, it was always so deserted!

Suffice it to say, someday we will return... hopefully soon.

Thank you, Elspeth!

Tammy and Todd Staats, Ohio, May 2009

Miro and Karaka are veritable havens - a true holiday retreat. The best testimony to this was the look of remorse on the face of our 8 year old son, Jack, when we had to pack and leave.

Not surprising - who could leave behind the hammock suspended right by the bay's edge? Who could ever tire of watching those curious Pukeko's strut their stuff around the pastures? Who could not be dumbfounded by the beauty of the bay at high tide, or get bored with the ever changing scenes as the tide retreats and returns? And you must be impressed with the superb thought gone into the design of the cottage....with decks to capture the rising sun in the morning and the setting sun of the evening.

Matahua cottages are also a lesson in sustainability, with a rigorous system for recycling and minimizing waste - throw in the fun of feeding free range hens, and you also have great entertainment for an 8 year old from Shanghai.

Elspeth is a great hostess too...always offering handy hints on the delights of the wonderful area of Mapua. Simply wow!

Darryl Andrew, Shanghai, December 2008

My wife & I stayed at the Miro & Karaka Cottages over the New Year's holidays and had -- no kidding -- a perfect time. We stayed for a week and wished it had been two!

The cottages are located on a beautiful ex-apple orchard, along a huge estuary. It was fun watching the tides come in and out, kayaking, and my favorite extreme sport: hammocking. New Year's Eve we lit a fire, drank some local wine, watched the local town's fireworks from afar, and went gaga over the local starscape above.

Kiwis have got to be some of the friendliest and open people anywhere, maybe it's due to all the fabulous wine they make. In our little area, there were dozens of vineyards -- really too many to visit, though we gave it our best shot!

Thanks again for your hospitality and use of the tres' fabulous Miro. We very much appreciated making some new friends and were constantly amazed at everyone's friendliness and warm spirits. We shall return!

Cliff and Ziggy Hahn, New York, January 2009

Thank you for our stay at your lovely house.

We really enjoyed the beautiful surroundings on your farm, the beach at Rabbit Island, and the PYO berry-fruit farms.

The silent morning - on the deck, with coffee and the view over the inlet to Rabbit Island - fantastic.

We love your perfect holiday house "MIRO" with our BBQ's in the evening and hope we'll come back again -for the 3rd time.

with kindly regards

Anja and Gerhard Petschow, Germany, January 2009

We returned to this cottage a second year in a row as we enjoyed it so much. The house is clean and beautifully situated. The atmosphere is 50/60s but with a modern bathroom and a very comfortable double bed.

Very quiet and private with lovely views set in an old apple orchard, perfect for a relaxing holiday. The proximity to Mapua township, only some minutes by car away, is an added advantage. Elspeth always gave us a very warm welcome. We can recommend this cottage as value for money.

Lesley Ramsden, Germany, February 2009

We stayed at Matahua cottages in January and absolutely fell in love with it! Of our 2 months of traveling around New Zealand it was our favorite place. A spectacular location, I stared at the ever-changing light on the hills all day. And the outdoor bath tub was sublime. The cottages are beautifully decorated and very comfy but still maintain that kiwi "bach" feel. Elspeth took great care of us with wonderful suggestions of local things to do, thoughtfully catered to our family (we were traveling with our 4 year old). We're already dreaming of going back.

cheers

Michelangelo, Karen and Oscar Capraro, San Francisco, January 2008

Thank you so much for our stay at your place - we all have wonderful memories. The kids still talk about splashing in the mud and collecting eggs. Not having been home in over 3 years, it was just what I needed!

Aloha,

Alice.

Alice Keesing, Hawaii, April 2008

We'll always remember driving through the vineyards and returning to the peacefulness of Matahua Cottages at the end of a day of sightseeing, sitting on the deck, looking out over the estuary and sipping a glass of wine that we picked up at a local winery. Watching the amazing assortment of birds, being greeted by your cute dog and feeding the chickens made us feel a part of the New Zealand experience.

The three cottages gave all of us (three couples) plenty of privacy yet the space to socialize and cook dinners together. We enjoyed the comfort of eating inside with views of the estuary or at the picnic table on a warm evening. After dinner we strolled through the vineyards and watched the sunsets over the estuary.

The proximity to Abel Tasman, Mapua (with a great bakery and restaurants), vineyards and great beaches was an unexpected treat. Thanks for all your great suggestions for hikes, wineries and restaurants. We enjoyed it all!

Peggy, Jeff, Elizabeth, Manuel, Erich and Kira, Houston, Texas, November 2008