

Nelson Marina. Beautiful, whatever the season. Above: it's eyes down, or eyes closed.

Fact file

Where to stay:

Trailways Hotel, 66 Trafalgar St, Nelson, ph (03) 548-7049, www.trailways.co.nz – a stylish, contemporary venue situated just 200m from Nelson's city centre. Rooms have views of Nelson city or the Maitai River, and studio, spa and executive rooms are available.
Nelson Monaco Grand Mercure, 6 Point Rd, Monaco, Nelson, ph (03) 547-8233, www.monacorort.co.nz – a purpose-built boutique resort featuring red-brick terraced cottages, landscaped around a quaint, village-style setting.
Edenhouse, Orinoco Valley, 213 Thorpe-Orinoco Rd, Nelson, ph (03) 526-8174, www.edenhouse.co.nz
Edenhouse has an exclusive offer for *Sunday Star-Times* readers, available until October 31. For \$2100, two people can stay in a luxury suite for two nights, with pre-dinner drinks, full breakfast and a complimentary exclusive private Abel Tasman National Park charter. Contact info@edenhouse.co.nz for more information, and mention the *Sunday Star-Times* Escape reader offer. Subject to availability.

What to do:

Skydive Nelson, 16 College St, Motueka Airport, Motueka, ph (03) 528-4091 or 0800 422-8999, www.skydive.co.nz
Abel Tasman Sea Shuttles, Riwaka-Kaiteriteri Rd, Motueka, 0800 732-748, www.abeltasmanseashuttles.co.nz
Reid Helicopters Nelson, 256 Eighty Eight Valley Rd, Wakefield, Nelson, ph (03) 541-9530, www.nelsonhelicopters.co.nz
World of Wearable Art & Classic Cars museum, 1 Cadillac Way, Annesbrook, Nelson, ph (03) 547 4573, www.wowcars.co.nz
Nelson Market, Montgomery Sq, Nelson City, ph (03) 546-6454, www.nelsonmarket.co.nz
Wine Art and Wilderness Tours, 99 Trosswill Rd, Tahaanuanui, Nelson, ph 0800 326-868, www.wineandwildernessstours.co.nz
Brian Flintoff, 89 Point Rd, Monaco, Nelson, ph (03) 547-3350, www.jadeandbone.co.nz
Cool Store Gallery, 7 Arani Rd, Mapua, Nelson, ph (03) 540-3778, www.coolstoregallery.co.nz

Where to eat/drink:

Kina Beach Vineyard, Dee Rd, Kina Beach Peninsula, Nelson, ph (03) 526-6252, www.kinabeach.co.nz
Golden Hills Estates, 272 Golden Hills Rd, RD1, Richmond, Nelson, ph (03) 544-4547, www.goldenhilsestates.co.nz
Petite Fleur at Seiffied Estate, Cr SH60 and Redwood Rd, Appleby, Richmond, Nelson, ph (03) 544-1555, www.petitefleur.co.nz or www.seiffied.co.nz
Woolaston Estate, 243 Old Coach Rd, RD1, Upper Moutere, Nelson, ph (03) 543-2317, www.woolaston.co.nz
Hoppood's, 284 Trafalgar St, Nelson, ph (03) 545-7191, www.hoppoods.co.nz
Boat Shed Cafe, 350 Wakefield Quay, Nelson, ph (03) 546-9783, <http://boatshedcafe.co.nz>

operations in the world and the view from 5000m is stunning. Or so I'm told. I think I had my eyes closed for most of it. To get a sense of the experience for yourself, put your head out of the car window like a dog next time you're a passenger in a fast-moving vehicle. Combine that flapping-face feeling with crippling fear, and you'll have some idea what I went through.

Stephanie Holmes was a guest of Nelson Tasman Tourism.



delicious antipasti that complement the moreish Woolaston wines. Housed in a grand heritage building in the centre of town, Hoppood's is a local favourite and it's easy to see why. Its menu utilises local suppliers, fresh, seasonal ingredients, and a wine list heavy on Nelson vineyards. Hoppood's made *Cuisine* magazine's Restaurant of the Year awards top 50 this year, along with another Nelson favourite, The Boat Shed Cafe, where I sample an assortment of riches thanks to Daniel Monopoli's "trust the chef" menu. Situated on the waterfront and jutting out over the ocean, by day, Boat Shed offers stunning views across the harbour; by night, the calm of the twinkling harbour lights and the gentle lapping water make for another fine Nelson setting.

BUT ENOUGH of the good life, and back to that skydive.

Did I jump? Yes. Did I enjoy it? Sadly, not exactly. While I'll admit it was an overwhelming relief to land on solid ground, in one piece, the actual journey to get there was not quite what I'd call fun. In skydiving's defence, I am the only person I know who, having jumped from a plane, doesn't extol the activity's virtues, and if you have ever thought about skydiving then Nelson is definitely the place to do it. Abel Tasman Skydive is ranked as one of the 10 greatest skydive

fish goes a treat with the Kina Beach 2010 reserve chardonnay. After our tasting, with a newly purchased 2010 rose and 2009 pinot noir in my bag, Dave shows me Kina Beach's on-site accommodation – a 1930s schoolhouse, transported from Redwood Valley and now converted into a self-contained cottage. It's a beautiful, tranquil location, making it an ideal couples' getaway.

We visit another luxury boutique accommodation provider in the region. Edenhouse in Motueka's Orinoco Valley. Hosts Bobbie and Peter Martin have created a glamorous yet tasteful country-house retreat, nestled in the hills and set in 19ha of private grounds and gardens.

Tatler described Edenhouse as "so deliciously pretty you want to take a big slow bite out of it". I couldn't agree more.

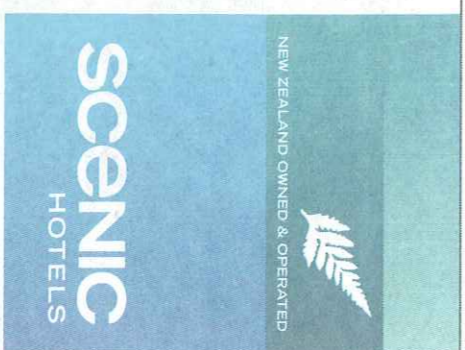
Noel also takes us to Golden Hills winery, where I taste an excellent dolcetto while the owner's adorable dog rests his head on my foot; Seiffied Estate,

SCENIC HOTEL TE PANIA: NAPIER

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