

Getaway with girlfriends



Family holidays are great, but getaways with your girlfriends are needed too. There's no better way to relax, recharge and spend time with your girlfriends than in a big beautiful cottage, lodge, house or bach. **SARAH WEEKS** scours the country for the best girlfriend getaways to unwind, bond and try new things.



Cliff House, Whangarei Heads.

Ara Roa Villa and Boutique lodgings has a collection of private, secluded, contemporary and professionally maintained luxury retreats located along the wonderful Whangarei Heads coastline.

They offer a wide range of properties and something to suit most people's needs. From The Guest House and Aria with their mountainside / forest settings, through to the larger "coastal estates" of Cliff House and Te Whara (Kauri Mountain Point) with their spectacular clifftop and peninsula settings. All of the properties offer a unique setting on

a beautiful stretch of New Zealand coastline. For a group of girlfriends, **Cliff House** is the perfect property for a weekend away.

You'll enjoy jaw-dropping views from almost every room in this spacious and beautifully furnished home. As soon as you enter the front door, you're welcomed by a magnificent panoramic sea view of the coastline, from the open plan kitchen, lounge and deck. Cooking becomes a pleasure when it can be done with such a vista and in such a large space with plenty of room for all your girlfriends to join in the cooking. Take a bottle of wine and try out the European

pastime of petanque in the backyard, or wander around the extensive grounds and mown pathways of this private estate, taking in several stunning viewpoints. For the adventurous, there's a steep stairway leading down to a rocky cove below with rock pools to explore, or you can try your luck at fishing for the day.

The house has four bedrooms and can sleep eight to ten people. It's cliff top and waterfront setting is unique with amazing views, making it a place you never want to leave. The large lawn area out the back gives you plenty of space to wander the ▶

GIRLFRIENDS' GETAWAY



**Hurstmere Cottage,
Matakana.**

property and enjoy the many scenic views – there's also many tracks to explore. Relax on the deck in their sun loungers to take in stunning coastal views and even do a spot of bird-watching. There are binoculars and a telescope for you to use if you're interested in stargazing or watching the many boats that cruise into the harbour. The house has all the modern amenities one would expect in luxury accommodation of this kind with Sky TV, DVD, ipod and WiFi. Luxury 100 per cent cotton linen, towels, bathrobes and ECO toiletries are provided throughout the property. The bedrooms feature a super king, king, queen, double and two single beds, with three shower / toilet facilities, so there's plenty of room for everyone. The unique blend of privacy and tranquillity in this architecturally designed open plan house will make it hard to leave this slice of paradise behind.

Just 40 minutes drive north of Auckland lies the picturesque Matakana wine region, home to over 30 boutique vineyards, olive groves, restaurants and the famous Matakana Village and Farmers' Market. You and your girlfriends will love this special place where you can come together to enjoy all this charming village has to offer.

Hurstmere Cottage is centrally located to Matakana's marine and parkland reserves, beaches, wineries and vineyards. Nestled in its own private corner on 25 acres of landscaped garden, farmland and vineyard, you'll enjoy expansive views of the surrounding Matakana valley and rolling hillsides. This fully self-contained barn converted into a cottage, features a full kitchen, lounge / dining area, laundry, bathroom and four bedrooms, accommodating up to ten guests, making it ideal for a group of girlfriends.



**The Lava Lounge,
Whale Bay, Raglan.**

Relax on the deck with the girls and enjoy the tranquillity of this peaceful property or visit the iconic Matakana Village just two minutes drive away with cinemas, restaurants, pubs, wine bar and boutique shopping. If you want a night in cooking with friends, the kitchen is fully equipped and modern with a fridge, microwave, gas hob, oven and dishwasher to help clean up after all the fun.

There's plenty of room for everyone to have their own bed with three double bedrooms, one of which may be converted to two singles and a fourth bedroom upstairs with four single king beds. A fully tiled bathroom and separate laundry facility makes guests feel right at home. In the summer you can also enjoy a BBQ on the deck, which overlooks the Matakana Valley whilst enjoying the all-day sun. Home comforts such as internet, Sky TV, audio and DVD are available and the cottage also provides all linen, towels and bedding. If you'd like that extra touch of luxury, daily servicing is available at a small extra charge.

Sleeping Lady Lodges in Whale Bay, Raglan offers you and your girlfriends an amazing holiday with unique, quality accommodation that will invigorate your soul. The bay offers a magical atmosphere just ten minutes drive from Raglan town and is nestled amongst the lush green rainforest of Mount Karioi and world class surf breaks of Manu Bay and Whale Bay with fantastic mountain and ocean views.

Their **Lava Lounge** lodge has a whole lot of

style and warmth featuring local and surf inspired artwork. You and your girlfriends can laze on the spacious sunny deck in summer or roast by the gas fireplace in winter. The highlight of this place is a private deluxe six to eight person spa and outdoor shower situated in the garden – perfect for girlfriend getaways. There's also a ten-seater outdoor table and chairs with umbrella, two sun-loungers and BBQ, making it a great retreat for entertaining. Inside there's a large open-plan living and kitchen area with a massive puriri wood dining table and island cooking station. You can enjoy ocean views from the deck and living area through the large wall-to-wall bi-folding doors that open out.

The lodge sleeps up to ten people in three bedrooms with sets of bunks in each so you can relive childhood memories or enjoy late night gossip sessions bunking with your girlfriends. For larger groups, you can book the adjoining downstairs studio unit to sleep an extra two people in a king-sized bed. The kitchen is fully equipped to cook all your own meals with stove and microwave and there's also a washing machine and dryer if you need it. Phone, Sky TV and a DVD / stereo system will let you enjoy some chick flicks or fun party tunes during your stay. As a guest of the Lava Lounge, you and your girlfriends will also receive special discounts on surfing lessons, surfing equipment rental and sunset harbour cruises. Or if you want to relax, the staff will gladly help you arrange therapeutic in-house massage therapy to



Backyard at Driftwood Central, Kerikeri.


ultimately enjoy your Raglan holiday.

You and your girlfriends will love **Driftwood Central's** holiday and business accommodation because it offers the best hotel / motel alternative in a boutique environment that's both privately situated, full of local flavour and conveniently located near the town of Kerikeri. Owners Richard and Vanessa are passionate about the natural beauty of their property and are seasoned travellers. Their boutique accommodation is mid-range, so it's affordable to most people and provides a memorable holiday for you and your girlfriends.

With seven uniquely different self-contained holiday homes, cottages, baches and studios situated on six acres of lush gardens, Driftwood Central offers affordable accommodation options to fit any budget for girlfriend getaways to the Bay of Islands. There are boutique two-bedroom cottages for small groups and larger holiday houses with room to share for bigger groups. Located just minutes from the heart of Kerikeri, this is the perfect location for those wanting a peaceful and natural environment along with



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Cliff House

'Where the sea meets the sky'

Cliff House offers luxury, boutique, self-contained or catered accommodation on Northland's beautiful Taiharuru Peninsula.

With spectacular clifftop views, access to the water for fishing and rock pool exploring, and pathways over 25 acres, Cliff House is also just a short drive from all the beautiful beaches, walking tracks and more that Whangarei Heads has to offer.

Cliff House sleeps 8 - 10 people and has every convenience to make your stay truly memorable.

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Tumblehome is Richard and Vanessa's fabulous family and friends' lakeside cottage that sleeps six. It's easy living with a relaxed and contemporary coastal design and there are tranquil views through the palms and hammocks to the pond below. The ranch sliders open from the lounge and twin master bedrooms onto a covered deck and large outdoor seating area. You'll enjoy extraordinary wildlife from here with the most fabulous birdlife such as tuis, rosellas and pukekos.

Tumblehome has a full kitchen and large laundry with twin master bedrooms, queen beds and a bunkroom with a set of generous sized bunk beds. The cottage is great for a group of girlfriends with even sized

bedrooms. You can also enjoy Sky TV, a retro sound system, great local art, books, magazines and lots of lovely Laura Thomas soy candles. All this and you can walk to bustling Kerikeri in minutes.

Another fantastic location for the girlfriends' getaway, is the beautiful Marlborough wine lands, staying at the luxurious five-star **Marlborough Vintners Hotel** in Blenheim, offering 16 beautiful appointed suites with vineyard or garden views. When feeling peckish after a day visiting vineyards, guests can enjoy the famous fine-dining Vintners Room Restaurant, where chefs tantalise taste buds by using local produce with matching wines from well-known cellars in the region. The hotel also offers packages for weddings, romantic stays, degustation experiences and corporate events.

Girlfriends' healthy escape

For girlfriends on a mission to shape up for the beach, look no further than PT for Me, a luxury health and fitness retreat in the beautiful Kerikeri, Bay of Islands.

Fun, motivation with a personal trainer and relaxation, ensure participants feel amazing, lose weight (if that is the goal) and tone up.

Soak in the spa or cool off in the salt water pool after a workout. Hosts Philippa and Pete Cooper are REPS registered and Philippa is an associate member of the Australian Institute of Weight Loss Consultants. Their all-inclusive package includes



healthy breakfasts, tasty evening meals, using local fresh produce and they can cater for all diets. Daily activities include kayaking to the Stone Store, biking the Twin Coast Cycle Trail, running the local trails and longer hikes.

The retreat can accommodate up to six people (three double rooms) and there is also a camping site. The private luxury, self-contained accommodation is 4km from the centre of Kerikeri. ↗