

Take the Napier i-SITE quiz

ATTRACTIONS \ NAPIER i-SITE CENTRE

NAPIER
LIFE

We all know one fact about Napier i-SITE. It's the place you go to make travel bookings, source accommodation, purchase tickets for activities, or find information about local attractions. It's for the tourists... right?

Take a look in the Holiday 101 textbook and it says "Start with i-SITE". But Napier i-SITE is also a treasure trove of local secrets that will enlighten even the most seasoned resident of Hawke's Bay.

editorial michael gardner / picture lee warren

Test yourself to see how many things you know about Napier i-SITE.

ONE. i-SITE has a fabulous souvenir shop with everything from mud soap to aprons printed with the Pavlova recipe. It's the ideal place to find a holiday keepsake if you're visiting Napier's fair shores, or to find a kiwi gift for friends overseas.

TWO. i-SITE has a list of all the culinary attractions in Hawke's Bay that end in 'ery', such as Winery, Cheesery, Olivery, Ice Creamery, and Preservery. They can also help you find confectionery.

THREE. i-SITE has a fact sheet showing the safe walking times to Cape Kidnappers so you can dodge the tides. If you want to find the tides, they can also tell you about surf conditions in the Bay and beyond.

FOUR. i-SITE has free maps of the walkways on the hill. These help visitors navigate the maze of steps to take in the marvellous views. Better still, residents can plan more challenging routes for a good workout and sell off those expensive exercise machines.

FIVE. For those that don't want to be land-bound, i-SITE can help you get airborne in a Tiger Moth, balloon, paraglider, plane, or helicopter. Then come back to earth in a parachute.

SIX. On the rare occasions the famous Hawke's Bay weather fails to deliver, i-SITE has a list of fun activities for a rainy day.

SEVEN. i-SITE can help you find something different to serve on Christmas Day, like delectable gourmet snails hand-harvested in Hawke's Bay. If you don't fancy

cooking, they can also give you a list of venues open for a delicious dinner.

EIGHT. i-SITE can solve the dilemma of what to do when the kids have a holiday and you don't. There are holiday programmes for children of all ages.

NINE. If you live for the weekend, i-SITE produces an event guide every week. Never miss out on what's happening in the Bay.

TEN. i-SITE has had over 3,000 visitors in one day – roughly one person every ten seconds!

If you scored nine or less, then put this magazine down and pay Napier i-SITE a long overdue visit. If you scored ten you probably work there.

www.visitus.co.nz



Something fishy's going on

Every visitor soon discovers that the National Aquarium of New Zealand has great displays about New Zealand's wildlife and the underwater world of the ocean. But don't make your way through too fast, as there are a few other surprises you might not know about.

editorial michael gardner / *picture* lee warren

Take the kiwi enclosure. There's a good reason why our nocturnal national bird is always up and about. No, they aren't supplied with endless pots of coffee. The lighting cycle has actually been reversed so they experience night during our day.

Speaking of reversed, the aquarium also has an upside-down catfish. The catfish is not actually dead as many concerned visitors believe. It simply spends much of its time swimming upside-down, a behavioural by-product of clinging to the underside of logs to hide from predators.

The salt water crocodile is also a must see, especially at feeding time, but it remains a mystery as to whether Izzy is a 'he' or a 'she'. Apparently, determining the gender of a crocodile is a delicate job, and nobody is keen to get close enough to find out.

More surprises

Then there are Tuataras – the closest living relative of the dinosaur. Explore further and you'll discover an albino eel, piranhas, cave fish with no eyes, and bad-tempered corals that fight with their neighbours.

However, the newest attraction to be found at the National Aquarium of New Zealand is humans... swimming freely with the sharks. And more than that, everyone can be part of the display.

This is the only place in New Zealand offering people the chance to snorkel in the Oceanarium with sharks, stingrays, and a multitude of other underwater beasts. Certified divers are able to get even closer.

There are no age restrictions either for swimming with the sharks, other than that children must be accompanied by their guardians. This is not an activity exclusively for the fearless. It has been done by people of all ages, including an 83 year-old man who had it on his 'bucket list', and 10 year-old Anna Heath. "Swimming with the sharks was an amazing experience," says Anna. "I loved the sharks gliding through the water underneath me."

This is definitely something to put on your must-do list, or a great gift idea. It'd certainly be a surprise to find out you're going for a swim with the greatest predator of the sea.

Above: The National Aquarium of New Zealand right on the stunning Marine Parade beach.

www.nationalaquarium.co.nz



More than a room with a view

Take half a step through the main doors at the Napier War Memorial Conference Centre and you'll understand why it's such a special venue.

editorial michael gardner / **picture** john cowpland

The eternal flame at Napier's War Memorial Conference Centre is a fitting introduction as the level of dedication that is taken to keep it burning flows through every aspect of the facility.

Then step into the ballroom and be prepared to see a stunning example of the New Zealand coastline, an unobscured view of Cape Kidnappers and the Pacific Ocean.

Beyond the main conference area there are breakout rooms and facilities to suit groups and budgets of all sizes. Outside, there is ample space for a marquee to accommodate trade shows and exhibits. It's a practical venue too, with the flexibility to host anything from conferences, to corporate occasions, to weddings and more. And just in case the speaker at your event gets carried away with their moment of oratory glory, you can easily while away the time taking in that view.

The facility is purpose built and everything is done on site. This means the level of care and attention that is delivered can be tailored to groups or the needs of an individual. The staff take responsibility for every detail, from the initial planning process right through to the moment

Above: Inspiring views across the bay to Cape Kidnappers.

the last guest departs. Removing that stress means everyone can relax and take part in their event.

The Napier War Memorial Conference Centre has all the features you might find at a venue in one of New Zealand's main centres, but it also has the most enviable location. Set in the heart of Napier, a wide selection of hotels, motels, cafés, restaurants, shops, and attractions are all a matter of minutes away on foot. Unlike the major centres, guests aren't faced with parking issues, traffic jams, or potentially expensive taxis. If that wasn't enough, the pick of Hawke's Bay wineries are no more than half an hour away.

The Napier War Memorial Conference Centre is an incredible asset to the city. It's accessible and affordable, and crying out to be the number one meeting point for local clubs and associations. If you live in the Hawke's Bay, why not pick up the phone and make a few enquiries?

And if you don't live in Napier, then when was the last time you were here? Come and find out what you're missing out on.

www.venues.co.nz



Local talent takes the stage

You could be excused for thinking that the Municipal Theatre is the only venue in Napier to see the big shows when they come to town. And you'd be right. But this incredibly colourful and vibrant building is also the place much of our local talent calls home.

editorial michael gardner / *picture* richard brimer

This year the Napier Municipal Theatre introduced a series of lunchtime concerts showcasing some of our most popular local performers. The six concert series that opened in May is the ideal excuse to dust off your glad rags, and head to the theatre for entertainment, laughter, and song.

The series began with Remember the War Years, a trip down memory lane to relive those great songs that brought so much hope and joy through the grim war years. This was followed with some continental fun - An Italian Experience. To coincide with the Deco Decanted Weekend the toe-tapping concert Celebrating Deco featured some lively tunes from Noel Coward, Cole Porter and George Gershwin.

In early September it's time to shake off the winter blues with Music Hall. This show promises laughter and song from a time when an evening around the piano was a real treat, and a visit to the Music Hall was a little sinful. In the spirit of the era you can expect a lot of audience participation.

The second to last lunchtime concert for the year is Great Partners in Song. You'll hear timeless classics from great song-writing partnerships such as Rodgers and Hammerstein, Lerner and Loewe, George and Ira Gershwin,

Kander and Ebb, and Lloyd Webber and Rice. Bring a friend.

What better way to finish the series than Christmas at the Muni? This will feature Christmas themed solos and sing-alongs to welcome in the festive season. It'll be such a treat we understand the chubby man with the red suit has already booked his seat. Make sure you don't miss out.

GEON Art Deco Weekend 2011 the theatre hosts the Hawke's Bay Orchestra and Friends for three days of foot tapping fun and frivolity Art Deco style! The concerts will feature some of New Zealand's finest musicians and vocalists. Guests include jazz vocalist Margot Pierard, saxophonist Anton Wuts, and pianist Paul Carnegie -Jones in some very stylish pizzazz and jazz!

Although still in the planning stage the Napier Operatic Society is hoping to return to the theatre in March with the glitzy Art Deco musical theatre extravaganza 42nd Street. The show was hugely popular when staged to celebrate the opening of the newly refurbished theatre in 1997 and the 'Sold Out' signs are likely to be going up once again in 2011.

Above: The Napier Municipal Theatre Pan Pac Foyer and box office entrance.

www.napiermunicipaltheatre.co.nz



Relax, the kids are happy

There are two big decisions we make when we plan a holiday, where to go and where to stay. There are lots of choices, and for most of us funds aren't bottomless. The truth is you never really know what you're going to get until you arrive.

editorial michael gardner / **picture** brian hatton

Kennedy Park Top 10 Resort has a pile of awards, which stands it in good stead when you read the brochure, but they make a bold promise when they say 'Relax, we have got it all'. I was given a full tour of Kennedy Park with General Manager David Aflallo, and the opportunity to test the validity of that statement.

"We have a bed for every budget," says David, "from villas through to campervan sites." We start in a two-bedroom villa and I am immediately impressed with the general upkeep of the room. It looks freshly painted and has the latest facilities. And so spacious... the bathroom is bigger than my one at home. I expect to be told I'll need a second mortgage to afford a reservation, but when David gives me an idea of the rates I can't help doing one of those sit-com double-takes. To say the rooms are value for money is somewhat of an understatement.

Kennedy Park is large, and so very tranquil. It's easy to forget we're only minutes from the CBD. The new eco-cabins are also quite remarkable, built entirely from sustainable materials, and the reason why Kennedy Park was one of the first parks in New Zealand to win Qualmark Enviro-Gold.

Above: With a veritable selection of things to do on-site, the kids will never be hanging around waiting for something to happen.

"We're a one-stop shop," David continues. "There's no need to even leave the grounds if you don't want to." He shows me the catalogue of facilities available to guests. Take a deep breath, the list is long... a swimming pool, playground, park, giant chess board, restaurant, bar, conference rooms, library, wireless internet, an internet café, Playstations, a DVD library, barbecues, laundries, kids game room, Sky TV theatre, a family TV lounge, karaoke, and even a giant jumping pillow. The sight of it makes me want to take off my shoes and sneak away for some good old-fashioned fun.

"We're secure too," adds David. "Guests don't have to spend their holiday watching the kids every move." "So," I ask, tempting fate, "is there anything you don't have?" David thinks for a moment. "No, there isn't." I have to have one last go. "Well, what about a pentanque court then?" "Just over there, next to the playground."

Kennedy Park is good to its word and I leave satisfied. I think you will too.

www.kennedypark.co.nz

Golf at the beach

Next to the i-SITE on Marine Parade you'll find the mini golf equivalent of Pebble Beach. The comparison isn't limited to stunning views of the ocean. Par2 MiniGolf also offers two very different 18 hole courses. Both are guaranteed to challenge your putting skills and entertain.

editorial michael gardner / **pictures** brian hatton

What sets Par2 MiniGolf apart from many other courses is the subtle way it has been themed to compliment the unique qualities of Napier. With such a great location, there's no need to clutter the fairways with gimmicks.

Deco Drive is styled in the spirit of Art Deco. Simple open curves wind through landscaped gardens and take in the views of the Art Deco Arches and the Soundshell. The long greens have some very tricky slopes reminiscent of the Bluff Hill beyond. They're a great leveller because they can wreak just as much havoc as luck. Don't be surprised if you hear comments like "not enough porridge",

which have nothing to do with what people ate for breakfast. Weighting your shot is crucial to avoid seeing your ball roll in the wrong direction of the hole.

Pacific Pro-Am reflects the beauty of the seaside views, with blue carpets and plenty of water hazards. Numerous wacky angles present a testing game for golfers of all abilities. Having a degree in advanced geometry could be your only advantage. One notably difficult hole requires launching your ball off a ramp to cross a stream. Missing is actually quite handy if your ball is dirty.

Par2 MiniGolf is the perfect way to pass a

few hours. It's suitable for people of all ages and from all walks of life. You might want to consider it for a school outing, or a corporate team building exercise, or just a great family day out. You can even tell your boss you're leaving work for a round of golf with the option to play a quick nine holes at lunchtime.

A round or two won't break the bank either and there are discounts for family groups. Regular players should also take advantage of the loyalty card which gives the tenth game free.

The same-day discount for a second round becomes especially attractive when there are two courses to play. For most avid golfers this presents 36 opportunities to get a hole in one. If you do there are awards to be earned. And just like a championship course, the ultimate reward for a top round is a place on the Par2 MiniGolf leader board.

www.par2golf.co.nz



Napier's Award Winning Thai Chef's Restaurant



Menu suggestions

STARTER

Thai Roti Bread

A pan grilled Thai style flatbread.

ENTRÉE

Rainy Season

Lightly battered stuffed mushrooms with minced pork and prawns, served with Thai sweet chilli sauce.

SOUP

Tom Kha

Creamy coconut soup with lemon juice, cabbages, mushrooms, tomatoes, lemon grass, kaffir leaves and your selected meat.

CURRY

Duck in Love®

Roasted duck fillets on our special curry recipe with coconut cream, pineapple chunks, lychees, tomatoes and courgettes.

APPETISER

Sleepy Pig in Bed

Marinated minced pork and herbs on toast, served with Thai sweet chilli sauce.

ENTRÉE

Pattaya Girls

King Prawns with Thai spices and Thai sauces. A traditional Thai salad. It's sexy and medium hot.

EXTRAORDINARY

The Ocean Volcano

Steamed mixed seafood dish. Prawns, squid, fish fillets and scallops with a mild curry paste, herbs, spices and vegetables. Served in sparkling flame.

DESSERT

Banana Boat

Deep-fried banana with maple syrup, served with ice cream.

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