

# NEW ZEALAND 2024 /2025 - PART IX

TAURANGA - WHAKATANE - ROTORUA - TAUPŌ - NAPIER

From Whitianga we headed further south to our next stop, Tauranga. We stopped for lunch and to explore the famous murals in Katikati.

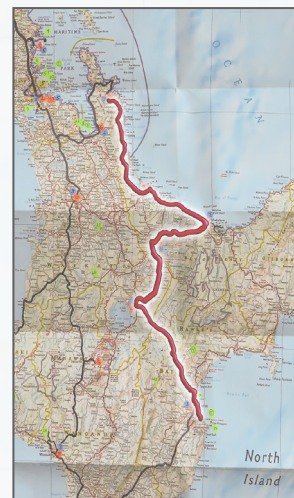
Katikati is known for its many murals painted on walls of commercial buildings. Started in the 1990s to generate tourist interest it led to the town getting a *New Zealand's Most Beautiful Small Town* award for towns with a populations of less than 8,000.





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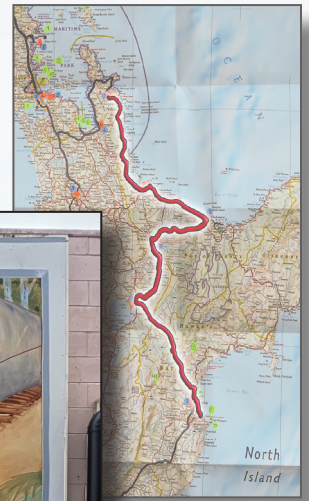
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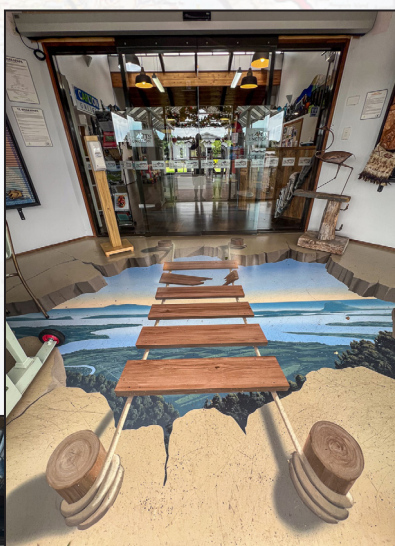


# NEW ZEALAND 2024 /2025 - PART IX

TAURANGA - WHAKATANE - ROTORUA - TAUPŌ - NAPIER



The entrance to this art gallery was a bit of concern as my vertigo kicked in.



We enjoyed our long stop exploring all the murals and other art in Katikati. After lunch we continued on south to our next lodging where we would stay over the New Year holidays.



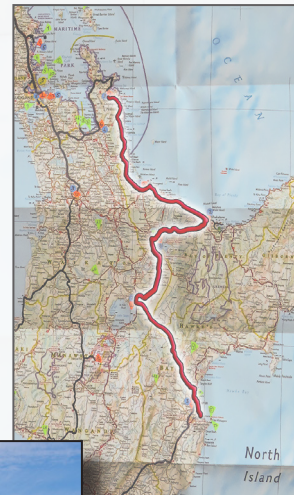
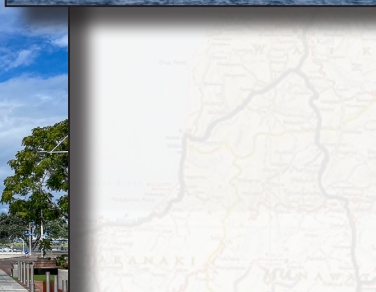


# NEW ZEALAND 2024 /2025 - PART IX

TAURANGA - WHAKATANE - ROTORUA - TAUPŌ - NAPIER



In Tauranga we found one of the few New Zealand manhole covers with place names on them.



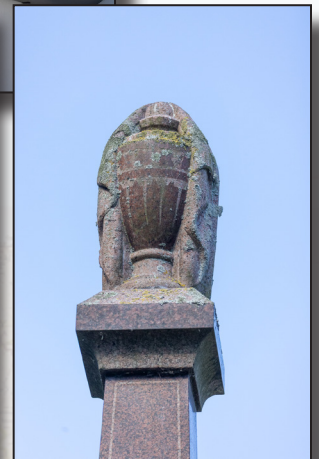


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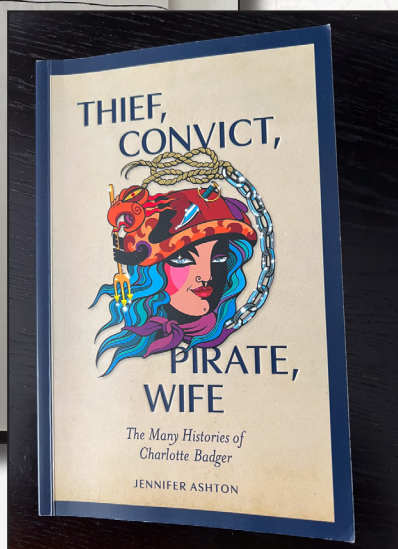
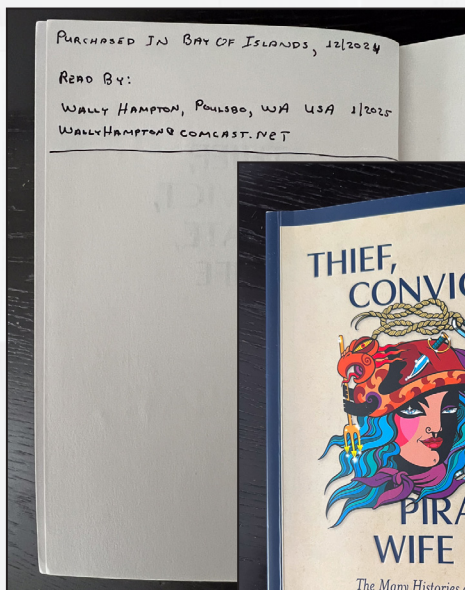


Xmas celebrations were finished and put away in Tauranga..



Next door to our lodging and up a decorated stairway was a cemetery with some interesting headstone designs.

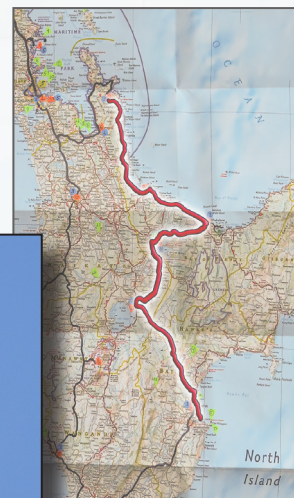
After finishing the book about Charlotte Badger I left the book for others to enjoy, marking it with the idea of starting a long distance book club. After months with no responses it seems to be a slow start.





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TAURANGA - WHAKATANE - ROTORUA - TAUPŌ - NAPIER



ANZ (Air New Zealand)



Waipu Bay & Matapihi



At our next base camp, Whakatane, we had our second Kiwi sighting.



The cliffs above Whakatane had some interesting wind shaped trees that were fun to photograph.





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TAURANGA - WHAKATANE - ROTORUA - TAUPŌ - NAPIER

The *Statue of Wairaka* (also known as *The Lady on the Rock*) is a favorite perch for the shorebirds of Whakatane.

Wairaka was the daughter of Toroa, the captain and navigator of the Mātaatua waka (canoe) which travelled from Hawaiiki to present-day New Zealand. When the Mātaatua first arrived in the Whakatāne region, the men left the women alone in the canoe while they went ashore. The canoe started to drift back to sea, and although women were forbidden from handling a canoe, Wairaka picked up a paddle and led the women to paddle the canoe back to shore. As she did so, she called out "Kia Whakatāne au i ahau" – I will act the part of a man."

The statue was commissioned by Sir William Sullivan, a former mayor of Whakatāne, following his wife Lady Sullivan's death. He wanted the statue as both a memorial to his wife and as a symbol of the bond between all citizens of the Whakatāne District. Sullivan chose Jim Allen, senior lecturer of Elam School of Fine Arts in Auckland, to produce the piece.



A few of the 230 or so species of fern in New Zealand.

Whakaari (White Island) to the right is New Zealand's most active cone volcano. The island has been in a nearly continuous stage of releasing volcanic gas at least since it was sighted by James Cook in 1769. Whakaari erupted continually from December 1975 until September 2000, and also erupted in 2012, 2016, and 2019. Tours to the island were popular, but a large eruption occurred on December 9, 2019, causing 22 fatalities, including two people who were missing and ruled to be dead by a coroner. Twenty-five survivors were injured, many critically and with severe burns. Forty-seven people were reportedly on the island when it erupted. Whakaari was pretty quiet during our few days in Whakatane, only venting gas (which we took as a warning to stay away).



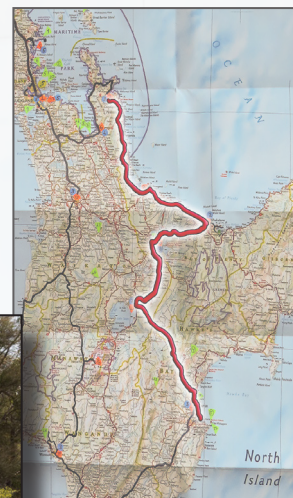


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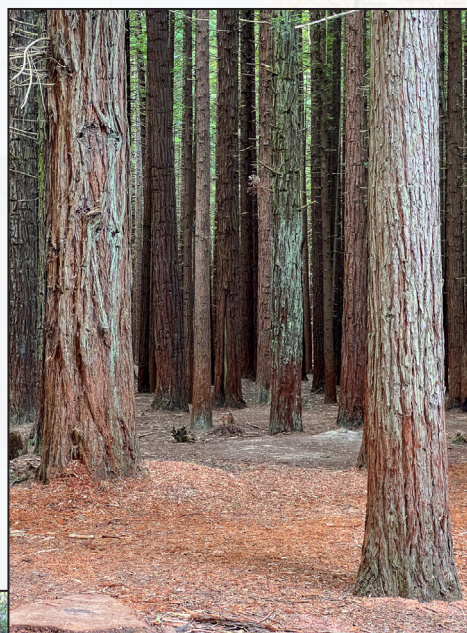
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Our next base camp was Rotorua where we found what appeared to be some of those controversial WWII-era Duck Boats that were deemed too dangerous in most places, but still being used here. As of late 2023, there were only 16 of these old vessels still in use the USA and in Seattle none were operating anymore after 'Ride the Ducks of Seattle' closed in 2020.

Although Wendy did take the tour in Seattle before they closed down, I never did take the gamble.



We stopped in to see how the Redwood trees brought here from from California were doing. They have built a suspended walkway in this 15 acre forest of Redwoods (planted in 1901) that was a fun perspective to experience. There is art to enjoy along the way as well.



Also included for no fee, were some more unique New Zealand public toilets.





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TAURANGA - WHAKATANE - ROTORUA - TAUPŌ - NAPIER

Traditional and contemporary art forms in New Zealand.



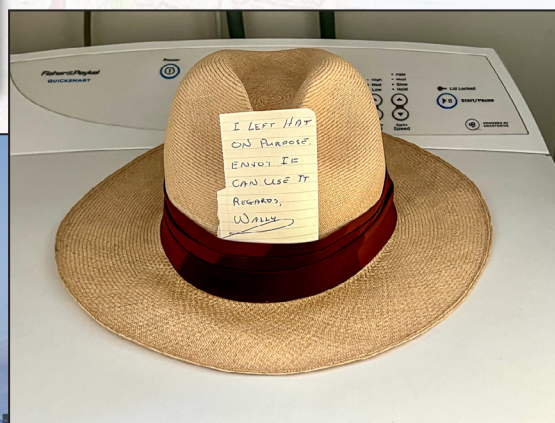
Luggage, driving, arthritis and old injuries were taking their toll on my wrist so I began wearing this for some relief.

On our way to the next base camp we passed a power generating station surrounded by cows... possibly cow pie fueled as there is no nuclear power in New Zealand?

Actually, it is a geothermal power station, the Ngatamariki Power Station with almost 30 drilled wells ranging from about 3,300 feet to over 11,000 feet deep.



My Panama hat was taking an awful beating in the car and was starting the breakdown. I left it in our room so that someone with a more tender lifestyle than my current one might get some use out of it rather than I further destroy it from all the rough handling of travel. Although, it did serve me well for the two plus months travel across the Pacific, down the western side of the Pacific, across several seas to New Zealand and our almost month of New Zealand travel so far.





# NEW ZEALAND 2024 /2025 - PART IX

TAURANGA - WHAKATANE - ROTORUA - TAUPŌ - NAPIER

Just north of Taupō we stopped at Huka Falls and the Waikato River narrows (in the photograph to the right). The volume of water flowing through often approaches 8,000 cubic feet per second, making it one of the highest flowing waterfalls in the world. There was almost that much in humanity flowing through to see the falls as well, so it was a short visit for us once we were able to find parking.

We only spent a couple nights in Taupō but it was enough to enjoy some of the lake side town and downtown sights.





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TAURANGA - WHAKATANE - ROTORUA - TAUPŌ - NAPIER

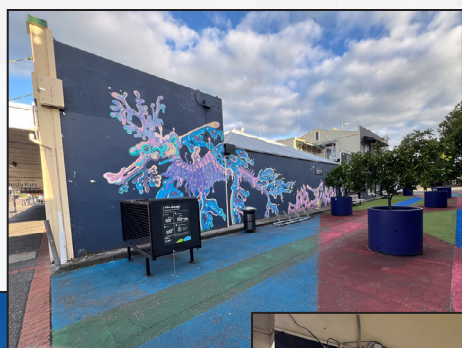
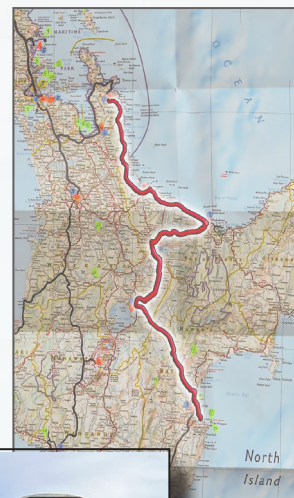


After Taupō we headed back towards the east coast and yet another of our favorite base camps, Napier, the seat of the Hawke's Bay region. It is a sunny beach side city known for its nice climate and extensive Art Deco architecture. For these attributes, Napier is sometimes romantically referred to as the "*Nice of the Pacific*". Napier has a unique concentration of 1930s Art Deco, and to a lesser extent Spanish Mission architecture. This was due to much of the city being razed in the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake and the rebuilding of the city done when Art Deco architecture was popular.

We stayed at the Quest lodging in the photograph to the right, itself a stately Art Deco building in the downtown area. Our apartment was street side on the 2nd floor with a balcony, the half on the right.

We also had a personal birding guide here, Ron Jackson. We met Ron somewhere on the rivers between the Black Sea (Bucharest) and the North Sea (Amsterdam), travelling with him on the same river boats during the Northern hemisphere's spring of 2024. When we told Ron of our future plans to explore New Zealand for the Southern hemisphere's summer of 2024-2025 he said to look him up when we got to Napier where he lives. An avid birder and really good artist with special interest in trains, Ron was extraordinarily gracious during our stay, taking us to local birding spots we would never had know about without his help. Ron's guiding was instrumental for some really nice sightings, photo opportunities and even some resulting photographs. We enjoyed seeing him again and exploring the greater Napier area with him.

There was plenty of public art to enjoy in the area we stayed in as well.





# NEW ZEALAND 2024 /2025 - PART IX

TAURANGA - WHAKATANE - ROTORUA - TAUPŌ - NAPIER



The boy on the street-lamp pole and the lady walking a dog, located across the street from each other, was a clever piece.



These were the tops of traffic bollards.





# NEW ZEALAND 2024 /2025 - PART IX

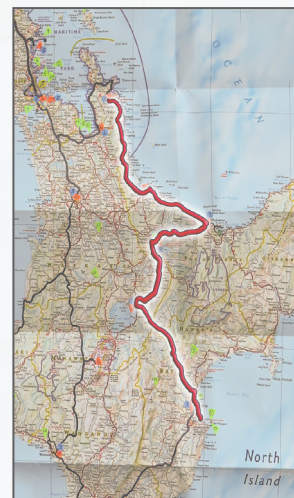
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~ The Napier Art Deco ~

In February 1931, most of Napier and nearby Hastings were levelled by an earthquake of 7.8 magnitude and lasting for two and half minutes. The collapse of buildings and the ensuing fires killed 256 people. Nearly 10,000 acres of today's Napier were undersea before the earthquake raised it above sea level. The earthquake uplifted an area of almost 600 square miles, some areas nearly 9 feet. In Hastings, about 3 feet of ground subsidence occurred.

The center of Napier, destroyed by the earthquake, was rebuilt in the Art Deco style popular in the 1930s. Although a few Art Deco buildings were replaced with contemporary structures in the 1960s to 1980s, most of the center remained intact for long enough to become recognized as architecturally important, and it has been protected and restored since the 1990s.

Napier and the area of South Beach, Miami, Florida, are considered to be the two best-preserved Art Deco towns.

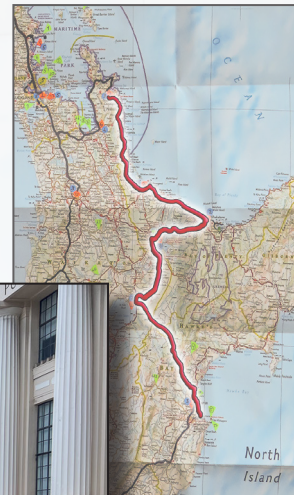




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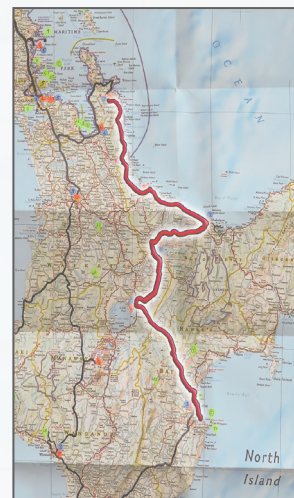




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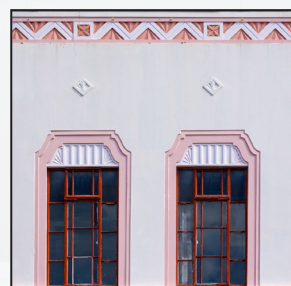
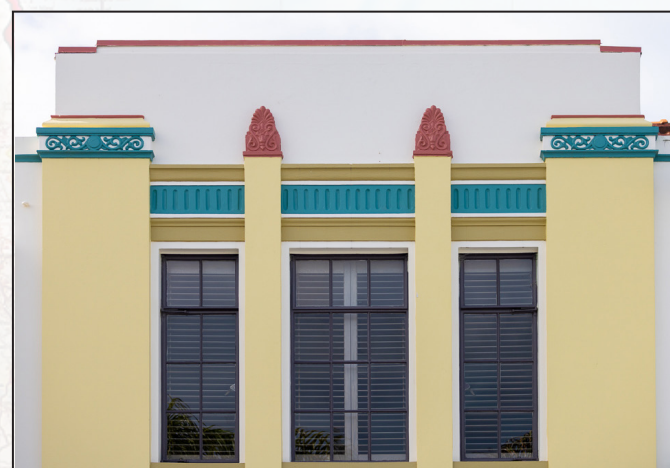
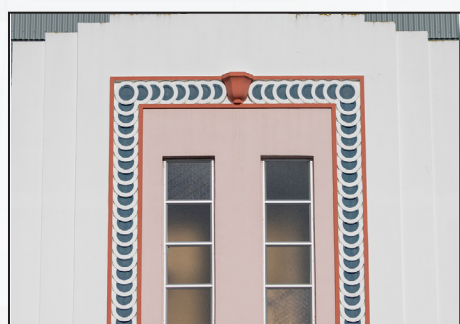
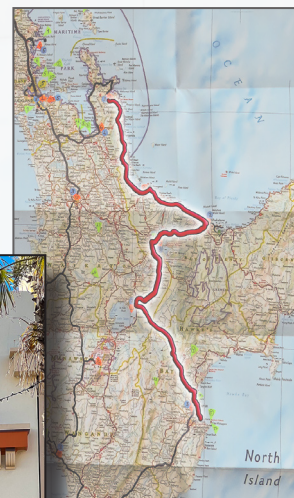




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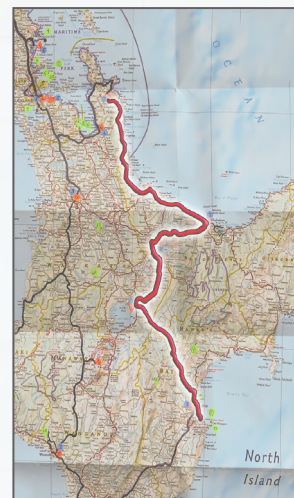




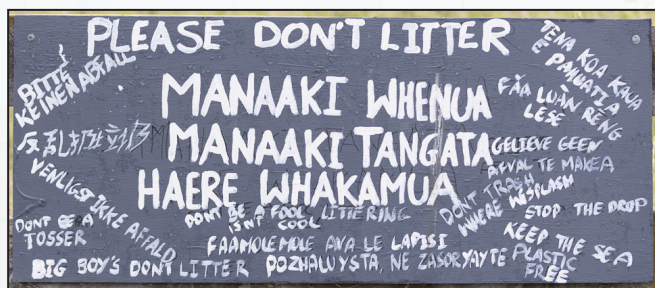
# NEW ZEALAND 2024 /2025 - PART IX

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~ The Napier Art Deco ~



One of the birding spots Ron took us to was also an Adventure Walk.



It is generally windy in much of New Zealand.



NEW ZEALAND PINOT NOIR FACTORY

In the next issue of *Flying Pig Adventures*, we will spend a few days in Wellington and then travel by north by ferry to the south island... explanation in next issue.

.END



If coming by ship this is where you will dock.