

# Exclusive - Hauraki Gulf Christmas - itinerary

## Introduction

We have booked our own No.8 private Chartered day and evening dinner cruises from the Hilton out onto the Hauraki Gulf. We have selected a wonderful, large stable vessel, with fantastic viewing. The nice thing about our new vessel is its 360degree walk-around deck. This vessel has an incredible history and a skipper with extensive knowledge to share, having been involved in the sailing industry for many years. Enjoying morning teas and lunches as initially planned whilst we visit the beautiful islands and our Gulf exploration. We have planned visits to the historic home of Governor Gray Kowau Island, Wine tasting and a tour of the iconic Waiheke Island, one of the highlights of this day will be the luxurious lunch at the exclusive Mudbrick Vineyard.

Our journey North will include a lunch at the scenic Castaways Resort, views to enjoy over the rugged west coast beach, and after lunch, a stroll along the beach could be had before departing to the Hilton. After returning each day from our activities on and off the water, the long warm summer evenings and the Hiltons' ideal location lends itself to fun after-dinner walks through the Viaduct and its changing lineup of Superyachts, you never know which famous person you might spot that this time of the year. We are also likely to encounter visitors from the returning Cruise ships as they dock alongside Queen's wharf.

Some of you will have friends and relatives who may like to join you for dinner or a day on the water with us. Christmas lunch in Devonport village right on Cheltenham Beach, nestled amongst the pohutukawas will be a wonderful location, evoking lots of summer holiday memories for you all I am sure. I hope you are excited about this summer cruising Christmas Trip as we are. best thing I think.

## Moderate Fitness Required

**\*\* Please note** the Itinerary listed is a brief outline and is subject to change if weather conditions require it for the enjoyment and comfort of all on board.

**\*\* Please note** very limited Single Supplement rooms available.

## DAY ONE MT,L,D

Pickups complete we make our way to the "City of Sails" stopping for morning tea at the Boatshed Cafe, a chance to meet your fellow travellers and a beautiful leafy location which looks over the Waikato River. Continuing with the nautical theme, we then head to the west coast for a lovely lunch at Castaways Resort, recently renovated enjoy the clifftop coastal views and take the time to stretch our legs on

Karioitahi Beach. After lunch, we board our bus and take the short ride to our accommodation in the heart of the Viaduct Basin. Our accommodation, The Hilton has a nautical-inspired style with panoramic sea views and sits on the end of Princes Wharf. Sleek rooms, gorgeous views, and the perfect location for our stay. Our waterfront hotel has sundecks, private balconies and walls of windows for views of the harbour you won't find anywhere else. Dinner tonight will be in FISH Restaurant, complete with panoramic harbour views. After dinner perhaps check out more of the facilities available to you, and head downstairs to Bellini Bar for coffee or an expertly mixed cocktail. The outdoor lap pool is on the fourth floor of the hotel, suspended above the wharf. Swim to the end of the pool to see the underwater viewing window that looks out to the harbour over to the North Shore.

## DAY TWO B,MT,L,D

After a leisurely breakfast, we will take the short walk to our Vessel Ocean Eagle birthed in the heart of the Viaduct we will feel like filmstars as we board our chariot for the day. The 72foot Ocean Eagle has a rich history, originally built for a Billionaire big game fisherman who tended to get seasick on all but the mildest of ocean swells. Thus She was designed and built to travel the world with all her sophisticated systems and deep draft to be super stable in inclement conditions. In the last month, She has been through a refurbishment. With lovely facilities and 360-degree viewing balcony, it's the perfect vessel to go cruising the Gulf. After our introduction to the crew, Captain Carey Shelley and safety briefing we will head out of the inner harbour weaving our way around the Super Yachts and pleasure craft. Our Captain Carey has an amazing background and deep knowledge of the history surrounding the Viaducts and the vessels that have and still do call it home today. As well as an avid sailer Carey spent many years piloting the Fullers ferries and will bring some of these work stories to light for our entertainment. He also has extensive knowledge of the Inner Harbor. We will be leaving today's Hauraki Gulf exploration to Carey's creative talents. We will be on the water cruising the Gulf for approximately 6 hours, with morning tea and lunch onboard. We will return to the Viaduct mid-afternoon, leaving some free time to freshen up and perhaps take a stroll around the viaduct to soak up some of the

holiday spirit. We will meet again for a social drink in the bar and dinner at the onsite FISH Restaurant.

### DAY THREE B,MT,L,D

With breakfast behind us, we will walk to the Fullers Ferry terminal only a short distance from the hotel. Fuller's public ferry service will transport us to Waiheke Island. Once we arrive at Matiatia Wharf we will be greeted by our Waiheke Tour Guide and commence our private guided tour of the Island. On the way, stunning scenery is around every corner, and you will be entertained by the guide's commentary covering the history, geography, culture, people and produce of Waiheke. For our stop at Onetangi Beach, take the free time to choose to enjoy a tea/coffee at one of the local cafés overlooking the beach (own expense) or take a stroll along Waiheke's longest beach. After our mid-morning stop, we will board the coach and continue on our tour. Our lunch stop will be at the one and only Mudbrick Vineyard and Restaurant. We will enjoy a leisurely lunch and glass of wine or two, set against a backdrop of panoramic vistas stretching out to the sea. Mid-afternoon we will be transported back to the ferry for our crossing home to the Hilton. Dinner onsite at Fish Restaurant

### DAY FOUR B,MT,L,D CHRISTMAS EVE

Today we are driving to the seaside village of Sandspit to meet our boat and guide for our trip to Kawau Island the historic home of Governor Gray. We will be joining the Royal Mail Run Cruise, which is the largest mail run by water in the Southern Hemisphere and is a delightfully relaxing way to learn about the history and admire the natural beauty of Kawau Island. Cruise the beautiful bays, gaining a rare glimpse into life on an island that has no roads. From the comfort of our large and luxurious ferry, we will have uninterrupted 180-degree views of this scenic seascape and historic landmarks, while our experienced and informative skipper guides us around over 75 different wharves delivering freight and mail to the island residents. While on the mail run, you can watch Gannet birds diving for food and hear the melodic call of the Tui bird – don't forget to keep a watch out for penguins & dolphins! Once we have arrived at Mansion House on Kawau we will

have time to walk around the beautiful grounds and explore the governor's historic home. We will enjoy a BBQ lunch on the grounds before returning to our vessel for the trip back to Sandspit and back to the Hilton.

### **Christmas Eve Harbour Cruise Dinner and Live Music**

This evening for dinner we will be special. Tonight we enjoy a Christmas Eve harbour cruise. Returning to our launch The Ocean Eagle we will cruise out into the harbour soaking up the festivity that comes with this time of the year. We have a wonderful singer Gemma Celeste, travelling with us to entertain and enhance what will be a fun atmosphere, she will be sure to get us all singing along. A buffet-style dinner on the water framed against the backdrop of the city lights will be a wonderful occasion.

## **DAY FIVE    B,MT,L,D            CHRISTMAS**

Merry Christmas everybody!! Enjoy breakfast at your own pace, we are in no hurry. Some free time to wonder, and enjoy the facilities and surroundings. We have word that Santa may have visited in the night he is known to stop in at the Hilton on his way around the globe. A quick get-together mid-morning could be a good idea to check whether he has left any gifts....At 11.00am we will board our coach to then drive across the Harbour Bridge to Devonport and our lunch destination at the picture postcard McHugh's of Cheltenham Beach. With spectacular views of Rangitoto, North Head and the Waitemata Harbour, McHugh's of Cheltenham is the perfect location for this special day, nestled in a unique and beautiful spot. With a rich history stretching over 100 years, McHugh's of Cheltenham has evolved into one of Auckland's top event venues. With Christmas lunch behind us, we have some free time for a stroll around Devonport Village and Beach, some may choose to catch the ferry back at their leisure ( Dependent on Fullers holiday hours of service). We will bus back to the Hilton in mid-afternoon to relax for the rest of the afternoon. We have arranged for the Hilton to provide Platters for a light dinner this evening.

## **DAY SIX    B,MT,L**

Alas, our final day together has arrived, after breakfast, we will board the coach

with our luggage and head off on the adventures planned along the route home. Our first stop will be for morning tea and a walk around the Auckland Botanic Gardens a spectacular South Pacific Botanic Garden that is widely recognised for its outstanding plant collections. After our garden visit, we will travel through to our lunch destination, the Rydges Formosa Golf Resort. Overlooking the Hauraki Gulf with expansive panoramic vistas of Waiheke Island, Rangitoto Island and the Coromandel Peninsula, this picturesque clifftop resort in Beachlands will be a lovely way to finish the trip. Once we have dined and stretched our legs we will board the coach for the trip home arriving back late afternoon.

**\*\* Please note** the Itinerary listed is a brief outline and is subject to change if weather conditions require it for the enjoyment and comfort of all on board.