

## Ask T+L: New Zealand Driving Itinerary, Travel Widgets, Art Tours

From [October 2009](#)

**Like this article?**

[Recommend this article!](#)

**Q:** Where can I find affordable designer pieces in Milan? - KATHRYN MILLS, HUNTINGTON, N.Y.

**A:** Before your trip, order Marina Martorana's book **Low Cost** (Antonio Vallardi; [lafeltrinelli.it](#); \$18; in Italian only). It has the addresses of more than 50 of the best designer outlets, such as [Marni](#), that are in or near Milan. Also check out boutiques from up-and-coming designers, which offer discounts of up to 70 percent during winter sales (*January-February*); I adore the quirky styles from [Anna Fabiano](#).

**Q:** Can you suggest a weeklong driving itinerary around New Zealand's North Island? - EVELYN THOMPSON, MARIETTA, GA.

**A:** The southern route, from Lake Taupo to Wellington, is one of the country's most scenic. The lakeside [Acacia Cliffs Lodge](#) (doubles from \$430) makes a good base for a long weekend. Head south on the 28-mile-long Desert Road (keep an eye out for the wild Kaimanawa horses that roam the plains). Along the way, stop at **Tongariro National Park** ([doc.govt.nz](#)) for a two-hour trek through volcanic terrain. For a change of pace, continue four hours southeast on country roads to the four-room [Tirohana Colonial House](#) (doubles from \$180, two-night minimum in high season), set on a 6 1/2-acre vineyard in Wairarapa wine country. In the morning, drive an hour south over the winding Rimutaka Mountain Range to the new hotel [Ohtel](#) (doubles from \$330), in Wellington, New Zealand's seaside capital.

**Q:** What are the best new travel widgets? - DARREN NEWELL, FREMONT, CALIF.

**A:** T+L editors have tested dozens of travel applications. Here are the three we're most excited about: the **Ultimate Travel Widget** allows you to compare airfares on hundreds of airlines from 28 different sites and book reservations with the major cruise lines as well as hotels in more than 20,000 locations. **Currency Converter** automatically updates exchange rates for more than 200 currencies, including unrecognized and older European notes, so you can prepare for trips to even the most far-flung destinations. And for those hosting out-of-town guests, **Flight on Time!** provides up-to-the-minute information on the status of incoming flights on hundreds of U.S. airlines.

**Q:** Are any operators offering good, in-depth art tours of Europe this fall? âMATT LANDRY, DALE, PA.

**A:** On the seven-day trip to Spain's Basque Country with **Smithsonian Journeys** (877/338-8687; [smithsonianjourneys.org](#); \$2,995 per person, double, November 2-8), you'll meet with local artists and take a two-hour tour of the [Guggenheim Museum Bilbao](#). **Travel for the Arts** (44-20/8799-8350; [travelforthearts.co.uk](#); \$1,800 per person, November 25-29) runs a five-day excursion in central Prague that culminates in a performance at the grand Estates Theater, where Mozart's *Don Giovanni* premiered. If you're looking for a customized itinerary, [Exeter International](#) (\$2,625 per person, double) brings guests to St. Petersburg for exclusive access to the Hermitage's vast storage chambers, filled with furniture once used at the Winter Palace.