



Yoga at Sunrise

An escape to Parohe Island Retreat feels like an adventure – and a chance to reset, says **Brenda Ward**.

The magic of an island is its isolation – and the journey you take to reach it.

At Parohe Island Retreat, the isolation from the mainland is a welcome break from my day-to-day routine.

The water taxi ride to Kawau Island is also the first part of another journey, one to health and wellness, calm and serenity.

This brand-new retreat is close to Auckland, a quick boat ride from the marina at Sandspit to 20 hectares of native bush nestled among the gentle, rolling slopes of Kawau Island.

If ever there were a place to reset yourself and refresh your intentions to live in a more connected way, this is it.

The retreat offers two, three and five-day wellness packages, with the most popular being the Refresh yoga retreat I attended.

Longer packages include cooking classes and boat tours to surrounding areas, says Rawinia Buchanan, general manager at Parohe Island Retreat.

On a yoga retreat, you'll start your experience with a cacao ceremony, where you set your intentions and form a bond with your fellow attendees.

Each day, you'll greet the morning with an energising power yoga lesson on the dock overlooking the water and the bush-clad bay, as the sun rises.

Spend the days either relaxing or getting physical.

Hike along the trails to a waterfall, try kayaking or archery, or swim in the pool.



Or if you need a treat, just unwind with a relaxing massage, spend time in the sauna, or while away the evening with bamboo and birdsong in an outdoor bath by a pond.

At The Enchantment central hub, gather on the tropical-styled open veranda and socialise around the outdoor fireplace, or eat nourishing meals. In a modern, airy studio, teachers offer yoga, meditation, and mindfulness sessions.

Wholefood vegetarian meals include breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, and non-alcoholic beverages.

Says Buchanan: “Food is delicious, healthy fare, featuring ingredients from Parohe’s organic gardens



Opposite page: Water views from the property.

Above: Cabin interior.

Left: Parohe Island Retreat spreads from the dock to high up on a ridge.

Bottom: Outdoor fireplaces look inviting.

Lower left: Yoga by the sea. Credit: Jess Winkle Wellness.

and designed by a consultant chef in collaboration with an in-house naturopath.”

For breakfast, try a chia bowl with fresh strawberries or overnight oats.

A main meal could be a roasted vegetable tart with homemade cashew feta and local balsamic vinegar, a raw energy salad of beetroot, carrot, celery, apple and ginger, and a celery, fennel, and orange salad with citrus vinaigrette.

Just when you think you’ve eaten more than enough, a delicious dessert appears to tempt you, adorned with seasonal fruit.

Feeling peckish? There’s always a carrot cake or a bliss ball waiting by the kitchen.

Wind down with an evening candle-lit yin yoga session and then head to your accommodation in brand-new luxury cabins and cabanas, a short wander from The Enchantment.

Sliding doors open each room to the bush, even the shower.

The retreat also hosts couples retreats and corporate away days. It has been designed as a multi-purpose event space, for hire for corporate events or weddings, using other buildings on the land.

The Honeymoon Cottage is a charming old building near the dock. Once home to Governor Grey’s lady ‘friend’, it has a cosy interior and a fireplace.

And a three-bedroom designer home high above the property is available for family groups.

Property development company Equinox is the brains behind this passion project. It’s a retreat that’s world-class – but also completely New Zealand.