

# NAVIGATING NELSON

With sandy beaches and bush hiking for miles, grape vines, hops and orchards, and a vibrant arts and crafts scene, it's no wonder Nelson is the haven of choice for those seeking an idyllic lifestyle

Story and Photography SARAH TUCK

Nestled into the top of the South Island Nelson is also known to be one of the sunniest regions in New Zealand and home to well-known food brands Pics Peanut Butter, Proper Crisps, Appleby Farms, Howarth chocolates and more. Near the end of 2023 I zoomed down for a whirlwind tour, eating, drinking, and exploring my way around this scenic city.

## Boat Shed

350 Wakefield Quay, Nelson

Situated on the iconic Nelson waterfront overlooking Tasman Bay, the Boat Shed menu revolves around the seasons with a goal to celebrate exceptional New Zealand produce. The sea-front location provides the perfect view for sipping and dining, and the restaurant is consequently loved by locals and visitors to Nelson alike. Cleverly, they open for breakfast and brunch at the weekend, with lunch and dinner every day of the week. Flavours are fresh and punchy with dishes ranging from baked Mills Bay mussels with lemongrass & ginger mayonnaise and Sichuan chilli oil to grilled lamb rump with stuffed cabbage, anchovy baba ghanoush, feta, harissa puree and dukkha. Having had to undergo significant renovation following damage incurred during Ex Tropical Cyclone Fehi in February 2018, the Boat Shed was fulsomely back in business after four months, delighting its long-standing supporters and providing an on-going drawcard for the community. [boatshedcafe.co.nz](http://boatshedcafe.co.nz)

Seasonal fresh fare served above the glittering sea at the Boat Shed.



The beautiful wines from Flaxmore Vineyard.



Nelson has beaches for miles.



Patricia and Stuart Anderson from Flaxmore Vineyard.



Eddyline Lagers have loads of personality.



Eddyline Brewery Taproom and Mexican Taqueria.

### Flaxmore Vineyard

24 Flaxmore Road, RD2, Upper Moutere

A fine example of 'living the dream', Stuart and Patricia Anderson are the owners and custodians of Flaxmore Vineyards, a 9-hectare vineyard in Nelson's Moutere Hills. They originally bought the land in 2006, and Stuart and Patricia spent many years flying back and forth from the UK before finally making it their home. During that time the land was developed and vines planted with the couple supplying grapes to Neudorf Vineyards since 2011. They are committed to improving the land and local environment, planting thousands of trees and creating a large irrigation pond to attract native fauna. Patricia jokes that her friends back in the UK imagine her life is blissfully idyllic, which she laughs is not always the case, especially after a long day assisting in the vineyard – it can be hard graft! Meanwhile Stuart has a side-passion in photography, which can be seen on display alongside works from a selection of local artists in the gallery they have created adjoining the cellar door tasting room. [flaxmore.co.nz](http://flaxmore.co.nz)

### Eddyline Brewery

15 Elms Street, Stoke

With a very pleasing offering of Brewery Taproom and Mexican Taqueria housed together, Eddyline are drawing locals to their Elm Street location in droves. All of the beers are brewed on-site to the highest standards, with a mission to 'make the best damn beer WE CAN with no compromise', pun intended, given the beers are available to buy in cans, that are counter-pressure filled then stored at -5°C for maximum freshness. At the Taqueria 18 beers are available on tap, so while chowing down on tasty BBQ hot Wings or a Green-Chile Cheeseburger punters can also be sipping on an Amigo Amber Lager, Crankyanker West Coast IPA or one of the other myriad options. A huge array of beers and merchandise are also available to buy online via the website. [eddylinebrewery.nz](http://eddylinebrewery.nz)

### Michael MacMillan Gallery

252 Neudorf Road, RD2 Upper Moutere

Nelson is a region well-known for being home to artists and artisans, in fact there is even a Moutere Artisans society, of which gallery owner Michael MacMillan and partner Jackie Crow (a talented photographer in her own right),

are proud members. An artist and sculptor whose works include limited edition bronzes, as well as large outdoor sculpture, he is wont to use all manner of recycled and locally sourced items in his work. Many of Michael's pieces are available to view and purchase at The New Gallery where they have lovingly created a space to showcase their pieces as well as a selection of other local artists. In addition they have created a stunning Country Homeware range featuring everything from French oak rolling pins to beautifully crafted cheeseboards, available to buy instore and online. [michaelmacmillan.co.nz](http://michaelmacmillan.co.nz)

### Pic's Peanut Butter

49 Saxton Road, Stoke

Like the Walt Disney of peanut butter Bruce 'Pic' Picot is pretty famous round these parts, in fact he is a New Zealand legend, complete with his own Pic's Peanut Butter World. His nutty adventure began in 2005 with the purchase of a concrete mixer turned peanut roaster, bought by Bruce to make his own spread having been disappointed at what was currently on the market. Fast forward ten years and Pic's had become the benchmark for peanut butter around the country as they extended their retail offering and expanded the range to include Almond and Cashew butters, before introducing Boysenberry Jelly in 2018 and Peanut & Chocolate Butter in 2021 and Pic's Big Mix in 2022. With an extraordinarily keen finger on the pulse of the nation, Pics enjoyed collaborations with other brands at the forefront in New Zealand – Lewis Road, Whittakers, and Vogels. While some flavours have come and gone the business continues to delight with its core range and an ongoing passion for doing good – environmentally and socially through their support of mentoring programme Big Brothers and Sisters. [picspeanutbutter.com](http://picspeanutbutter.com)

### Proper Crisps

23 Echodale Place, Stoke

In full confession, I had always been devoted to another potato chip brand. That is until I visited Nelson and had a good old poke around the Proper Crisps factory, saw them being made and had explained to me, what a true crisp connoisseur looks for. And that was it – like Kiwis all-round the country I became a devotee of what are touted as 'real' or I should say 'proper' crisps. With their own bespoke seasonings and potatoes that are cooked by hand the results speak for themselves with several award winners in the mix. Since the original



Photographer Jackie Crow and artist Michael MacMillan.



Nest sculpture by Michael MacMillan.



Country Homeware at Michael MacMillan.



Himmelsfeld winery  
Beth Eggers with Zane  
Kennedy of Wine, Art  
and Wilderness.



The award winning  
Noble Chardonnay  
from Himmelsfeld.



Gravity Winery  
features an  
artist-led gallery.

Marlborough Sea Salt Crisps they now offer five more flavours in the original range, plus thickly cut 'Big Cut' crisps as well as kumara, beetroot and parsnip varieties. [propercrisps.com](http://propercrisps.com)

### Hogarth Chocolate Makers

10F Kotua Place, Stoke

As is so often the way, an experience was at the heart of Hogarth's founders Karl and Marina Hogarth's foray into the world of food production. Ex-sailor and then officer on specialised vessels, it was in Guatemala that Karl tasted the local chocolate and became entranced with the cacao influence on the flavour. He set about sourcing a machine of his own and started making chocolate at home in Nelson, which was so good he made the call to move into a registered premise, then began selling it at the local market. From there the brand took off, and is now available around New Zealand, as well as at selected locations as far afield as Amsterdam, Paris, London, and in the US and Canada. Cacao beans are ethically sourced from around the world, then sorted, roasted, and nurtured through the manufacturing process by hand. Quality, flavour and ethical integrity are paramount, and the flavours are sensational – from Monsoon with chili, ginger, lime and lemongrass, to Licorice Caramel, Anzac biscuit and the super popular Buttered Toast & Sea Salt. [hogarthchocolate.co.nz](http://hogarthchocolate.co.nz)

### Appleby Farms

26A McMahon Street, Stoke

Nelson farming neighbours Murray King and Julian Raine started out by producing 100% A2 certified milk before looking for a product suitable to create from their core milk product. Food technologist and friend Kirsty Giles suggested ice cream and so their 'cow to cone' business began. Flavours range from the Kiwi classic, Boysenberry, to Passionfruit and Chocolate Brownie and the offering has been extended to include Frozen Yoghurt which comes complete with a 5-star health rating – delicious and nutritious! [applebyfarms.co.nz](http://applebyfarms.co.nz)

### Food Factory

11 Findlay Place, Stoke

Nelson is the proud home of many established foodie entrepreneurs, most of whom overcame hurdles and endured sharp learning curves on the way to success. Bruce 'Pic' Picot of Pic's Peanut Butter was one. In true philanthropic manner he started The Food Factory in 2020 to assist like-minded go-getters work

on their foodie dreams without having to sign pricey leases or buy expensive machinery. The Food Factory incorporates work spaces, kitchens, chillers and warehousing facilities able to be rented short or long term by budding producers. They also have a demonstration kitchen and network of local foodies happy to have a chinwag and share their knowledge. [thefoodfactory.co.nz](http://thefoodfactory.co.nz)

### Himmelsfeld Winery

100 Gardner Valley Road, Upper Moutere

Occasionally, we all encounter a special individual who leaves a lasting impression. Beth Eggers who established Himmelsfeld Winery in 1991 is one such person. Full of passion and love for winemaking (and her Romney sheep that roam amongst the vines), Beth produces award winning Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Noble Chardonnay – the 2006 vintage of which won a gold medal at the 2006 Vinalies Internationales wine show in Paris, a better achievement than many top wines from highly regarded European producers. As well as a tiny tasting room the vineyard features a charming chapel – influenced by her German heritage and a late 1970s trip to the Black Forest Beth has replicated a very European experience at Himmelsfeld (Heaven's Field). The chapel is modelled on one in the Siedelbach Valley in Germany and has been used for picture-perfect weddings. With her vast knowledge of the Moutere valley and the terroir her vines enjoy, it is well worth stopping by for a chat, a tasting and no-doubt, to buy a few special bottles to take away. [himmelsfeld.co.nz](http://himmelsfeld.co.nz)

### Gravity Winery

243 Old Coach Road, Mahana

As a woman of a certain age, I wouldn't ordinarily think of gravity as being a particular friend of mine, but as it turns out, when it comes to making wine, gravity is very useful indeed. Especially when the entire operation is designed to make the most of it. This four-level winery, cut into the side hill of Mahana is one of a very few gravity-fed wineries in New Zealand, requiring no pumps to be used during the wine-making process. Winemaker Brett Birmingham explains the process with the enthusiasm of a kid in a candy shop. Gravity is the home-base for the Booster Wine Group, and the grapes are received from Nelson, Central Otago, Marlborough and Hawke's Bay, before being sorted and de-stemmed on level 4, then sliding



Fiona and Alistair  
Forster of Forsters.



The joyful rambling  
garden at Riwaka  
River Estate.



The beautiful tasting  
selection at Forsters.



Amber Robertson of  
Riwaka River Estate.



Jo and Greg McCrostie of Ruby's Espresso.



Drinks and nibbles in the cabana at Pihopa Estate.

down chutes into the winery levels below using the natural forces of gravity. This minimal-intervention technique is designed to see the true character and purity of the grapes shining through. In addition to the winery, Gravity is also home to a cellar door for imbibing and dining, as well as a charming art gallery, run by local artists. [gravitywinery.co.nz](http://gravitywinery.co.nz)

**Forsters Moutere Hills**

**42 Eggers Road, Upper Moutere**

Once home to a winery café, Moutere Hills Winery now features a stylish, casually contemporary vineyard restaurant operated by husband and wife dynamo Fiona and Alistair Forster. Working in synergy with Moutere Hills the restaurant showcases many of their wines, which can also be sampled at the cellar door. Chef Alistair's talent is on full display in the kitchen, where he turns out stunningly presented plates packed with flavour and texture. One of the most popular items, the Forsters Long Board, is a selection of 5 tapas designed to reflect the season. From fresh and bright Teriyaki cured Ora King Salmon to Ricotta Dumplings with Romesco sauce and classic Confit Duck Leg and Smoked Breast with tagliatelle there is an option to suit all palates and appetites. Whether sitting outside overlooking the vines and hops or inside the airy restaurant Forsters is well worth a visit. [forsters.co.nz](http://forsters.co.nz)

**Riwaka River Estate**

**60 Takaka Hill Highway RD3**

Riwaka River Estate is a charming boutique vineyard, olive oil producer and home to Paul Miles, Amber Robertson and their two children. The vines and olive trees are planted adjacent to the house and tasting room, with a sprawling garden beyond. The garden, complete with swathes of flowers, vegetable beds and chicken coops, has been a labour of love for Amber. With the cellar door usually open 7 days per week from midday, Riwaka makes an ideal spot to drop by and sample a Resurgence Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Noir – uniquely styled Kiwi wines with a subtle European influence, reflecting the limestone terroir, unique to the Riwaka River Estate vineyard. [riwakariverestate.com](http://riwakariverestate.com)

**Ruby's Espresso**

**Akersten Street, Nelson Marina**

If sea air and a great coffee sound appealing (and why wouldn't they), Jo and Greg McCrostie's converted shipping

container café is well worth a visit. Built by the marina with a long term view of creating a bigger premise as the marina develops, this small set up pumps out hundreds of coffees on a daily basis, to locals who come in their throngs for a great brew with beans sourced from local supplier Supreme.

**Neudorf Vineyard**

**138 Neudorf Road RD2, Upper Moutere**

Founded by Tim and Judy Finn, Neudorf now includes daughter Rosie on the team alongside GM and winemaker Todd Stevens. Pioneers with little knowledge when they started out, Tim and Judy learned fast, and along the way adopted a plan to embrace organic growing as much as possible; all Moutere blocks are either fully certified organic or in conversion. This ensures that Neudorf Moutere Chardonnay, Neudorf Moutere Pinot Noir, Neudorf Twenty Five Rows Chardonnay and Neudorf Moutere Riesling, Moutere Pinot Gris and Moutere Albariño are all certified. It's not just about managing an organic vineyard; it's about operating their enterprise in the most responsible manner to safeguard their piece of the planet. This entails planting native vegetation along the streambed, shunning polystyrene, opting for recycled paper, composting winery by-products, reintegrating pruning waste into the vineyard as mulch, minimizing air travel, and returning jars and packaging to suppliers. When they send wine to private customers abroad, they use wool protectors for each bottle. These protectors have a delightful dual purpose—they can be reused as planters or even made into hand puppets! The entire environment is incredibly picturesque, with cellar door and an outdoor seating area inviting guests to slow down and make the most of the experience. [neudorf.co.nz](http://neudorf.co.nz)

**Pihopa Retreat**

**225 Waimea Road, Bishopdale**

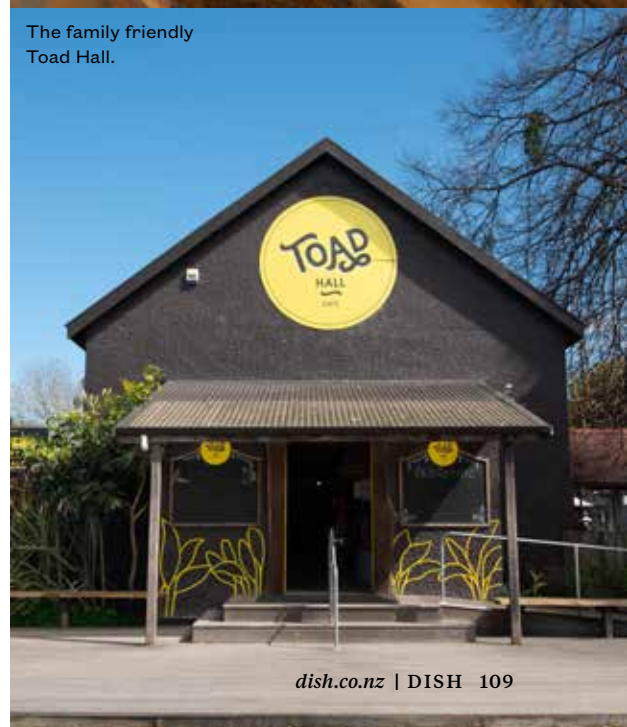
The location of the original residence commissioned by Bishop Edmund Hobhouse in the mid-1800s the 'new' house was built in 1925. Now it is a centrepiece for Pihopa retreat, a 5-star luxury accommodation with six suites, set in 5.5 acres of beautifully park-like gardens and borders alongside the 2.4ha Bishopdale Reserve. The grounds are enhanced by heritage landscape trees that are over 100 years old, with 14 of these being protected, along with heritage woodland. Bought by current owners



A significant wedge from The Junction Shop.



A hearty breakfast at River Kitchen.



The family friendly Toad Hall.



Grab a glass at Neudorf Vineyard.



Neudorf award winning wines.



Charming Pihopa Retreat.



Noël and Teena Jelsma with a selection of Neudorf Black garlic products.



Neudorf Black garlic infused olive oil drizzled over tomatoes and mozzarella.



The Neudorf Black range.



Fresh flavours at The Apple Shed Kitchen and bar.



Cosy seating at The Sublime Coffee.



The popular Sublime Coffee morning spot.

Sarah and Sam Mellor in 2015, who returned home from the UK in 2021, the suites have been completely renovated, and are large and beautifully appointed with everything you'd expect of a luxury resort, presented with an old-school charm. Breakfast at Pihopa is a real treat with homemade muesli, pancakes and eggs however you fancy on the menu. The pool house provides the perfect spot for a pre-dinner drink and nibbles with a private and idyllic setting. [pihoparetreat.nz](http://pihoparetreat.nz)

### The Junction Shop

151 McShane Road, Appleby 7081

With a region packed with local producers and artisans The Junction Shop isn't short of suppliers. Their store is packed with cheeses, condiments, beverages, meats, gifts and antipasto supplies. While all of the products are enticing it is the fromage that really shines, with award winning Thorvold and Little River Estate dairy delights in the mix. No Nelson picnic would be complete without a visit to The Junction Shop for supplies. [thejunctionshop.co.nz](http://thejunctionshop.co.nz)

### River Kitchen

81 Trafalgar Street

If you're after a hearty brunch with a pretty view in central Nelson, you can't go past River Kitchen, turning out plates loaded with breakfast and lunch fare enjoyed by diners as they enjoy the view over Maitai River. On my visit I must admit some temptation to try the Chicken Waffles with Frank's hot sauce and maple syrup or the nostalgically evocative Mince on Toast with a poached egg (which I hear was very good), but instead I opted for a classic bacon, eggs, and avocado with hollandaise on bagels which hit the spot.

### Toad Hall

502 High St, Motueka

Whether you want to grab a luscious wedge of cake or a spectacular salad to take away, or would rather settle in and enjoy a vast menu of breakfast and lunch delights, Toad Hall has you covered. It's something of an institution in the region, the dining area is vast, airy and packed with a range of diners, from toddlers to grandparents. Built in the 1850's Toad Hall was the original school house at the first-ever school built in Motueka. The building was later donated to the Salvation Army by early settler Dr Greenwood and used as their Sunday School Hall for over 100 years. At some stage, during that time it was traded with St Thomas's church and relocated to become their Sunday School Hall, and now, for almost

20 years it has been a hub of the local foodie community. A place where fresh produce and a welcoming atmosphere draw hungry diners from far and wide. [toadhallmotueka.co.nz](http://toadhallmotueka.co.nz)

### Neudorf Black (garlic)

88 Neudorf Road, Upper Moutere

Producers don't come more enthusiastic than Neudorf Black owners Noël and Teena Jelsma. In 2019 while living overseas, they heard that Nelson-based black garlic paste producer Ralph Butcher was looking for a buyer before closing up shop. Unwilling to let New Zealand's best black garlic fade into the sunset, they bought Ralph's oven and recipe then moved home to Upper Moutere in December 2019, where Neudorf Black is based. Their carbon-friendly business is very hands-on as they slow-cook the garlic at a very low temperature for several weeks until it becomes almost sticky in texture and the distinct pungency of fresh garlic is softened such that it almost or entirely disappears, as it develops umami-rich savoury notes. The purée is spectacular stirred through mushrooms, as an extra on the cheeseboard, served with steak or stirred through mayonnaise. As well as the purée Neudorf Black produce an essence, sea salt, honey, olive oil and barbecue sauce all infused with the distinctive flavour. Noël and Teena are particularly effusive about the health giving properties of black garlic, and advise that to preserve its superfood qualities when cooking, its best to add it as late as possible in the cooking process. [neudorfblack.co.nz](http://neudorfblack.co.nz)

### Sublime Coffee

32 New St, Nelson

Sublime was founded by Dan Hennah in 2005, when a living room was converted to a small business, and their OG espresso bar on Haven Road was born. When he set up the small roasting business in an old cottage on Haven Rd he had a coffee roaster that could handle five kilograms of beans at a time. The roaster was in part of the front room with a coffee machine and a couple of tables on the veranda. Dan's brother-in-law used another room as a gallery while Dan lived in the back of the building. Steadily, production increased and Sublime built up a band of wholesale cafe outlets to serve up Sublime goodness and eventually the coffee demand outgrew what the Haven Road roaster could produce. They took a punt and built their bigger coffee roaster from the ground up. Master Roaster, Mike, would cart green beans over to Motueka

and roast them in a container on the outskirts of town. The roasted beans would travel back to Sublime Haven Road and be packaged up and distributed to spots in the top of the south, often hand delivered by Dan and wife Emma, with kids in tow. These days the business has expanded successfully throughout the North Island, but you'll still find locals queuing for their favourite coffee in the original New Street location. [sublimecoffee.roasters.co.nz](http://sublimecoffee.roasters.co.nz)

### The Apple Shed Kitchen and Bar

Shed 3, Māpua Wharf

After a stroll around Māpua Wharf, exploring the local craft and artisan shops, The Apple Shed provides the perfect spot to take a break and enjoy a delicious, restorative bite with a cheeky glass of wine. The offering is casually sophisticated, the menu changes seasonally and has a focus on sourcing and using local produce wherever possible. On my visit the Green Pea and Mint Falafel with whipped plant-based feta and beetroot were the perfect combination of light but satisfying. The Seared Hokkaido Scallops with black pudding, cauliflower purée, apple and horseradish gel, bacon and panko crumbs looked equally delicious. For the sweet tooth amongst us, I reckon the Apple and Tamarillo Crumble would be a hit. The vibe is light and breezy and the interior spacious, with a selection of tables overlooking the stunning Waimea estuary as well as casual outdoor seating. [theappleshed.nz](http://theappleshed.nz)

### Wine, Art and Wilderness

7 Majestic Way, The Wood, Nelson

Wine, Art & Wilderness is an Owner/Host Business Class visitor 'activity provider', which sounds a wee bit dry until you meet the operators Zane Kennedy and Elissa Menzies. They provide luxury wine, nature and art tours in Marlborough and Nelson with an eye for delivering a perfectly tailored experience. Fully catered wine, nature and art tours are leisurely, informal and designed to cater to all levels of fitness. They describe their service as providing a 'soft adventure - enticing, always rewarding and taken at a relaxed pace'. During my Nelson visit I was very happily transported between sites in the luxurious comfort of a Mercedes accompanied by Zane and his enthusiastic and vastly knowledgeable patter.

Doing more than just dropping visitors to various locations, they introduce the wine and art personalities of Nelson, bringing a personal touch and a depth of experience that is extra special. [wineartandwilderness.co.nz](http://wineartandwilderness.co.nz)