

Duke and duchess of style

An unrivalled dining experience

Once in a while you find something that's better than the rest. So it is at Herzog Winery and Luxury Restaurant and the winery's recently opened cottage. In 2000, when Hans and Therese Herzog moved to Marlborough from their winery and Michelin-rated restaurant in Switzerland, it was a given that Hans would make superb wine; when Therese decided to open a restaurant, no one doubted she would do it with style.

A couple of years ago, Therese told me her idea of having accommodation on the vineyard and how she'd like to use the old cottage she and Hans lived in when they first came to New Zealand. "You know I like nice

things, it'll have to be nice."

It's no surprise that the cottage is simple and superb. I walk in and it wraps itself around me like an old friend; the towels are fluffy, the sheets are divine; the veranda, with its lounge chairs and table, is perfect for a snooze. And it smells good — as good as the feel of sand sitting through your fingers on a warm summer day.

I took a friend to Herzog's to celebrate a 40th birthday. It was perfect: the food, the cutlery, the wine; the rate at which the staff brought each of the five degustation courses; the flawless presentation of exquisite food matched perfectly with wine; the fresh flowers. And, of course, Therese. She is funny,



professional, polished and just a little bit gooty, reminding me that she is the woman I first met when I lived in a cottage nearby and who laughs with me when we share stories about exploring our new country. She loves providing great food, yes, but she also loves the outdoors and is as comfortable in muddy hiking boots as she is in heels.

After dinner, we returned to the cottage, welcomed by flickering candles, chocolates

on the pillows and the table set for breakfast. The refrigerator was filled with the ingredients to make breakfast at our leisure. The next morning, before flying back to Auckland, we bought a few bottles of wine at the cellar door and had a coffee with Therese. She drove us to the airport and we flew over the vineyards of Marlborough and Cloudy Bay, knowing we had enjoyed the consummate dining experience.

Bette Flieger