

# SLOW DOWN

*...You're Here*



With an appropriate motto of 'so close, and yet so far away', Waiheke encompasses the best New Zealand has to offer in one exceptional place. EYE magazine talks with Ed Coutts, founder of Waiheke Unlimited, an exclusive personalised property management and holiday home rental company.

### How did Waiheke Unlimited come about?

I revisited the island in the mid-nineties after living overseas for 20 odd years. There was such tranquillity, beauty, community and purity here – I saw the opportunity for Waiheke to become a major tourist destination. So I set about building a portfolio of luxury and executive self-catered properties for world class accommodation, corporate and private events.

### How do you find properties?

We are blessed to have property owners prepared to share their piece of paradise with others, but this only came about through the care, trust and attention we offer those owners. We have always been careful in the types of clients we allow to use these high end properties, which reinforces the owners confidence and sense of security.

### How do you choose properties?

I look for special properties in unique places that offer what I would want out of high end accommodation or a venue if I was the client. Luxury, isolation, exceptional views, modern facilities and so on. Then I set about marrying clients to a property and adding on anything they may desire. We offer full provisioning if requested, along with in-house catering, massage, maid service, baby sitting and organising of activities – or the guests can do their own thing confident that experienced staff members are only a phone call away.



### Why Waiheke?

There is something special about the island. The original Maori name for Waiheke apparently meant sheltering island or womb, and I believe that sense of rebirth and retreat is immediately evident when you arrive. Conde Nast Traveller, Lonely Planet and The New York Times all rank the island amongst the best stand-out destination islands in the South Pacific, and no other city in the world can boast such an international experience in their own backyard. As a destination Waiheke is truly unsurpassed in so many ways, where natural beauty exists in such close proximity to urbanity.

### How has the business changed?

Over the years Waiheke Unlimited has run an exclusive portfolio of over 100 personally selected premium properties on the Island, ranging from luxury beachside villas to quintessential cottages. The level of properties available in the beginning is vastly different to today, where we now have some of the most expensive real estate in the country. It has been a wonderful transition from the old broken down baches to today's premium properties.

### Who uses your services?

Waiheke Unlimited has looked after many high end clients from heads of state to leading business moguls and through to entertainers. Lady Ga Ga started out as a very high maintenance client but quickly fell into the Island pace and relaxed so much so

# Waiheke ...pure paradise



that she did not want to leave. She even insisted I move in to be her Man Friday, down to being the on-site chef cooking export quality legs of lamb and high country beef. The Top Gear Team have enjoyed several stays on the island and they are demanding in the best way, but great fun. Jeremy asked us to supply a brand new black on black Range Rover Sport for him to enjoy having at the front door.

## What's to do on the island?

There are many things to do on the island, from chilling out and watching dolphins playing in the bay to enjoying the internationally ranked restaurants and award-winning wineries. Indulge in a lazy lunch at the colourful cafes in Oneroa, or enjoy a laid back day at the likes of Stonyridge or the award winning The Shed next door. Cable Bay and Mudbrick restaurants are amongst the options for five star dining; you can cook food from local vendors or get fish and chips for the beach. There is plenty of adventure from laser bird shooting and zip lining through the forest canopy to the once in a lifetime experience of heli-fishing on an isolated rock reef off Gt Barrier Island or the Coromandel.

## And Waiheke is not just for holidays...

Waiheke Unlimited have also built a sustainable relationship in the corporate market, where companies come and hold their off-site meetings, run conferences or showcase Waiheke as the gem of New Zealand. Waiheke's creative and peaceful spaces assist greatly in getting the job done better. We have many options available and it's so easy, just get on the boat, we look after the rest. ◊

Visit [www.waihekeunlimited.co.nz](http://www.waihekeunlimited.co.nz) to book your stay at Auckland's most exciting destination.



**WAIHEKE UNLIMITED**  
premium holiday accommodation