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Blame cultural cringe, but it used to be that New Zealand hotels tried very hard to be “international”, which mostly meant that they were bland and impersonal. Thankfully, there is a new breed of boutique hotels making “Kiwiana” cool. The purpose-built Ohtel is leading the way by offering an eclectic – and uniquely New Zealand – experience.

Each of the rooms is furnished with '50s and '60s furniture (including several pieces by local designers) and art and ceramics featuring native plants and birds as well as Maori motifs. The beds are dressed with handmade linen from hip Auckland store Native Agent. The Tivoli audio system is preprogrammed with music from Wellington bands including Fat

Freddy's Drop, and the reading material is mostly quality local magazines such as *Cuisine*. Even the minibar eschews the usual big-brand snacks for an all-NZ line-up.

Downstairs in the small lobby-cafe you can order a good cup of coffee from local roaster Caffe L'affare and a bacon and egg pie before heading out for a day at Te Papa, the impressive national museum located a short walk away on the waterfront. **Lauren Quaintance**



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Cost: from \$NZ295 a double a night.

Distance: 10km (15 minutes' drive) from Wellington Airport.

Accommodation: 10 rooms.

Features: gym, lobby bar-cafe; in-room high-speed internet is complimentary.

Nearby: restaurants, cafes, shops, art galleries, museums, theatres, urban walks.

Children: by arrangement.

Wheelchair access: yes.