

Urban eye

Our local experts find what's hot around the country

AUCKLAND

SHELLEY BRIDGEMAN



△ Dry & Tea

This innovative blend of blow-dry bar and tea house opens out onto a sunny, verdant courtyard landscaped by Auckland company Second Nature (see page 94). Choose your T2 organic tea then flip the menu over to see the list of hair and beauty treatments, which include a basic blow wave, speedy up-do, false eyelashes and quick nail polish. They'll even do a dry style if you're short of time. The brainchild of hairstylist-about-town Louise Pilkington, this inviting enterprise (which also serves scones and macaroons) is sure to please. **Cnr Kent and York Sts, Newmarket, (09) 522 1679, dryandtea.com**

Moustache Milk & Cookie Bar

This is a magnet for people eager to recapture their childhood with an old-fashioned fix of milk and cookies. The queue stretched out the door the day we visited for a taste test. Cookies, handmade from additive-free ingredients and baked fresh on site daily, are displayed in large glass jars and include such flavours as cinnamon, black forest, peanut butter and white chocolate macadamia. Order a milkshake, coffee or cold milk for the all-important dunking. **12 Wellesley St West, City, moustache.co.nz**

▷ Koko Classics

Step into a wonderland of industrial-inspired furniture and thought-provoking objects where raw country chic meets rustic safari glamour. Banquet-style elm dining tables, height-adjustable crank tables and armchairs upholstered in vintage leather lend a sense of permanence and authenticity to any home. Accessorise with cowhides, pewter antlers, oversized steel letters, wind-up tin toys, taxidermy mounted bison, hand-cast resin elephants and polished kudu horns. **743 Mt Eden Rd, Mt Eden, (09) 623 0990**



WAIKATO

DENISE IRVING

▽ The Country Providore

An unexpected treasure on Newell Road in rural Tamahere, between Hamilton and Cambridge, this is one of a "cluster" of interesting places (see right). The rustic Country Providore is a one-stop foodie-gift shop, selling local fruits and vegetables, free-range meats, cheeses and artisan condiments and a delightful range of homeware. It's adjacent to the very pleasant Punnet Cafe, and there's a children's playground as well, all neatly placed on Pam and Gary McMahon's strawberry farm. Daughter Emma McMahon manages The Country Providore, which has just doubled in size. Avail yourself of their excellent strawberry ice creams and punnets of berries in season. **Open 7 days; 337A Newell Rd, Tamahere, Hamilton, (07) 859 1380**



▷ Inspirit Studio & Gallery

Established five years ago in this rural setting by Waikato photographic artist Jenny Scown, Tamahere's Inspirit gallery has a sculpture garden outdoors. Indoors you'll find paintings, glass, ceramics, prints, jewellery, photography, wearable art, mixed media and more. Look for the pre-Christmas exhibition of work by Cambridge painter Santie English and Te Aroha ceramicist Aaron Scythe. **Open Sat-Sun 10am-4pm; closed Mon; weekday hours vary; 360 Pencarrow Rd, (0) 856 3170, inspirit.co.nz**



Tamahere Country Market

Many Waikato people plot their social activities and shopping around this huge "don't miss" monthly market in the grounds of St Stephen's Anglican Church in rural Tamahere. It's become a local phenomenon since it started eight years ago with just over 20 stalls. These days there are more than 100, brimming with seasonal Waikato fruits and veges, cheeses, breads, meats, olive oil, plants, and high-quality crafts. **Third Saturday of each month; just off SH 1**

CHRISTCHURCH

LEE SUCKLING

▽ The General Store

Another addition to Re:Start in Cashel Mall, The General Store brings creative local design back to the central city. This store is wonderfully stocked with handmade gifts, from decorative Wahine Maori dolls to Christchurch map pendants and cushion covers fashioned from vintage blankets. Designer tea towels also feature – ideal for decorative use or to be used (indulgently) to dry delicate dishes. **111 Cashel St, (03) 365 9950, thegeneralstore.net.nz**



▷ The Pedal Pusher

Christchurch has been a cycling hub since Alfred Preece's bicycle exchange was established in 1885 and The Pedal Pusher honours the city's affinity for two-wheeled travel. This watering hole and eatery features colonial-style street lamps and bike seat stools, surrounded by a modern red and black Canterbury theme. The local lamb "sliders" are a must-try, as are all five of the beef options – sourced from the award-winning Ellesmere Butchery in Leeston. **284-286 Lincoln Rd, (03) 335 0095, thepedalpusher.co.nz**



Copenhagen Bakery

Copenhagen Bakery, formerly of Armagh Street, was once a daily hot spot for lovers of European baked goods. For 23 years they flocked there every morning for gourmet sandwiches and pastries and the best offerings were always sold out by lunchtime. Now relocated in a converted petrol station in Bishopdale, the bakery is swamped again, with Danish black bread, croissants and strawberry tarts hot from the oven. Get in before 11am for the best selection. **409 Harewood Rd, Bishopdale, (03) 359 0175, copenhagenbakery.co.nz**

QUEENSTOWN

PETA CAREY

Kapa Design Gallery & Toi o Tahuna

Toi o Tahuna, a gallery exhibiting Maori art, has merged with Kapa, an outlet for high-quality New Zealand-made jewellery and treasures. Now, the two are in one large, light, white space on Rees Street. Enter by way of Kapa, taking in the gifts and pounamu, then climb the stairs to the new, expansive gallery space of Toi o Tahuna. See beautiful tapa-like canvases by David Teata or the carvings of Roi Toia. Striking original art. **29 Rees St, (03) 442 4041, kapa.co.nz, toi.co.nz**



◁ Cranky Franky's Diner

Affectionately named after co-owner Wayne Hanson's father, Cranky Franky's Diner is fast attracting regulars in its sunny corner of the Mountaineer Building in central Queenstown. Some come just for the sublime chocolate milkshake (real Belgium chocolate), others for the burgers, pancakes or "cranky corn". A must-go for those with a soft spot for chevies, jukeboxes and 50s decor. **Level 1, Mountaineer Building, 32 Rees St; (03) 441 3050**



△ Atlas Beer Cafe

Judging by the standing-room-only crowd, Atlas is no longer a locals-only hangout. Barely more than a hole in the wall – the "wall" being the edge of the Steamer Wharf – it features an eclectic mix of library-style wall coverings and old photographs, with outside tables overlooking lake and hills. Lining the bar is a beer connoisseur's array of quality ales, all on tap. Simple but quality food, fine ale and a grand view – who could ask for more? **Steamer Wharf, 88 Beach St, Queenstown, (03) 442 5995**