

Gisborne EXPLORER

From fine wine and designer fashion, swimming with sharks to horsing around, Gisborne has something for everyone. We asked local Diana Dobson to give us the heads up on what the first city to see the sun has on offer

BEST EATS

1 The ultimate gourmet picnic

Grab what just might be the best coffee in town from the Gisborne Deli, on the corner of Gladstone Road and Derby Street by the iconic town clock.

Pore over their own manuka smoked salmon, bagels, salads, pâtés and all sorts of treats, and put together a picnic. The breads come from artisan baker Mark Morrell and are baked just down the road. Picnic in hand, we head to Matawhero Wines at Riverpoint Road.

Matawhero founder Bill Irwin is considered by many to be the father of modern viticulture. His son Denis, a cheeky and entrepreneurial chap, created the wine label in the 1970s and made the gewürztraminer so famous that even the Queen was drinking it. These days, the Matawhero estate is owned by the Searle family, who have revived the acclaimed label. The cellar door

Wines from Matawhero are renowned.



offers a five-wine tasting rack – the rack made from the winery’s recycled barrels – including gewürztraminer, pinot gris, viognier, chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, arneis and merlot. Sit under the big old walnut tree outside in a beautiful vineyard setting and listen to the birds sing.

HOT SHOPS

2 C’est si bon: It’s so good

Chelsea Thorpe appears as delicate as the feminine and floaty clothes she creates. After a bit of a sabbatical she’s back with her new store L’Amour Modern, nestled in a revamped shop she shares with younger sister Zoe on Grey Street, right next to the popular Winemaker’s Daughters cafe. At L’Amour Modern you will find everything you expect in a designer’s sanctum – brown paper patterns, big scissors, lengths of cloth and, of course, the sewing machine. It’s all so beautifully girly, with antique lace and other treasures from decades long gone. Chelsea, who has twice shown at New Zealand Fashion Week, may call herself “just a dressmaker”, but her work is impeccable.

These days she loves the idea of creating dresses and outfits for one special occasion – like weddings. Her inspiration is clear – the classics of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s live on in this lovely little store.

3 Vintage-lovers’ secret treasure

It’s another sister act at the other end of town at Bird of Prey, in the Art Deco Coronation Building at 24 Gladstone Road. Bird of Prey is brimming with vintage and retro goodies, new clothes designed →





Vintage treasure at Bird of Prey.



by Sheryl May, and lavender treats and jewellery by Amanda Laidlaw-May. It's a salmagundi of treasure: Bejewelled tiki drop earrings stand out from the many offerings in the old glass cabinets, but there is so much more to take in. Amanda makes much of the jewellery on site, with two collections released a year. A whole wall dedicated to bird memorabilia provides a funky new take on the iconic flying ducks. There's plenty of Pacifica with a Kiwiana flavour, with a rather stunning kitsch floral flashing lamp, complete with an authentic butterfly.

4 Boys' club turned arts hub

The Poverty Bay Club at 38 Childers Road is a destination in itself, with artists happily sharing this historic old building with Cafe 1874 and the Dome Cinema. Swede-turned-Kiwi jewellery designer Helena Andersson uses old coins, bone, flax, stamps, paper clips and imagery to create fun and funky pieces that are as beautiful to wear as they are to look at. She invites other top jewellers to exhibit at her Studio 66, which she shares with – among others – ceramic artist Peggy Erikson, whose exotic array of creations range from small wall pieces to large garden sculptures. There's also designer furniture, Turkish homewares, and just down the hall is Mad Madge Jewellery, for a different take on semi-precious stones. The Poverty Bay Club used to be a gentleman's club in the 1800s – women weren't allowed to become members until 1988. Over the years it has been lovingly restored to become a hub of arts and entertainment in the broadest sense.



Swim with the sharks, or just watch from the comfort of the boat.

ADVENTURE THRILLS

5 Diving with the great whites

While diving with sharks sounds like heart-stopping stuff, you don't actually have to get into the (very strong and secure) cage if you can't face it. Boyd McGregor's locally made boat SurfIt takes groups about 15km or so offshore. White pointers and makos are the sharks of favour and his tales are enough to turn your blood cold. The biggest white pointer he's seen was 7m long, almost 2m across and probably weighed a couple of tonnes.

Years ago Boyd, like many fishermen, simply cursed sharks for the fish they chopped in half as he reeled them in. But these days he's tagging sharks and collecting data to help the world better understand these mysterious creatures. August and September is high season for great whites, with makos running November through to the end of March. Boyd fishes all year round and says he never tires of spending time with the giants; he reckons they're more curious than aggressive and a sign of a well-functioning ecosystem. Most people who head out with him come back so inspired by "the



Wainui Beach is stunning for surfers or to just chill out.



Experience some of New Zealand's most isolated beauty spots on a horse trek.

experience of a lifetime" that they tell him it leaves skydiving and bungy jumping for dead. In the 12 or so years he's been running tours Boyd figures he's seen around 15 great whites – all female. The three-hour trip is suitable for those over 16.

RELAXATION CENTRAL

6 Seaside sunrise retreat

Absolute Wainui B&B at 69 Wairere Road provides everything you need to rest, relax and rejuvenate – seaside – after a day's travel. It's the kind of place you feel immediately at home, thanks to the discreet attentions of hosts Lynn Broad, who hails from London, and husband Andy, whose family have farmed the local hills for generations.

Highly noteworthy is their welcoming chilled local chardonnay accompanied by a sumptuous platter piled with the best foodie treats from the East Coast on offer – Waimata cheeses, fresh fruit, olive oil, mussels, parengo (seaweed) fritters, homemade hummus and more. Sit back and enjoy as the sun sets and watch late-afternoon surfers ride near-perfect tubed waves on the Pacific Ocean just metres away. Or even better, join them.

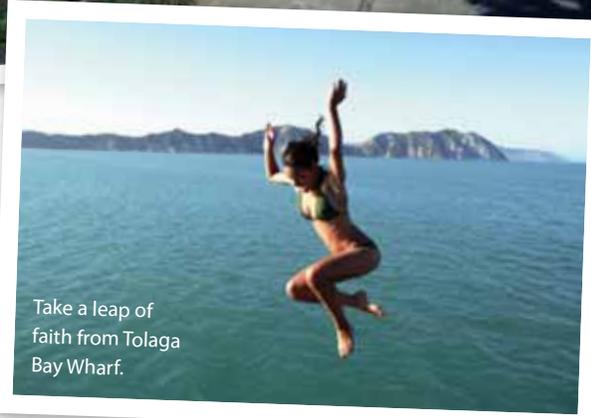
Dinner is traditional local fish and chips on the beach, albeit in more comfortable style. And it's a given to rise at dawn to watch the sun sneak out of the Pacific, sipping freshly squeezed juice and enjoying the start of what will surely be another perfect day.

FURTHER AFIELD

7 Horses on the beach, of course

It's a mighty hike along SH35 to Rangitukia to find Eastender Horse Treks, but miss it at your peril. Turn off the Pacific Coast Highway at Tikitiki. If you don't have a car, you can work in with the daily courier run from Gisborne. This is Ngati Porou East Coast fun at its best – the folks at Eastender are adamant a good gallop along the beach pumps more adrenalin than a bungy jump. Run by East Coast-born and bred Reg Kaa and his Dutch wife Jacqui, the treks run all year round. They include beach, bush, hills and panoramic views taking in historic Mt Hikurangi – the first point on mainland New Zealand to see the sun each day and a very special maunga (mountain) to Maori – and the Waiapu River. Reg is happy to share local folklore and legend with trekkers and, with around 30 horses, the Kaas have something suitable for all levels of riding. Don't expect to be corralled in organised style. Riders cruise at their own pace. They work with Eastender Backpackers, and can also offer bone carving classes and a hangi dinner for the complete experience. If you like to plan, do note that these trek bookings aren't taken way in advance – this couple fully expect visitors to get lost in the beauty of the coast and end up taking extra days to reach them. It may be an isolated stretch of New Zealand but there's no shortage of things to do.





Take a leap of faith from Tolaga Bay Wharf.

8 Ultimate grass roots road trip

Drive SH35, with plenty of stops along the way. You could use every cliché in the book to describe this route and they'd all be true. It is picture postcard stuff around every bend. You'll probably have to give way to horses as they're ridden across the bridge at Tokomaru Bay, and be ready to chat with local kids jumping off the historic Tolaga Bay Wharf, but is there any better way to really feel New Zealand?

Pack a snorkel, flippers and your fishing rod. Stop in at Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve just 16km out of Gisborne and see if you can't find the giant footprint left by East Coast ancestor Rongokako. It's a beautiful spot to explore, both in and out of the water, especially with children. But take nothing more than memories and photographs from this protected water. Just around the corner is the beautiful horseshoe bay of Whangara where the epic movie *Whale Rider* was filmed.

Next stop is the 660m long Tolaga Bay Wharf – said to be the longest in the southern hemisphere – which was built between 1926 and 1929 to service a bustling coastal shipping trade. While you're casting a line off the wharf, look around and soak in the area that Captain James Cook visited in 1769. Jump off the end and help the kids pick mussels from the pylons that are being rebuilt to stop the wharf from crumbling into the sea. ▣

rotorua paradise



Relax in the sophisticated elegance of a luxury lakeside lodge and bathe in thermal waters under a canopy of tranquil native bush.

www.rotoruaNZ.com/luxury