



Queenstown sits on the beautiful Lake Wakatipu, backed by the snowy Remarkables mountain range

# HOB TO IT!

## OK! FOLLOWS 'THE HOBBIT' CAST TO NEW ZEALAND...

**K**iwi film director Peter Jackson didn't have to look far for the perfect location to film *The Lord Of The Rings* and *The Hobbit* – it was right there on his doorstep. In terms of epic landscapes – glacial lakes, deep ravines, smoking volcanoes and bubbling hot springs – New Zealand holds the trump card.

With the third *Hobbit* film, *The Battle Of The Five Armies*, just released, *OK!* jetted off to Queenstown to check out some of the filming locations and, while there, we couldn't resist trying out some of the adventure sports for which it's so renowned. *OK!*'s Annabel Mackie also discovered that this South Island resort town has plenty of upscale restaurants, boutiques, ski fields and lake-side cycle tracks...

### WHERE CAN I STAY?

Queenstown sits on a sheltered inlet on Lake Wakatipu, an ancient glacial lake in the shadow of the majestic Remarkables mountain range – aka the Misty Mountains in *The Hobbit*. *OK!* checked into the five-star Sofitel Hotel & Spa, a centrally located boutique hotel that offers a

mix of French antique style and contemporary chic. The hearty breakfasts served at its Left Bank Café certainly set us up for the day!

### WHAT STARS WILL I SEE?

The Hollywood blockbusters were filmed all over New Zealand – from Tongariro National Park on North Island to Fiordland, Lake Pukaki and Mount Cook on the South Island. Benedict Cumberbatch, who voices dragon Smaug, enthused: 'I had a week off and went down to Queenstown and had a fantastic time. I went sky diving, paragliding, I went down a luge and on the Shotover Jet around the rapids. I'm a bit of an adrenaline junkie so I loved the great outdoors. Evangeline Lilly, who plays Tauriel, said: 'I had a lot of off-time, so I was able to see some of the sights. I was able to travel down to Paradise – I heard it was incredible and, of course, it's more incredible than you can describe. Truly and utterly breathtaking.' Queenstown has also had a starring role in other blockbusters including *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* and *The Chronicles Of Narnia*.

### CAN I VISIT THE FILM LOCATIONS?

Yes! Sign up for a four-hour Safari Of The Scenes tour with the Nomad Safaris, which offers 4x4 trips to some of the filming locations in and around Queenstown. After picking us up, our driver/guide whisked us along the stunning road that hugs one side of Lake Wakatipu to the tiny hamlet of Glenorchy, regaling us with stories, myths and legends

*OK!* stayed at the Sofitel Hotel & Spa in Queenstown



about the film and area. We heard about how actor Sean Bean hated flying in helicopters so much that for one mountain scene he had to walk the last part in full costume to avoid using one. And that it was Viggo Mortensen's son Henry who encouraged the actor to take the part in the movie – and his reward was an appearance in the film. We also visited Arcadia Station, a working farm in Paradise, where Beorn's House was built for the film, and stopped off at Twelve Mile Delta, the location for Ithilien Camp.

### WHERE CAN I EAT?

Fergburger, on Shotover Street, is a local institution where you can order fun-named burgers such as Bun Laden, The Codfather and Cookadoodle Oink. Or you could pick up fish and chips at Aggy's Shack on the shorefront. Actor Sir Ian McKellen said of Aggy's: 'I don't think I could go to Queenstown without that.' Elsewhere, Orlando Bloom liked to hang out at the Vudu Cafe, while the *Hobbit* crew couldn't get enough of the pizza and pasta served up at The Cow, a ski lodge-style eatery.

If you're after gourmet cuisine served in a beautiful setting, book a table at



Above: *Hobbit* stars Evangeline Lilly and Orlando Bloom (right)



Amisfield Winery – the Duke and Duchess Of Cambridge visited earlier this year during their royal tour of Australia and New Zealand. We had the Trust The Chef Menu with paired wines, and it was one of the best dinners we've ever eaten. Or, for contemporary Asian cuisine, try Madam Woo, where we loved the cool decor and ginger mojitos.



Kate and Wills at the Amisfield Winery

### WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

Ride the gondola up to the top of Bob's Peak and take in the panoramic views over Queenstown from the Skyline viewing platform – then whizz down the two 800m luge tracks on a motorised go-kart located nearby. From the Skyline Centre, OK! walked down to the start of the Ziptrek EcoTour, where we whizzed through the forested hillside learning about the environment as we traversed.

One of the highlights of our trip was the Dart River Funyak day trip. After boarding a jet boat in Glenorchy, we sped along the Dart River holding on for dear life as our driver put the boat through several 360° spins. Then we got into inflatable canoes to paddle back down the river, stopping off for a delicious river-side picnic before finishing our trip in Paradise – yes, that's really the name of an actual place!

Last but not least was our favourite family activity – frisbee golf – that we played through the trees in the town's 12-acre Memorial Park.

It's hard to imagine, so go and try it for yourself!



Ziplining at the Kawarau Bungy Centre

flocked to the Arrow and Shotover rivers to make their fortune. The historic timber buildings along the main street now offer upscale restaurants, a clutch of boutiques and a gold mining museum.

The Kawarau Bungy Centre, the birthplace of the bungy jump, is a 20-minute drive from Queenstown. We watched in awe as people jumped off the Kawarau Bridge into the canyon below. We were told that Billy Connolly did his jump naked! While we weren't brave enough to bungy, we did try out the new three-line zip course, which was still pretty heart-pumping stuff!

### HOW DO I GET THERE?

New Zealand In Depth ([www.newzealand-indepth.co.uk](http://www.newzealand-indepth.co.uk); 01298 74040) can tailor-make holiday experiences, including flights, hotels, transfers and activities, to New Zealand.

Room rates at the Sofitel Hotel & Spa, Queenstown ([www.sofitelqueenstown.com](http://www.sofitelqueenstown.com)) start from £131 per night for a superior room. Accor ([www.accor.com](http://www.accor.com)) have three other hotels in Queenstown – the Novotel Lakeside (from £78 per night), the Hotel St Moritz (from £111 per night) and the Mercure Resort (from £54 per night). **OK!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.NEWZEALAND.COM](http://WWW.NEWZEALAND.COM) OR [WWW.QUEENSTOWNNZ.CO.NZ](http://WWW.QUEENSTOWNNZ.CO.NZ).  
FOR MORE ON THE ACTIVITIES AND EXCURSIONS MENTIONED, SEE [WWW.NOMADSAFARIS.CO.NZ](http://WWW.NOMADSAFARIS.CO.NZ); [WWW.SKYLINE.CO.NZ/QUEENSTOWN/LUGE](http://WWW.SKYLINE.CO.NZ/QUEENSTOWN/LUGE); [WWW.ZIPTREK.COM](http://WWW.ZIPTREK.COM); [WWW.AMISFIELD.CO.NZ](http://WWW.AMISFIELD.CO.NZ); [WWW.DARTRIVER.CO.NZ](http://WWW.DARTRIVER.CO.NZ); AND [WWW.BUNGY.CO.NZ](http://WWW.BUNGY.CO.NZ).

REPORT BY ANNABEL MACKIE, OK! TRAVEL EDITOR  
TRAVELLERS' TALES AND 5 OF THE BEST BY NANCY BROWN  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAMY, GETTY IMAGES

### WHAT MUST I SEE OUTSIDE OF QUEENSTOWN?

Arrowtown, just a short drive from Queenstown, is a must-visit. The charming heritage village flourished in the 1860s, when gold prospectors



## TRAVELLERS' TALES

### CAPRICE

THE NEW MUM ON FAMILY HOLIDAYS AND PASSPORT DISASTERS...



#### What's been your most amazing holiday yet?

When we chartered a 250ft Turkish gulet [sailing boat] and travelled around the coast of Turkey. It was amazing for the children and the adults – the food was great and the cabins were better than a suite at the Four Seasons. It was incredible!

#### Have holidays changed since becoming a mum to one-year-old sons Jax and Jett?

Our destinations have changed now that I'm a mum – we pick places that are child-friendly. My joy comes from watching my kids being happy and content. I also can't travel without diapers, bottles, formula and toys for my boys to play with!

#### What's been your biggest holiday disaster?

That was recently. We went to Ibiza and my case was stolen with nine passports, all my jewellery, my wallet, my camera, my sunglasses and two Louis Vuitton bags. The biggest disaster was the passports – we had to travel from Ibiza to Madrid for a day and apply for a temporary passport, then I had to FedEx that to England to get my UK visa and then get it sent back to me in Spain. It wasn't a nice situation to be in on holiday.

#### You were born in Los Angeles but now live in London – what do you love most about both cities?

London is my home and always will be. I love the people, the food, the culture, the opportunity and the mentality – basically everything but the weather [laughs]. LA, I love the fact my family are there, the weather, the fantastic Mexican food and the fact there's a better quality of life over there because it's cheaper there.

AUTUMN/WINTER BY CAPRICE LINGERIE IS AVAILABLE NOW FROM LITTLEWOODS AND [VERY.CO.UK](http://VERY.CO.UK). FOR ALL STOCKISTS, VISIT [WWW.BYCAPRICE.COM](http://WWW.BYCAPRICE.COM).

## 5 OF THE BEST CHILLY TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

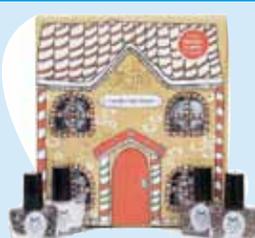


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**1 RADLEY LAMBETH MITTENS, £29**, [www.radley.co.uk](http://www.radley.co.uk). Perfect for a winter wander, these knitted mittens will keep your hands warm while you're off seeing the sights.

**2 PINK SODA RIBBED POM-POM BEANIE, £8**, [www.bankfashion.co.uk](http://www.bankfashion.co.uk). Cute and cosy, this bobble hat puts the cherry on top of winter for us! There are even matching mittens.

**3 PHASE EIGHT NOLA CAPE, £65**, [www.phase-eight.com](http://www.phase-eight.com). Available in black or camel, this oversized wrap is fab for stylishly layering up against the winter chill.

**4 CIARTE CANDY CANE HOUSE, £25**, [www.boots.com](http://www.boots.com). Frost your nails to match the weather with this super-cute scented lacquer collection. We love the white glittery Snow Fall, with its fresh cotton scent.

**5 VICHY CAPITAL SOLEIL FACE BB TINTED VELVET CREAM SPF 50+, £15.50**, [www.boots.com](http://www.boots.com). Protecting your skin from the sun isn't just for hot-weather holidays, UV rays still hit the skin, even in colder climes. This hydrates, illuminates and protects.