



World Drive Rally 2012 – New Zealand

Leanne Sajtos packs some serious New Zealand travel into 3 days.

I was one of 50 lucky agents who recently participated in Newman's Holidays World Drive Rally in New Zealand.

World Drive Rally is organised for travel agents to see and experience different countries. This year it was New Zealand and I participated in 1 of 5 car rally challenges. My region was Rotorua/Taupo and I had 3 days jam packed full of adventure and sightseeing activities.

I had to be in Rotorua ready for action on October 3. Thank goodness I had taken the direct flight from Perth and only had to drive 3 hours, as it really was straight into it. The first night we were off to the Skyline Restaurant for dinner and other activities such as lugging, heli-pro scenic flights and a cable car. I did get to sleep and stayed at the Sudima Hotel, Lake Rotorua which is on the lake and in a great central location to the Polynesian Hot Pools and the town, with a boardwalk around the lake.



Next day we ventured to Agroventures, where there are 4 breath-taking activities for everyone.

- The Agro-jet is New Zealand's fastest jet boat ride, 0-100kph in 4 seconds and takes only 1 or 2 passengers on board plus the driver!
- The Swoop is a 40 metre high swing drop. 1, 2 or 3 people can swoop at any time but one has to pull the rip cord!
- The Freefall Extreme is free flying over a turbo propeller jet (like floating in space!), there are instructions before you fly and you get suited up with jumpsuits – and the nets will catch you.
- The Schwebb is a world first and you peddle just like on a bike but lying down, in a cocoon like capsule. You will be racing against the clock and each race has 3 laps of the 200 metre race track.



After Agroventures we visited Te Puia, which is a cultural centre where you can see a Maori meeting House, make some flax flowers and see some mud pools.

There were many more sights and attractions to see in Rotorua and about 3 days is a great length of time to fit it all in.

Next stop, Taupo. We went to Huka Park where there is the Prawn Park. Here you can fish for prawns and they will cook what you catch, you can play 'killer prawn golf' over the nets off platforms and also visit the prawn sheds where all the prawns live. There is also Huka Jet, an exhilarating 45 minute jet boat ride that takes you up to the falls for a closer look.



We stayed at the Wairakei Resort, which has great course and they also have family units. The buffet meal was excellent with a great range of foods.

Our next lot of activities took us to the Taupo Bungee and Cliffhanger Swing. At 47 metres high, Taupo Bungee is the most popular bungee in the North Island. You can jump, solo or tandem, over the Waikato River, and you can even get wet with a water touch if you want, whether it be your hand or your whole body! The Cliffhanger Swing is a new adrenalin addition to the Taupo Bungee. You swing down towards the waters below with the freefall kicking in immediately and speeds reaching up to 70kph. You can get the crew to count you down or the surprise option of being released at their will! One or 2 of you can swing at the same time.



I also went on a lake cruise of Taupo, seeing the Maori carvings in the rocks. You can just do the cruise or you can have brunch on board as well. Chris Jolly also offers fishing charters.

Last destination was Auckland for the World Drive Rally finale and gala evening. All the teams stayed at the Sky City Hotel, where the casino is. Sky City also offers adrenalin activities to do such as the Sky Walk outside the ring of Auckland's famous SkyTower or a Sky Jump which is NZ's highest jump of 192m.

There are many cruises on to be taken from the Auckland Harbour as well to see the wineries, go dolphin and whale watching to sailing the Americas Cup winner on the Auckland harbour.

From bush and beach adventures to helicopter scenic flights, jet boat tours or just shopping on Queen Street, Auckland is fast becoming a modern, vibrant city.

The whole trip, despite being a whirlwind tour, has increased even more my enthusiasm for travel in New Zealand and especially in the Rotorua/Taupo region that I was located. I can't wait to tell my clients more!!