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MAY '25

An uplifting
monthly election
of life, style and
happenings.



We take a literal plunge into May with a look at some of the best scuba diving spots – part of a Best in Breaks feature spanning Aotearoa and beyond. This month, we also get creative and take a spin in a self-driving car.

Fermob

Photo: Nicolas Mathieus

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BEST IN BREAKS

Escape the ordinary and dive into
these incredible destinations.



A Valley Paradise

Tucked away in the remote Taharua Valley on New Zealand's North Island, Poronui Lodge spectacularly – and effortlessly – blends luxury and wilderness.

This 6,500 hectare high country playground retreat offers escape for anglers, hunters, horse riders, and those simply in search of solitude.

Poronui's journey began with fly fishing, located at the head of the Taharua and Mohaka rivers where healthy trout populations thrive in the clear waters. Among regenerating manuka, wetlands, and native bush, these pristine waters provide some of the finest brown and fly fishing not just in Aotearoa New Zealand, but the world.

"We've built something lasting here – not just infrastructure, but connections," says lodge manager, Claire Hall. "The people are what make this place truly special."

Poronui's sheer scale must be seen to be believed, its diverse terrain incorporating eucalyptus stands and high ridgelines to open country trails and working farmland. And managing it comes with its own quirks and complexities. "You can have sun and rainbows at one end of the property and snow or a deluge at the other," chuckles Claire.

Whether standing at the highest point of the property with nothing but wilderness in sight, or wading through a trout-filled

river, it's a chance to inhale, and let go. "It's certainly a 'wow' moment for most," Claire reflects.

Fly fishing remains the core offering, and the lodge is consistently ranked among the best on Earth. But that's just the beginning. Guests can traverse the rugged terrain on horseback, or hike and mountain bike through 2,000 hectares of native bush. There's also pheasant and clay pigeon shooting, archery, heli adventures and even chef-led foraging experiences. From adrenaline to quiet immersion, everything can be arranged with ease.

When it's time to unwind, Poronui goes above and beyond to deliver on comfort and culinary excellence. Dining is an event in itself – not simply a meal, but a nightly celebration of our nation's seasonal bounty, with the opportunity to even feast beneath the stars. "In

New Zealand we're spoiled for seasonal produce, passionate growers, incredible artisans, great role model icons throughout our culinary circles," Claire adds. "Here at Poronui we host a dinner party every night. We like the menus to tell a story of the property, chef and country."

The lodge's seven guest cabins – some with fireplaces and private decks – form the social heart of the estate. Blake House (pictured above), a grand timber villa with ample space for multigenerational travel, offers a more private stay in classic hunting lodge style. For those craving to unplug, Poronui Safari Camp delivers riverside luxury under tented cabins, complete with crisp sheets, hot showers, a separate dining tent, and gourmet cuisine.

Poronui is driven by an impressive long term plan. The team has fenced over 1,100 acres of native beech forest to exclude deer and enable regeneration. There's also a focus on carbon forestry, predator control, and protecting native species such as bats, skinks, and native birds.



Community outreach is woven into the lodge's ethos. Poronui opens its land to schools, environmental groups, and events like the Poronui Passage – a ticketed multisport race through the estate that includes marathons, trail runs, and hiking, complete with gourmet meals, hands, and a bar.

Despite its remote location, Poronui guest feel anything but isolated. Relationships take centre stage – between guests, guides, and the land itself. Many return often, drawn not only by the experiences but by the heartfelt hospitality. "It's about relationships and memories," Claire says. "That's what people take home."

As Poronui looks to the future, development continues with care and intention. A new accommodation cabin is in progress, seasonal menus are evolving, and conservation projects expanding. Yet the lodge's soul remains unchanged – a place where the wild beauty of Aotearoa is paired with warmth, purpose, and connection.

"I've had 25 years here," says Claire, "and it just gets better and better with many of the same amazing people, guests and friends along for the journey."

Visit poronui.com for bookings or find out more.