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Global Adviser

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New Zealand's Diamond in the Rough



Roughing it? Not in this rustic hideaway
COURTESY ROUGH AND TUMBLE BUSH LODGE

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If you want to visit the Rough and Tumble Bush Lodge, www.roughandtumble.co.nz, on the northern west coast of New Zealand's South Island, you first need to fly to Wellington, then catch another flight to the town of Westport, before finally making a 45-minute drive to Seddonville. The only buildings of note in this tiny village are the local pub, which stands in a field, and, 10 minutes away, the lodge, which you access by fording a creek in your car. Small wonder that guests are glad to finally arrive.

But then getting there is probably the roughest thing about the Rough and Tumble, which comprises a common living and dining area and five very

comfortable and spacious duplex rooms, each accommodating up to four. The property was built using sustainably harvested red beech and rata wood, on 128 hand-dug pilings, by its owners, New Zealander Susan Cook and American Marion Boatwright. The couple are part of the attraction — Cook rustles up stupendous breakfasts, lunches and dinners, while Boatwright, who hails from North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains, entertains with fiddle and banjo (a CD of his original compositions might be playing as you check in).

Outdoor activities abound, from hiking and biking to fishing, gold-panning, deer-hunting, kayaking on the Mokihinui River that flows past the lodge or simply sitting around the campfire while Boatwright shares a wealth of local lore about the 1880s gold rush or the 1929 earthquake. More rumbles are due soon at this wilderness idyll: the Mokihinui's raging waters may be dammed by 2013 as part of a hydroelectric project, and the creation of a 740-acre (300 hectare) recreational lake will be one of the consequences. We're already missing the way things are now.

— by *Stephanie Stephens*

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