

Garden Tours of NEW ZEALAND



Escorted by **Robert Watson** Landscape Architect

The Gardens of Canterbury

CONNECTITALIA-NZ

<https://www.connectitalia-nz.com>



Come with us!

info@connectitalia-nz.com

ABOUT CONNECTITALIA-NZ LTD

Our company's mission is to promote greater liaison between Italy and New Zealand, reflecting the different but complementary backgrounds of the company's two directors, Beniamino Petrosino and Anne Scragg. Our principal focus is planning and escorting exclusive small group tours in Italy offering a cultural experience with a difference. Our tours are definitely not of the whistle stop "Today is Tuesday so it must be Belgium" kind. We pride ourselves in providing you the time and comfort to really enjoy what you are seeing and doing and you will never feel rushed. Our Italian tours start and finish in Italy so you are most welcome to join us from anywhere in the world. Whether you are travelling on your own or with others, you can expect individual care and attention from escorts who are willing to go the extra mile to ensure you have an unforgettable time. This year, because of Covid-19, we are focusing on tours much closer to home. We encourage travellers wanting to visit New Zealand from overseas to contact us and we will be very happy to provide you with a New Zealand tour package tailored to meet your particular needs and interests. We use accredited tour operators to ensure our tours are trouble free and we insist on the highest standards of customer service in all situations throughout our tours. Your comfort and security are of paramount importance to us. Whether you are planning a trip to Italy or a trip to New Zealand or even a delightful local excursion with us, it will be our pleasure to look after you. We are confident you will enjoy a unique experience and a lot of fun along the way.

OUR EXPERTS

Robert Watson



"Following a brief career in the law I travelled and worked in Europe spending time in northern Italy where I taught and visited some of its great gardens. On my return to NZ I studied landscape architecture as a post graduate student at Lincoln University.

This course included the history of Italian gardens for which I have a passion. I have since then returned to Italy on several occasions and visited more of its gardens for the sheer pleasure of being there and to better understand their place in the history of garden design.

I am delighted to be an ambassador for Connectitalia-NZ's wonderful tours and an escort on its stunning Garden tours. I hope you will join us!"

Robert Watson is a landscape architect based in Christchurch and he has been involved in a wide variety of major projects around New Zealand over the last 35 years. He is a Fellow of the NZ Institute of Landscape Architects and an Assessor for the NZ Gardens Trust. Robert's work has won numerous prizes including a Gold award at the 2009 Ellerslie Flower Show for a garden he designed for the Canterbury Horticultural Society. Another of Robert's projects is the renowned Broadfield Garden, a NZ Garden Trust Garden of International Significance, for which he was a finalist in 2015 NZILA Awards. In 2021, Robert is looking forward to taking Connectitalia-NZ's guests around his home region to see some of the spectacular gardens he knows so well.

Jenny Harper



"I joined Connectitalia-NZ's tour of the Gardens of Lazio in 2019 and was very impressed by the variety of the gardens and the organization of the tour.

I have a definite sense of rapport with people who buy art and want to live with it at home both inside and outside."

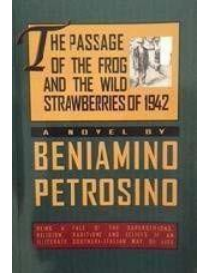
Until she retired in 2018, Jenny Harper was director of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna Waiwhetu from 2006. Before that, she formally established the Art History programme at Victoria University of Wellington and the Adam Art Gallery on the campus. She was also a Head of School and Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at V.U.W. In earlier years, Jenny held curatorial positions at the National Gallery of Australia (short-term), the Queensland Art Gallery and the former National Art Gallery. After a period of helping to plan the new Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, she became the last director of the National Art Gallery in 1990. Jenny was also commissioner for New Zealand's presentations at the Venice Biennale in 2009, 2011 and 2013. In 2020 Jenny was commissioned to write "Picture No Galleries" a booklet advocating public funding of art galleries. Harking back to an earlier interest in religious art and architecture, she led a tour to India in early 2019 and now works on various art-related projects which interest her.

VACANZE ITALIANE – Come with us!

Beniamino Petrosino



I am the founder of CONNECTITALIA-NZ. I came from Italy to live in New Zealand in the 1980's and have worked as a chef, restaurateur and consultant in the hospitality industry in New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia and the United States of America. I have taught Italian in schools and privately and also English to refugees. In 2003, Hazard Press published my novel "The Passage of the Frog and the Wild Strawberries of 1942" set in the Mezzogiorno regions of Italy where I grew up.



In late 2015 I met Anne Scragg when she became one of my Italian language students. In 2016 we ran a successful cultural programme in Christchurch showcasing many special Italian foods and wines and introducing our guests to delightful Italian locations off the beaten track. This year, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, we are sadly unable to visit Italy. Instead, we have decided to offer our guests a magnificent opportunity to explore our own backyard visiting some stunning gardens in our home region of Canterbury New Zealand. Local landscape architect Robert Watson will join us and provide expert commentary throughout the tour.

Anne Scragg



I initially trained as a lawyer and worked in private practice for some years. I had a few years off work while my family was young and then returned to work as an adjudicator and mediator. Over time I became involved in designing and establishing specialist dispute resolution schemes in the public and private sectors. In 2015, I retired from a senior management role with the intention of doing something entirely different. One day my husband came in from the letterbox with one of Beniamino's business cards and I thought Italian language lessons might be just what I needed!

I have been to Italy several times and have loved every visit. I am confident I know what non-Italians need and want when travelling and I want to share my passion for Italy with others. I also want to show our guests from other countries the treasures that my homeland, New Zealand, has to offer. I am therefore excited that this year we are able to offer our guests a very special experience in the region where I live. Whether our guests live in Canterbury or elsewhere, we guarantee they will enjoy a unique and memorable experience with us.

Exclusive Tours of Italy & New Zealand

"Over the last few years we have got together to bring people a genuine glimpse into Italian culture and customs. This time our intent is to take you to visit some of New Zealand's own treasures and give you an experience unlike any other."

For any queries email
info@connectitalia-nz.com

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The Gardens of Canterbury

An exclusive **CONNECTITALIA**  excursion with **Robert Watson**



The Gardens of Canterbury - 6 days

NZ\$3,825pp (includes \$573.75 GST)

On this tour, you will:

- travel in comfort to more than a dozen outstanding Canterbury gardens many of which are 'Gardens of National and International Significance'
- learn about garden design and plants from an expert, award-winning local landscape architect Robert Watson
- learn about the place of sculpture in a garden from renowned art historian, curator and art gallery director Jenny Harper
- enjoy delicious lunches and morning and afternoon teas in delightful settings
- savour a special Italian dinner where we will share stories about famous Italian giardini we have visited
- meet the ghost of a famous Edwardian lady (not guaranteed) in a beautiful historic homestead
- be hosted at two luxury lodges featured in the recent TV series "Lap of Luxury"
- have a leisurely daily schedule with central City pick up and drop off.
- receive individual care and attention from your hosts who want you to enjoy yourself every step of the way and
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY** you will have fun!

Tour outline

Start date: 15 November 2021

End date: 20 November 2021



On **DAY 1** we will travel from Christchurch to **Otahuna**, a luxury historic homestead just outside the city, for the formal welcome to the tour and our first garden visit.



Otahuna is an exclusive lodge that recently featured in the TV programme "Lap of Luxury". Originally built for Sir Heaton Rhodes, a lawyer, run-holder, politician and philanthropist, the building was completed in 1895 and is registered with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust as a Category 1 Heritage Structure. This Victorian mansion now offers luxury accommodation, glorious gardens and sophisticated cuisine.

We may be too late for the daffodils but there is plenty more to experience here. The spectacular 125-year-old grounds were created under the direction of A E Lowe, who trained at Kew Gardens, London. The wide vistas over the lawns and lake are complemented by intimate walks through formal gardens and wooded areas.

The potager-style vegetable garden sits within a sunny stone walled enclosure. Organic produce including exotic and rare heritage vegetables, fruit, herbs, nuts and mushrooms are grown here for the table. Two of the estate's original outbuildings, the Melon Shed and the Apple Store are still in use.

When we leave Otahuna we will make our way back to the city where we will visit historic **Riccarton House**.

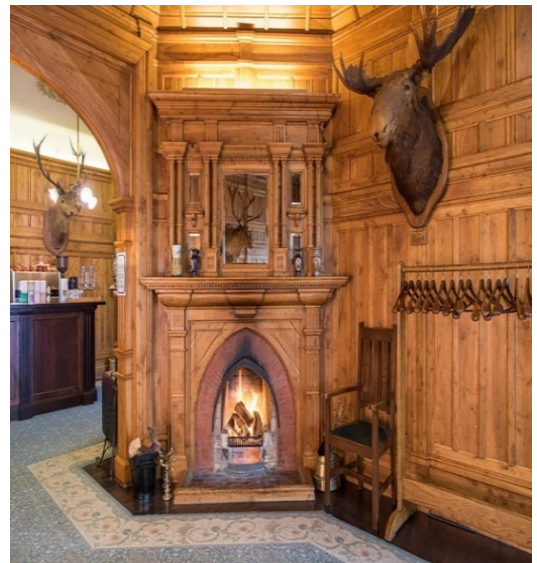


Riccarton House is a unique New Zealand heritage site comprising two historic buildings. We will be guided through the beautifully furnished house by a professional guide and



then, if we choose, we can take a stroll through the adjacent 12 hectare fully enclosed native bush reserve featuring Kahikatea trees up to 600 years old. These trees are the latest generation of a forest that established itself on this site 3,000 years ago.

Time and stamina permitting, we may then make a brief visit to another gorgeous garden fronting a stream in one of Christchurch's leafy suburbs before making our way back to the City at the end of our first day.



On **DAY 2** we will travel a little further afield making our way over the Port Hills to Lyttelton Harbour and the charming settlement of Governors Bay. Just out of the village, we will find **Ohinetahi** former home of renowned architect Sir Miles Warren.

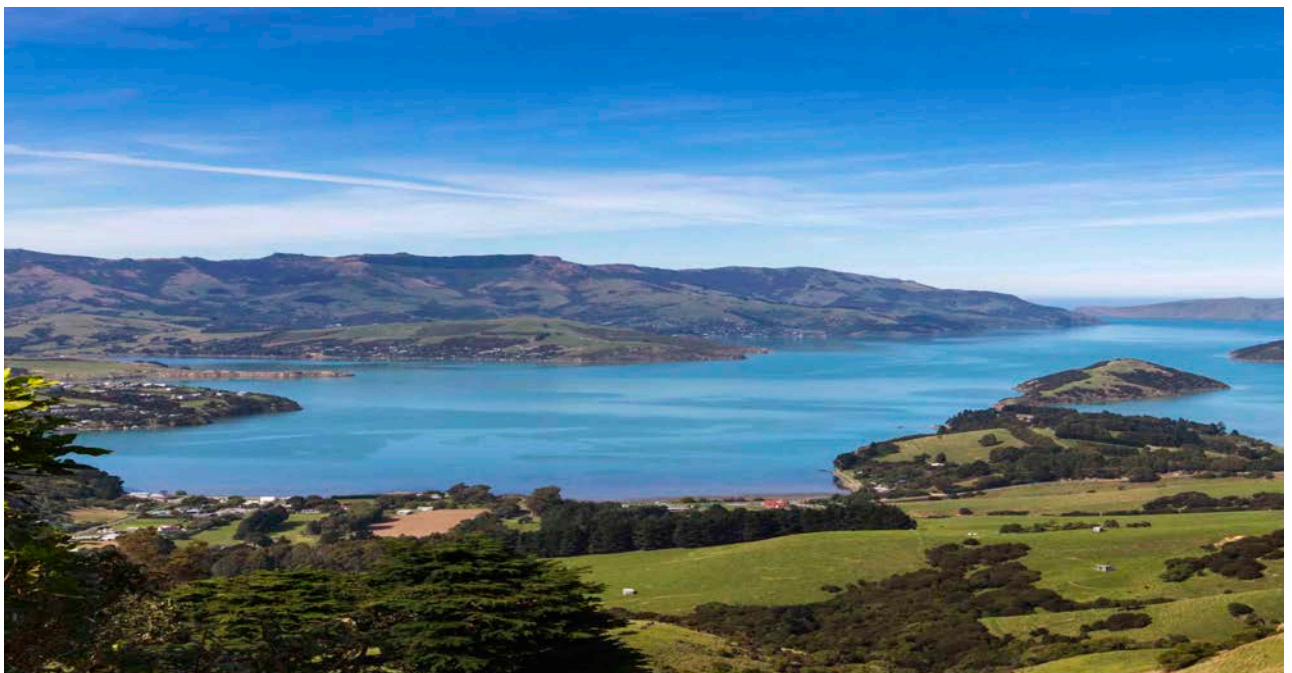


The property includes 1.25 hectares of garden, two galleries, sculpture and woodland walks and the 19th century homestead. The property was gifted by Sir Miles to the nation in 2012 and it is now run by the Ohinetahi Charitable Trust. Both our expert guides are trustees of this Trust.

The garden, dating back to 1865, was remodelled and planted from 1976 by Sir Miles, his sister Pauline Trengrove and her husband John, for whom it was a true labour of love. Ohinetahi is listed as a Garden of International Significance and it also features over 2 dozen contemporary sculptures. Beside the house there are two galleries devoted to New Zealand art and architecture and we will have the pleasure of being guided here by Jenny Harper, eminent art historian and former director of the Christchurch Art Gallery, Te Puna Waiwhetu.



From here it is a short distance to the historic homestead of **Loudon** at Teddington. The owners of this property host the biennial 'Sculpture of the Peninsula' exhibition held as a fund-raiser for the Cholmondeley Children's Home but the property is not generally open to the public. The house is set back against a woodland and overlooks the upper harbour. It is surrounded by an extensive garden which includes courtyards and lawns, trees and shrubberies, herbaceous borders, organic vegetable gardens and an orchard. Placed amongst this is the owner's collection of sculpture.



This will be our last port of call for the day and we will return you to the Garden City.



On **DAY 3**, we will travel a short distance out of the city to the Tai Tapu area and the beautiful garden at **Frensham**. This garden was created 29 years ago. The owner, Margaret Long, recounts that in the early days she had very little gardening experience and no real vision for the site but over the years with much trial and error a garden emerged which she and her visitors really enjoy. She comments that "much thought has gone into the placement of colour, the short and long-distance views and the filtering of light which is created through judicious pruning."

Many of you may know of Margaret from her excellent publication "The Gardeners Journal", which is written for people who are interested in a wide range of topics in the gardening world.

From Frensham we will make our way through the small settlement of Little River and up along the Summit Road with its stunning views across into Akaroa Harbour and out to the Pacific Ocean. We will then wind our way down into Pigeon Bay to the gardens of **Annandale**.



Annandale featured in the TV series, "Lap of Luxury" and we are confident you will quickly see why. The historic homestead overlooking the bay oozes charm and character and it is surrounded by magnificent gardens, a restored fernery and a working farm. The property also features ultra-modern retreats in secluded settings for those looking for the perfect getaway. For us, however, our focus will be the gardens and the warm hospitality offered to us, including lunch!



It will be hard for us to leave Annandale but at least we know we have more treats to look forward to in the coming days. Our journey back to the city will take us a little over an hour.



On **DAY 4** we have a different programme for you. We will see two wonderful gardens but there will also be free time for you to enjoy in the afternoon before we meet again for our special tour dinner.



In the morning we will make our way out of the city to **Casa Rossa**. This is a charming property located about 20 minutes away from central Christchurch. Its development over the last 20 years has utilised a former shingle pit. The owners report that the film "Much Ado about Nothing" inspired the Italian house and the garden design. The garden is a wonderful combination of the formal and informal and a key feature is a 60metre tapestry beech walk. Planting includes an eclectic mix of trees

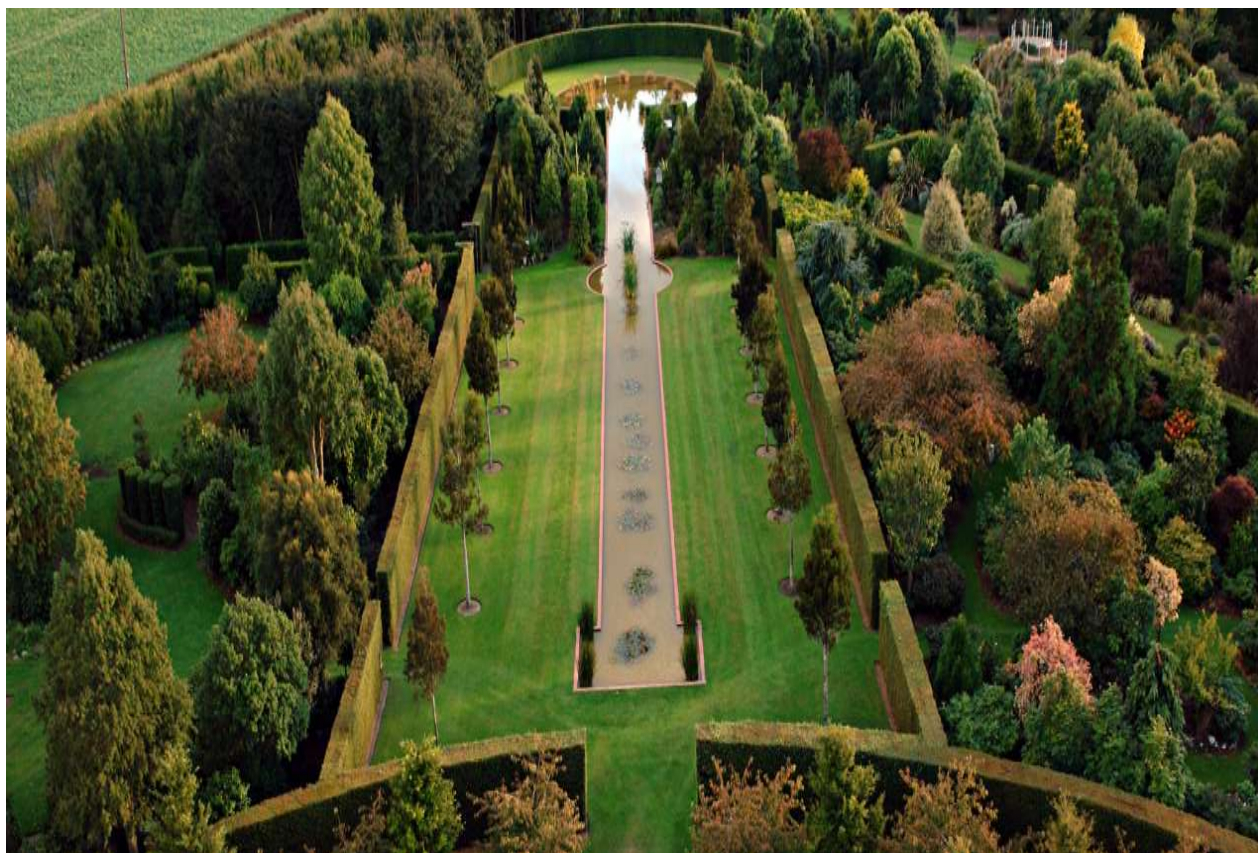


including magnolias, oaks, elms, Sequoia, Paulownia, birch and palms and interesting collections of bamboos, rhododendrons and hostas. The garden sculptures include lions, urns, plinths and archways and a striking Italian bronze fountain provides a beautiful focal point. It is no wonder that this is a very sought-after location for weddings in Canterbury.

When we leave Casa Rossa we will travel to the outlying district of Rolleston to visit **Broadfield**, a garden listed by the NZ Gardens Trust as being a 'Garden of International Significance'. This outstanding garden was designed by our expert guide, Robert Watson and we can think of no-one better to show us around it.



Broadfield garden which comprises 3.5 hectares, was established 20 years ago with originality as a priority. Many natives are used informally and formally and there are Kauri and Beech forests along with a beautiful rose garden, herbaceous border and rhododendron garden. Each garden features art work or sculptures and there is a magnificent hand-dug canal 140 metres in length. Robert will be able to tell us who was responsible for that feat.



We will return to the city by around 2.30pm today so you will have some free time to rest or enjoy local sights before we meet for our very special Italian-themed tour dinner. You may wish to take a stroll through the



Christchurch Botanic Gardens or visit the historic Arts Centre and nearby Christchurch Art Gallery.



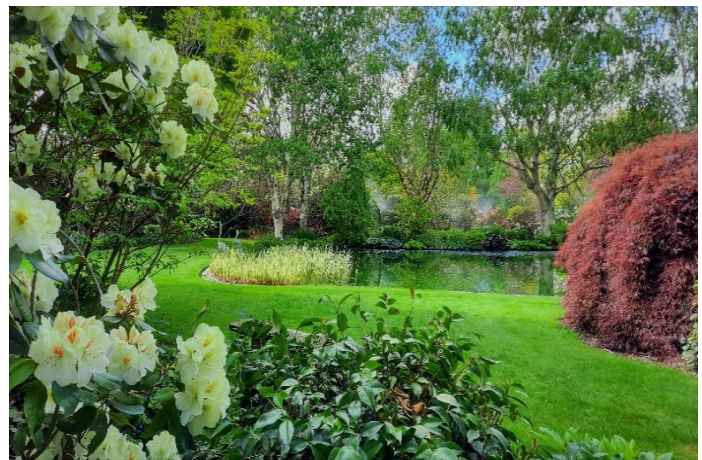
The full cost of our Italian dinner including beverages is included in the tour price along with all your lunches and morning and afternoon tea refreshments during the tour.



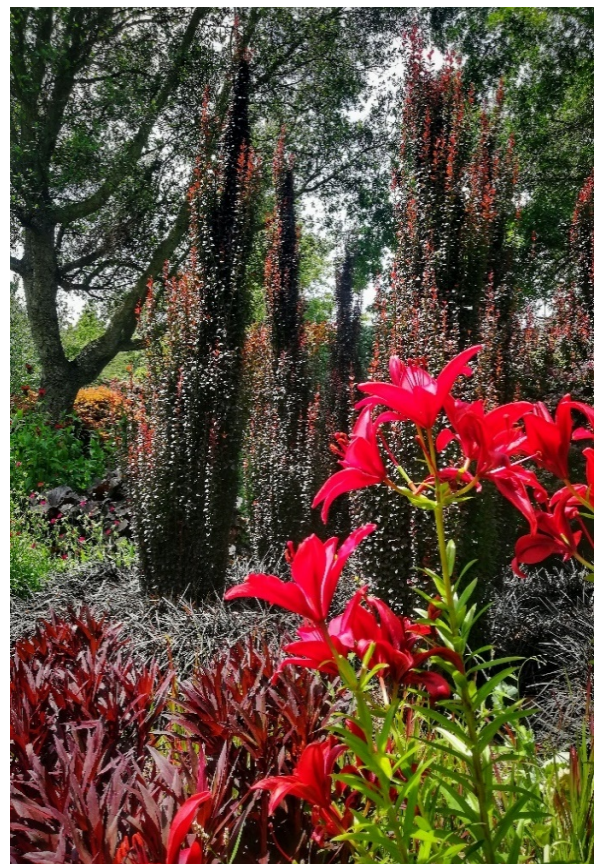
The tour dinner, hosted by Beniamino, will be an occasion to remember where we can also share our memories of beautiful gardens in Italy we have visited.

At the conclusion of the evening, we will provide safe transport to your accommodation.

On **DAY 5**, we will set off for our visit to two mid-Canterbury gardens situated near the township of Ashburton. The first is **Trott's Garden**. This magnificent 6-star 'Garden of International Significance' was created by the Trott family who lived there for 37 years. In 2017, the garden was sold and the Trott's



Community Garden Charitable Trust was formed to ensure it remains accessible to visitors from all over the world. The garden has many stunning features including 650 rhododendrons.



There is a long herbaceous border (110m) filled with perennials which is much admired along with tightly trimmed macrocarpa hedges, a knot garden and a red garden. The former owner has a life-long fascination with dahlias so these plants also play a prominent part in the garden.

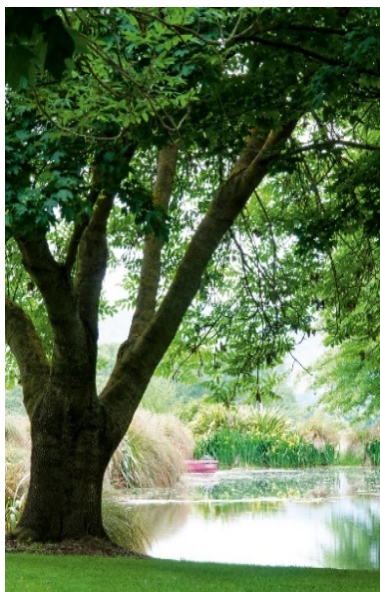
Our next stop is **Longbeach Estate**. This working farm is a mix of arable, livestock and dairy which has been owned by four generations of the same family. The station was a self-supporting community with its own Post Office, School, General Store, Flourmill, Brickworks, Chapel, Smithy, Bakery and Cookshop as well as Stables, Dairy and Wool Sheds, all of which remain today. It will be a treat for us to have our lunch here.



The 12 hectares of garden were established in 1864 with trees planted as shelter belts against the Nor-West winds and over the years the garden has grown up within the shelter. With its gardens and magnificent sweeping lawns, Longbeach has become the perfect venue for weddings and special events.

Our journey back to the city will take us a little over an hour.

DAY 6 is sadly the last day of the tour but we will definitely be making the best of it. Today we travel to North Canterbury to visit two elegant country gardens. The first is **Coldstream** near the village of Culverden. The (cold)stream flowing through the farm property is the secret to the spectacular growth of the garden that was established 31 years ago.



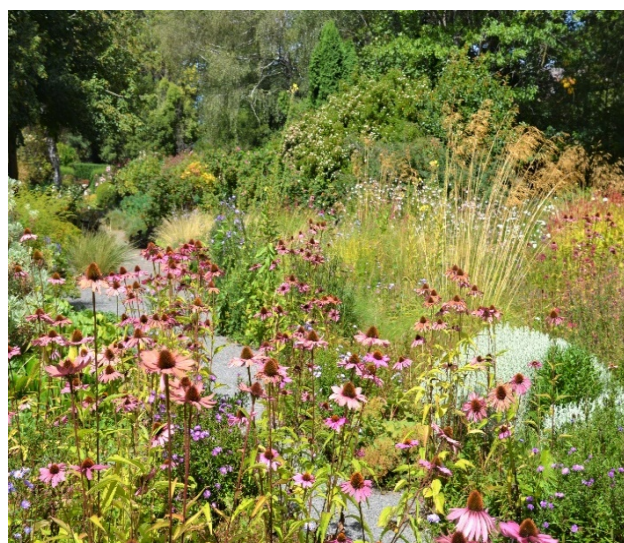
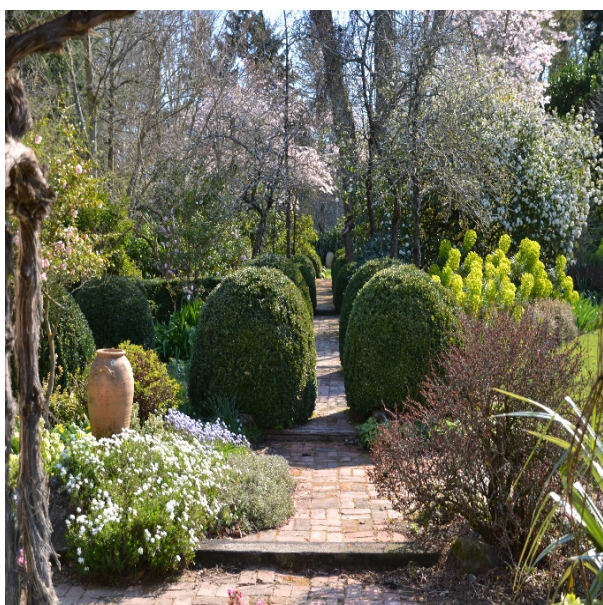
The one-hectare garden surrounds the farmhouse with a series of interconnecting lawns and pathways.

Mature oak and silver birch trees provide height and a canopy for well-established roses, camellias and rhododendrons. There are plenty of restful spots and a large pond with a jetty where eels wait to be fed by anyone inclined to do this! There are wonderful views from the property across the farmland to the Hurunui Hills in the distance.

From Coldstream it is a short drive to our last garden of the tour – the renowned garden **Flaxmere** created by Penny and John Zino. This 6-star rated 'Garden of International Significance' covers 3.2 hectares and it is visited annually by about 4000 visitors from New Zealand and around the world.



This magnificent country garden has been no mean feat to achieve with years of droughts, ferocious winds, searing summer temperatures and freezing winters but the result is nothing short of stunning. This is a garden which is splendid all year round. There are breath-taking mountain views, sometimes described as "art forms." Water is a major feature of the garden with a series of five ponds creating a restful atmosphere



and ensuring wonderful bird life. Stone walls and old bridge timber have been added over the years adding to the charm and country feel of the property. This is a garden which is a wonderful mix of the formal and the informal with extensive native and exotic plantings providing year-long interest.

It will be the perfect place for us to enjoy our last lunch together.

Following this visit we will say our farewells on our way back to Christchurch where we will assist you with any further travel arrangements you may wish to make.



Images of CHRISTCHURCH the Garden City

Acknowledgement of Copyright:

All photos of the gardens in this and our other promotional material have been supplied by the garden owners. Most if not all photos are the work of well-known garden photographer Juliet Nicholas.

Tour inclusions

- All travel costs during the tour including de-luxe coach or minibus with a professional driver.
- Complimentary transport daily to and from your accommodation in Christchurch CBD
- Expert commentary at all gardens from Robert Watson Landscape Architect and others.
- Expert commentary from Jenny Harper, art historian, at selected locations.
- All garden entry fees.
- An Italian-themed tour group dinner including all beverages at a specially chosen venue.
- Daily lunches, morning and afternoon teas during the tour.
- Tour Welcome and Breakfast at Otahuna Luxury Lodge

Tour exclusions

- Travel to and from Christchurch before and after the tour.
- Transport to and from your accommodation outside the Christchurch CBD
- All accommodation charges during the tour.
- All meals other than those included in the tour.
- Additional sightseeing or other activities not undertaken as part of the tour.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

WE DO NOT ARRANGE TRAVEL INSURANCE.
COMPREHENSIVE TRAVEL INSURANCE IS HIGHLY
RECOMMENDED



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