

Passion Points: Family



The Elms hotel, Abberley, England; courtesy of von Essen hotels

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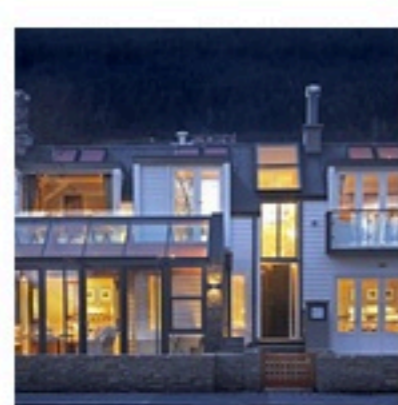
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Back from Queenstown: Eichardt's Private Hotel ext Size A A A

November 05, 2009 at 05:05 PM

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The new **Lakefront Cottage** suites at Eichardt's Private Hotel (www.eichardtshotel.co.nz) make a perfect family base. Eichardt general manager Victoria Shaw comes from a long line of New Zealand hoteliers, and as a young woman, is a rarity among high-end hoteliers in the country. In 1981, her family created Wharekauhau, one of the first NZ luxury lodges. Eichardt's, owned by six families from the U.S. and N.Z., opened to rave reviews in 2001 with five rooms in central Queenstown—the first ultra high-end city property, on par with lodges such as Huka and [Blanket Bay](#). At the end of 2008, Victoria launched the Lakefront Cottage, comprising four suites next door to the hotel. It was a three-year design process (construction was challenging due to historic building codes) and was overseen by the owners and Kiwi designer Virginia Fisher, who also did [Kauri Cliffs](#), Huka and Wharekauhau.

The suites are geared for families, as this is a perfect destination for kids, especially teenagers. Mother Nature provides the setting, and modern machinery the means. It's no coincidence that the Lord of the Rings movies were all filmed here. In fact, Queenstown, on the South Island, saw the bulk of LOTR filming and is the epicentre of all things intensely active and thrilling: jet boating, bungy jumping, helicopter rides, canyoning, biking, rafting, kayaking and more.

The suites come with kitchens, adjoining rooms and multiple configurations featuring teen essentials such as large couches, WIFI, large screen TVs (skillfully hidden behind artwork) and laundry. Outstanding service is delivered by a rare team of mostly longstanding Kiwi staff. The hotel's tapas bar offers excellent snacks and breakfast. For dinners, Eichardt's hooks guests up with the best tables at such local favorites as Wai and the new Botswana Butchery Steak house. What next for the restless perfectionist Victoria? She's starting to focus on expanding the Homestead, an exclusive, four-bedroom sheep station located a 10-minute flight from Queenstown.

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