

The New Zealand Retreat That Has Topped the Condé Nast Traveller Readers' Choice Awards - for the Second Consecutive Year

Pīhopa Retreat - a six-suite sanctuary above the city of Nelson - has been named #1 Hotel in New Zealand by Condé Nast Traveller UK for the second year running, and continues to hold a flawless sweep of the world's most respected travel accolades. For British travellers planning the long-haul journey of a lifetime, the answer to where to stay has never been clearer.

NELSON, NEW ZEALAND - Pīhopa Retreat, a luxury boutique hotel tucked away in the hills just minutes from Nelson's city centre on New Zealand's South Island, has been voted #1 Hotel in New Zealand in Condé Nast Traveller UK's Readers' Choice Awards 2026 - the most prestigious reader-voted travel accolade in the British market, and one of the most coveted in the world. Voted by nearly 200,000 readers, Pīhopa ranked #9 in Australasia and was the highest-placed New Zealand property.

This is the second consecutive year Pīhopa has claimed the top position, confirming what guests and editors have long known: this is not a moment of recognition, but a standard consistently upheld. In a remarkable double recognition, the US edition of Condé Nast Traveler has also named Pīhopa #2 Hotel in New Zealand for the second year running, ranking #6 in Australia & New Zealand - confirming a reputation that now resonates on both sides of the Atlantic.

The accolade places Pīhopa firmly on the global stage, alongside the world's great intimate luxury hotels and lodges. An independently owned six-suite retreat, Pīhopa ranks alongside international names including Ritz-Carlton, Capella, The Fullerton and The Langham.

The accolade does not stand alone. Pīhopa Retreat holds a perfect 10/10 on Booking.com - a flawless score sustained across every verified guest review over three consecutive years - TripAdvisor's Best of the Best (top 1% of hotels worldwide), and New Zealand's Qualmark 5-Star and Gold Tier Sustainable Tourism rating. It is, in every measurable sense, the finest small hotel in New Zealand.

"Just WOW. This was our favourite place over a six-week holiday in New Zealand and Australia. Only sorry we couldn't stay more than two nights. It is perfection."

- TripAdvisor Guest, United Kingdom

The Journey British Travellers Have Been Waiting For

New Zealand has long held a particular resonance for British travellers - a shared heritage, a common language, and a landscape so dramatic and unspoiled it feels like a world apart. And the numbers confirm what many already know: visits from the UK to New Zealand are growing year-on-year, with British travellers consistently ranking among New Zealand's most committed visitors - staying longer, travelling further, and exploring more regions than almost any other market. It is the question every long-haul traveller asks before they book: where, among all the options, will the stay itself become part of the story? Pīhopa Retreat is that place.

Set on a historic estate dating back to 1859, Pīhopa Retreat comprises just six private suites within 5.5 acres of heritage gardens - including 100-year-old protected landscape trees, neighbouring a 2.4-hectare reserve. It is, by any measure, one of the most extraordinary city-centre hotel settings in the country.

An Experience Unlike Anything Else

Hosted by Sarah Mellor and her team, every detail of a guest's stay is considered and deeply personalised - in a way that only a six-suite retreat can achieve. Restaurant reservations are arranged in advance with complimentary taxis to and from Nelson's city centre. Evenings begin with complimentary drinks and canapés served poolside. A curated selection of wines and cocktails, freshly baked afternoon treats, and a sumptuous chef-prepared breakfast served in the historic 1877 chapel complete the picture. Between it all, guests wander at their own pace - pathways weaving through heritage plantings, native birds overhead, the stillness of a place that feels entirely, gloriously private.

It is this calibre of unhurried, genuine hospitality - something the world's grand hotels rarely achieve - that has earned Pīhopa a remarkable depth of loyalty among its guests, many of whom return from the United Kingdom, season after season.

"Simply stunning in every way. Pīhopa has the wow factor. The host goes the extra mile to make your time here feel extra special."

- TripAdvisor Guest, Bexhill-on-Sea, United Kingdom

A Gateway to One of the World's Great Wilderness Regions

Pīhopa Retreat sits at the threshold of three of New Zealand's most spectacular National Parks - Abel Tasman, Kahurangi, and Nelson Lakes - placing guests at the heart of some of the most breathtaking and accessible wilderness on earth. Golden beaches, ancient beech forests, and mountain trails are within easy reach, as is the region's celebrated food, wine, and arts scene. The Nelson Tasman region is officially New Zealand's top-rated destination earning the #1 spot in the nationwide Visitor Satisfaction Survey with an outstanding rating of 8.9 out of 10. Nelson also consistently ranks as New Zealand's sunniest city - a detail that will not be lost on British visitors. For those making the journey across the world, it rewards every mile.

New This Season

Pīhopa Retreat's new Wellness Centre - incorporating a massage studio, reformer Pilates, sauna and ice bath - opened in Winter 2026, further strengthening the

retreat's offering for guests seeking restoration alongside exploration. The team has also planted 3,000 native trees on the property this winter, with a new walking trail and curated journeys through the emerging forest landscape - both reflecting the constant desire to refine and elevate the guest experience, and to deepen the sense of sanctuary that defines every stay. The suites have also been refreshed for the new season, with new paint, curtains and furnishings.

Sustainable by Nature

Pīhopa Retreat is carbon positive certified, a Kaitiaki member of the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary, and a signatory of New Zealand's Tiaki Promise - a commitment to care for the land, sea, and community. The retreat also holds Qualmark 5-Star and Gold Tier Sustainable Tourism accreditation - New Zealand's official quality mark for tourism, independently benchmarked against Global Sustainable Tourism Council standards, recognising Pīhopa's dedication to protecting the natural environment. For guests who care as much about how they travel as where they go, Pīhopa offers luxury with a light footprint.

Practical Information for Travellers

Pīhopa Retreat is bookable direct at www.pihoparetreat.nz. Long-haul services from the United Kingdom arrive into Auckland and Christchurch, typically with one stop via Asia, the Middle East or the United States. Nelson is then a short domestic flight, connecting via Auckland, Wellington or Christchurch. Given near-full occupancy through the peak summer season (November–April), early booking is strongly recommended - particularly for travellers building a wider New Zealand itinerary.

About Pīhopa Retreat

Tucked away in a tranquil pocket just minutes from Nelson's city centre on New Zealand's South Island, Pīhopa Retreat is New Zealand's most acclaimed small luxury hotel. Six private suites set amid 5.5 acres of heritage gardens on a historic estate dating to 1859. Highest-ranked New Zealand hotel in Condé Nast Traveller UK's Readers' Choice Awards 2026 (#9 in Australasia) and second-highest in the US edition (#6 in Australia & New Zealand) - for the second consecutive year. Perfect 10/10 on Booking.com (three-year verified score). TripAdvisor Best of the Best (top 1% globally). Qualmark 5-Star and Gold Tier Sustainable Tourism accreditation, verified against Global Sustainable Tourism Council standards. Carbon positive certified and signatory of the Tiaki Promise.

[Media Kit and High-Resolution Image Library](#)

Media Contact

Karenn Wood
Elevate Consultancy Ltd - Marketing & PR
T: +64 220 706 429 (NZDT / UTC+13)
E: hello@elevateconsultancy.co.nz
W: www.pihoparetreat.nz

- ENDS -