

New Oyster Cult Waiheke

Preface

When the owners of The Oyster Inn moved to New Zealand they never intended to open a restaurant, let alone a hotel. Two years on, they are the proprietors of a local institution and a winning brand.

Writer

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Increasingly known for its vineyards, sandy beaches and extra virgin olive oil, Waiheke Island is an idyllic spot 35 minutes by fast ferry from downtown Auckland. In the main village of Oneroa, just up from a gentle curve of white sand, is The Oyster Inn. Part hotel, part restaurant, the inn is a charming project that opened late last year, set up by Andrew Glenn and Jonathan Rutherford Best. The duo moved back to New Zealand in 2010 from London, where they worked for 15 years in marketing and in the catering industry respectively.

Not long after they landed, both fell in love with Waiheke and bought a piece of land on a whim. Actually owning the Inn came a bit back to front. They weren't looking to start a restaurant in the first place – although Rutherford Best admits to always having fancied a seaside inn – but when they walked up the ramp and looked in through the windows of what was then an abandoned restaurant, they couldn't resist. "We wanted an environment where you came up the stairs and left the world behind," says Glenn. "Our



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- 01 Graphic design by Special Group, Auckland
- 02 The Oyster Inn façade
- 03 Andrew (left) and Jonathan
- 04 The Inn is approached via a long ramp
- 05 Tables were made from salvaged timber
- 06 Head chef Christian Hossack
- 07 Industrial stools furnish the veranda
- 08 The seasonal menu is focused on fish and shellfish
- 09 Flax "kete" gives a New Zealand feel
- 10 Oysters come from all over the country, including Waiheke's Te Matuku Bay
- 11 The food is deliberately unpretentious



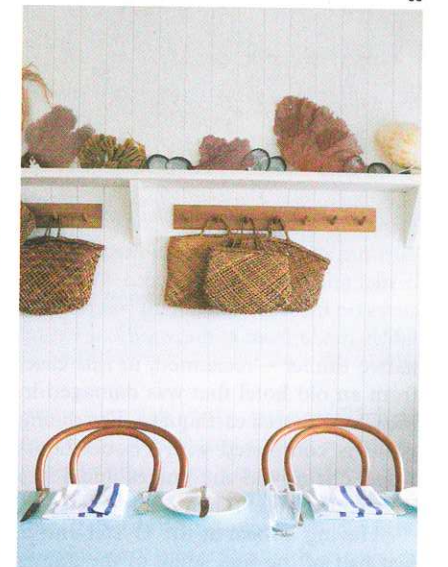
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greatest desire was that people would feel this was a local place, that they could feel familiar with it."

The concept came together in days but making it happen took a year. Across a fern-filled atrium they built a private dining room, three airy guestrooms and a small shop selling beachwear from The Waihetian, Saturdays Surf and Streetwear and locals Belle and Beau.

From the shop buyers can catch a whiff of the food being prepared by chef Christian Hossack. Formerly of the