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□ New management team at the Waikaremoana Holiday Park, Dave and Toni Caudwell, are set to enhance the buildings, grounds and overall visitor experience.

# The lake – 'where we wanted to live'

A NEW management team have taken over Lake Waikaremoana's best kept secret — the holiday park.

They will continue the work begun by former managers Petrina and Derek Brenchley who left last month.

Dave and Toni Caudwell bring their experience of running the Ohiwa Holiday Park, 90km directly north of the lake through the ranges.

Mr Caudwell said they were ready for a change and the Waikaremoana Holiday Park caught their eye.

"We looked and knew, that is where we wanted to live," he said.

comfortably, up to scratch.

"Dave has plans of opening the back wall of the store, adding a deck for customers to enjoy the view.

"There are so many thoughts around enhancements to make it a better experience.

"The fishermen usually pull out their smokers, so it is not uncommon to see ten or so of them going at once around the grounds.

"Dave is thinking of putting one big smoker in and letting the fishermen have a communal smoke up."

There are 18 local tracks and so far Mr Caudwell has put his boots on for two of them.

"The tracks differ in length and stamina and endurance demands, so Mr Caudwell said it was important to share with camp management fitness levels and health conditions before setting out.

"I have taken the track to visit the oldest rata tree in New Zealand — it is 13 metres around.

"Just up the side of the campsite, there used to be a THC (Tourist Hotel Corporation) hotel that burned down some years back. There is a pathway that takes you to the old site.



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Tucked into a sheltered cove on the eastern-most point of Lake Waikaremoana, just one hour north of Wairoa on State Highway 38, sits the secluded Waikaremoana Holiday Park.

"When you drive up here, it feels like you are entering a whole new world."

The holiday park's new management team said they came and spent time in the park, just to feel the experience.

"It was a simple decision to make," said Mr Caudwell.

"Out here, when the lights go out, there are no glows on the night sky from a nearby township or fumes in the air from heavy traffic.

"It is just you and the Milky Way."

There is no cellphone coverage, no radio reception and no television.

"There are a million things to do in this place and you don't need a telephone line to do them.

"The holiday park truly is the ideal nature getaway.

"This is a place where families reconnect with each other, without the interference of the outside world.

"This is the kind of place where you can bring your hiking boots, board games and a whole bunch of fun activity ideas."

Water taxis can take visitors to safe swimming spots or on tours around the lake.

Mrs Caudwell said, "we keep our business local and hire local."

"That includes storing necessities in Wairoa so we can make a weekly trek.

"It is an hour into town to buy anything."

The couple are keen to carry on the major improvements made by the previous managers.

"We are in the process of completing the varnish on the decks to the tourist cabins which come fully self-contained and have two separate rooms.

"We have plans to bring the whanau cabins, which can bunk down about eight

**'In this place you don't just read about it, you get to live it.'**

"This place has so much rich history around and that alone will keep you occupied for many visits.

"In this place you don't just read about it, you get to live it."

Some visitors store their boats at the lake over winter, making for lighter travel when they come back.

Others store caravans for the same purpose.

"A lot of the families have been coming here for years and we hope they will appreciate the new enhancements," Mr Caudwell said.

"We know what we want to experience here and we will put the finishing touches on our customer experience of the overall package, from the lake to the Ureweras, that we can be proud of.

"We do advise clients to check our Facebook page during the winter time, as that will have the latest information of road conditions out here.

"It is well worth a day trip to just pack a lunch and come up, and visit the falls in Tuai on the way home, or make it a weekend trip to visit the lake within the lake at Waikareiti.

"It takes you out of your comfort zone, if you are not used to the isolation, but if you are willing, it is an experience well worth the reward."

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