

# Writing Samples:

From press release to media including [scoop.co.nz](http://scoop.co.nz):

## **Fish & Game Steps Up Action over Poachers**

Wednesday, 15 June 2011, 1:06 pm

Press Release: Fish and Game New Zealand

Eastern Fish & Game

### **Fish & Game Steps Up Action over Poachers**

Fish and Game officers in Rotorua have stepped up their activities in response to a seasonal rise in poaching.

Eastern Region staff say over the last three weekends alone, 20 people have been found poaching – fishing illegally in a variety of different ways.

Fish & Game Officer Anthony van Dorp says an increase in poaching usually occurs when the fish are heading upstream to spawn – but their increased efforts to crack down have been highly effective.

Among the incidents, two men were caught after netting spawning trout from a stream in Lake Rotoiti, and a trio were illegally fishing the Ohau Channel, one using fish roe for bait.

The offending they've intercepted has involved fishing with illegal tackle, in closed waters or without licences – or a combination of these, Anthony says.

Anthony Van Dorp says that in the year to the end of May, more than 40 offenders have been apprehended for ten different types of offence, but fishing without a licence is always the most common - followed by fishing with illegal tackle.

Fish & Game officers work closely with police and “we've have responded to a number of recent calls from police officers alerting us to suspected poachers,” Anthony says. Officers also use various surveillance methods including covert camera equipment around spawning streams.

One feature of the offending has been the number of youths fishing using illegal methods, and in closed areas.

Anthony is appealing to parents and caregivers to ensure that youngsters are given proper direction on the regulations, including where they are allowed to fish – and by what methods. Anyone in doubt can contact Fish & Game for advice.

As a result of Fish and Game's enforcement work, 11 people are before the courts facing charges ranging from fishing without licences to obstructing a ranger, and taking spawning trout with a net.

Fish & Game has renewed an appeal for the public to report any illegal fishing they see on 0800 POACHING (762 244).

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**From press release to Bay of Plenty Times:**

## **Tim Taylor's odyssey**

25th November 2010



*Tim Taylor's epic journey begins on Saturday. Photo / Mark Mckeown/File.*

There are just two days to go before adventurer Tim Taylor sets off on his bid to kayak alone around New Zealand.

Saturday is D-Day for Tim who is aiming to make history with the first complete solo circumnavigation of New Zealand by sea kayak.

Leaving on Saturday from Waimarino Adventure Park on the Wairoa River, Tim estimates his 5500km journey around the country's rugged coastline will take three to six months.

"I won't consider my trip finished until I set foot back on that ramp at Waimarino," he says.

No newcomer to kayaking, as a teenager Tim trained, raced and coached at Waimarino Adventure Park. He began in the sport as a 12-year-old with the Park's co-founder Barry Anderson, and soon progressed to top-level competition under the "tough but inspiring" guidance of Barry's son (and current co-owner) Blair Anderson.

"Blair used to push us so hard in those early-morning training sessions that at times he seemed only ever satisfied if he got one of us boys to spew," he says.

From these beginnings Tim has developed into a full-time athlete preparing for an odyssey that will be a New Zealand first.

"Growing up in a boat, I've always wondered what the next step of my journey will be.

## Advertisement

It was during one of those long training sessions, that I wondered if it'd be possible to kayak around New Zealand. A mate later told me that it had already been done, so it wouldn't be worth doing anyway (but I went on to discover this wasn't the case).

"Since those younger days I have gone through university, worked, and travelled around the world. But I never completely let go of the idea to kayak around New Zealand ..."

In late December 2009, on his return from Europe, Tim revived the idea and sounded out his old coach Blair Anderson and his wife Charlotte.

Within the space of an hour it had gone from an idea to the reality of a planned expedition with its first sponsors - the Andersons.

Leaving his job as a tractor driver at Christmas and committing full time to the expedition was a difficult decision, but one Tim hopes will pay off. He has paddled almost daily, and committed countless hours to the hunt for sponsors.

He is now supported by more than a dozen local, national and international companies - including Mission Kayaks (Palmerston North), Back Country Cuisine (Invercargill) and GoPro (California).

"I worked hard to gain these sponsors and they expect me to perform. One of my greatest fears is letting these companies down because they've all given me so much".

The history of sea kayaking in New Zealand is relatively short but by no means uneventful. Prominent West Coast kayaker Paul Caffyn is credited with being the first person to paddle around New Zealand's three main islands.

In the late 1970s, he first took on the South Island with friend Max Reynolds. The following year he completed a circuit of the North Island, and finished it all up with Stewart Island and Foveaux Strait. Paul Caffyn also notched up the first circumnavigation of Australia in a kayak during 1981 and 1982.

In more recent times, there's been a flurry of activity around New Zealand by both men and women kayakers, but no one has managed a complete trip around the whole country. So Tim Taylor says a large part of his motivation for the epic trip is simply that "it's there to be done".

New Zealand has a daunting coastline 15,134km in length. Tim's plan is to leave from Tauranga, travelling in a clockwise direction around the country to make the most of tidal flows, covering an estimated 60 to 100km a day, and about 5500km overall.

He will break his day into two six-hour sessions, pulling into shore for lunch and to camp each night.

To monitor his progress he'll carry a GPS device call a SPOT. The gadget will send a continuous signal to satellites, and these will be plotted on a special Google Earth page linked to his website for all to view.

Tim plans to call into almost every major coastal town along the way, and is warmly inviting people to come and share some of the experience with him. "I'm counting on local people's support and encouragement to help stay motivated," he says.

As the final date looms, training and preparation have become an obsession. Not even a recent white-water paddling injury that left him with 32 stitches and chipped front teeth, has stopped him.

Tim freely admits that he's made many mistakes along the way and is likely to make many more, but reckons what he doesn't know he'll soon learn. "And then there's the old saying that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger," says Tim.

To follow Tim or support him on his journey, check out his website [www.nzkayaker.com](http://www.nzkayaker.com) for more details.

Tim will keep the site fully updated throughout, sharing his impressions of New Zealand's coastline through his blog, photos and video.

Tim will be given a big send-off on Saturday as he leaves Tauranga.

Waimarino Adventure Park will be hosting a special event called a Blob Party (the Blob is an inflatable human catapult) to help promote the start of this extraordinary adventure.

The party begins at 1pm with Tim due to paddle off at 2pm. Cost: Adults \$20.

To follow Tim's journey, see: <http://www.nzkayaker.com/>

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## **Waihi: Martha gives up her secrets**

By Grant Dyson

Tuesday May 4, 2010



***From the air the vast open pit of the Martha mine dominates the town of Waihi. Photo / Supplied***

What is opencast mining really all about? Anti-mining protesters might regard a tour of the Martha Mine at Waihi as a form of disaster tourism.

But while debate continues over mining on conservation lands, it's a chance to see for yourself one of the country's biggest opencast mining operations.

Newmont Mining Corporation - a Denver-based company which took over the mine in 2002 - provides thought-provoking two-hour tours of the yawning pit and the stages involved in extracting precious metals from the rock under the slogan "get to the bottom of it".

Mine tours leave from the Waihi Visitor Centre in Seddon St, near the magnificent 1903 Cornish Pumphouse that sits on the skyline as the mining town's new landmark, having been shifted there by Newmont from a risky, unstable spot closer to the pit, at a cost of \$4.2 million.

They're refreshingly far from a propaganda exercise, and in fact are run by Vision Waihi Trust, not the company. The guide for our tour, Murray Elliot, a good-humoured, long-time local whose grandfather came from Cornwall to work in the mine, is obviously pro-mining but doesn't duck environmental questions.

He points to some of the many regulations (and significant bonds), which prevent the company from walking away from environmental problems. And he outlines environmental rehabilitation measures.

More than half a million native plants grown in Newmont's own nursery have been planted around the mining operations. The tailings dam has a "non-toxic" lake that's home to a healthy flock of water fowl and the company has its own project to help breed endangered New Zealand dotterel.

All the water from the various processes is laundered by a high-tech water treatment plant before it's discharged into the Ohinemuri River. And Newmont's ultimate plans for the pit itself centre on the creation of a landscaped lake.

We learn also that the mine is the major employer in this town of 4500, providing jobs directly for 350, and indirectly many more who provide Newmont with goods and services.

First stop on the tour is a viewing platform with a hawk's view of a breathtaking hole in the ground, 260m deep and more than 700m wide. The pit is so large that the over-sized dump trucks hauling tonnes of ore look like Tonka toys.

"Incredible - in the middle of town," exclaims an elderly English tourist, a little inaccurately.

A surprise is the lack of high-decibel industrial din or dust clouds from the mine's workings. Diggers and trucks are not permitted to produce more than 55 decibels in daytime - far less than a group of school children at play, our guide notes - and water trucks constantly damp down the dust.

It takes around 20 minutes for one giant \$2 million-plus truck to crawl slowly back to the surface with 90 to 100 tonnes of ore for processing. That will yield nine teaspoons of gold and 90 of silver.

At the pit-edge, behind a large safety fence, Elliot tells of Waihi's tough early days as a goldmining town.

In that era of hard, dirty, laborious work, he explains, miners "worked around" the early accident compensation system. A lost digit was worth £400, enough to buy a miner's cottage, and "those desperate enough had their mates cut their thumbs off ..." They called the homes built with the money "thumb houses".

While the spectacular open pit grabs most media attention, Newmont also operates Favona, an underground mine nearby, where 40-odd workers spend 11 hours underground at a time. There are 3000 steps to clamber up from the mine tunnels, so there's no urge to visit. Instead we move on to a 2.7km conveyor belt, used to transport ore to the processing plant's stockpile, where it's fed into a grinding mill and mixed with hardened steel balls, lime and water. It takes days for the balls to crush the ore to a talcum powder consistency.

Extracting the precious metals is a technical process in several stages, involving the use of a weak cyanide solution to dissolve the gold and silver, then carbon granules for the gold and silver to attach to.

At the end of the process, amid tight security, a muddy sludge dried to a powder is smelted at 1100C to produce molten lava. The bars produced, a mix of gold and silver, weigh around 20kg and are worth from \$100,000 to \$280,000.

The gold bullion leaves the site under top-secret conditions, says Murray - "I've never seen it" - to an specialised industrial mint in Perth where the two metals are separated.

A highlight of the tour is the chance to handle an ounce of gold that our guide quips he has been told to "guard with my life" and a small bar of silver.

So this is what it's all about. On the day we were there that ounce of gold was worth nearly \$1600.

Is it worth the destruction? There is some reassurance from actually seeing a mining operation for yourself. And our guide quotes Newmont as saying they have no plans for another opencast mine on the Coromandel, so any further work would be underground.

## **CHECKLIST**

**Further information:** It takes just over two hours to drive from Auckland to Waihi, or just under an hour from Tauranga.

Waihi Gold Mine Tours cost \$25, departing from the Waihi Visitor's Centre, 126 Seddon Street.

**Phone:** (07) 863 9015 or visit [waihi.org.nz](http://waihi.org.nz).

*Grant Dyson visited Martha Mine courtesy of Waihi Gold Mine Tours.*

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**From NZ Herald:**

## **Bolivia: Holiday thrills on highway to hell**

By Grant Dyson

5:30 AM Thursday Mar 10, 2011

**Bolivia's infamous Death Road is an unlikely must-do for bike-riding gringos, writes Grant Dyson.**



**The bike tour takes you through the challenging Death Road where you encounter blind corners and 'murder muffin' rocks. Photo / [www.gravitybolivia.com](http://www.gravitybolivia.com)**

There's plenty of time to get nervous about the prospect of hurtling down the "world's most dangerous road" during the 45-minute drive high into the mountains above La Paz in Bolivia. And perhaps we shouldn't have asked about the cyclist death toll.

Our van pulls up in the thin, biting air of La Cumbre, a 4700m mountain pass (Everest Base Camp is only 600-odd metres higher). We check our bikes - chunky 20kg, full-suspension downhill monsters - and pile on heavy layers of wet-weather gear, ominous for such a fine day.

Excitement ripples through our cycle group of seven, mostly over-50s, who don't fit the common, thrill-seeking backpacker mould. One rider says she's feeling great, but "puffing like an old billy goat" in the rarefied air. Another tersely admits to being "effing nervous".

Swooping like a two-wheel pirate down Death Road (El Camino de la Muerte) has become a must-do on the Gringo Trail in South America. Cycling of this sort qualifies as an extreme sport like bungee-jumping or skydiving.

Lots of bragging rights come with the T-shirt "I Survived the World's Most Dangerous Road".

And demand is such that there are now nearly 20 tour operators running trips.

Unofficially, it's thought the 65km road has claimed the lives of 18 cyclists in the past 12 years. Sombre roadside crosses signal personal tragedies. And some deaths weren't accidents: back in the 1940s, five opposition politicians were taken, hands bound, to one of the corners and hurled into space (as another political aside, a house almost hidden from the road is said to have belonged to notorious Nazi Klaus Barbie, the Butcher of Lyon, who fled to Argentina in the 50s, then emigrated to Bolivia).

The twisting route, linking the administrative capital of La Paz to the resort town of Coroico, received its "world's most dangerous road" title in a 1995 report by the Inter-American Development Bank.

Back then an estimated 200 to 300 people died annually on the road, built in the 1930s by Paraguayan prisoners of war, though the toll has fallen since 2006 when an alternative road was built to link the two centres. But trucks carrying produce and agricultural workers, cars and minivans still trundle the old route, mixing dangerously with downhill "ciclistas".

Nerves are settled a little by the fact that we're riding with Gravity Assisted Mountain Biking, a pioneering company run by New Zealander Alistair Mathew, which has a fine reputation for safe descents on well-maintained bikes. But, taking no chances, we keep the gods on our side with the traditional toast to Pachamama, Mother Earth, dribbling alcohol on our front wheels, then taking a fiery sip.

Our gringo guide, Cody Evenhus, gives a brutally honest safety talk. "It's a very do-able ride, but if you screw up the consequences are huge ..."

One of his sternest warnings - not surprisingly - centres on braking. "Your front brake is your best friend and worst enemy," he says, going on to say, smiling, "If you come sliding towards me and there's a 600m cliff behind me, you'll see my angry face."

The start offers safe but exhilarating riding past black-grey cliffs into a huge valley on a well-formed, sealed road. Stopping on a bluff known as Hospital Corner (don't ask), gazing soberly hundreds of metres down at the wreck of a minivan, we learn we are still some distance from the real Death Road.

Not long after, we come across a drugs checkpoint - ironic in a country famed for its coca crops. No one appears to challenge us.

After a short uphill, we descend through misty cloud into the deadly 40km section of road, chiselled into the mountainside, that plunges 3600m through the humid cloud forest of the Yungas.

No wider than 3.2m, the unfenced road throws up a variety of challenges, including blind corners and "babyhead" or "murder muffin" rocks (in downhillers' jargon) that seem, uncannily, to booby-trap the worst corners. But most alarming are the dizzying drop-offs of up to 1000m.

I try to keep left, but my eyes are drawn irresistibly down into yawning, misty chasms filled with tangled vegetation. Morbid curiosity makes it impossible not to sneak repeated glances that leave my flesh literally crawling. The prospect of flying over a hairpin bend from a blow-out is so awful that - against advice - I swerve repeatedly back to the rock face.

Disturbingly, we have been warned to stay left, beside the evil drop, because normal Bolivian road rules don't apply here. The driver heading downhill is supposed to move to the outer edge of the road so he can see how close his tyres are to the edge.

Our descent takes more than five hours, partly because there are frequent stops for briefings on the route ahead, water, food and photos. Innocent-sounding Postcard Corner is one of the most dramatic and deadly; a sharp right-hander with a sheer 650m drop off the no-guardrails edge.

The most recent victim was an Israeli backpacker who died in April this year after going over the edge in mysterious circumstances. Other tales told to cheer us up involve a young Briton who died in the arms of rescuers who had managed to abseil down to him; two brothers, one of whom bumped the other, sending him over; a guide who died taking pictures when he "took one step too far back".

At around 1500m, we've lived on the edge in every sense: skated close to the vertiginous brink many times, survived near-misses with large rocks on bad corners, ploughed through mud and scooted through water cascading from nearby waterfalls, but we've managed to stay upright and out of trouble.

Down lower, it's getting hot, and we strip off clothing layers, rolling towards Coroico on a red dirt surface through vegetation that's becoming increasingly tropical. Now, as coca and other crops come into view on a distant hillside, new hazards appear: dogs, chickens and children on the road.

Our ride has been an offbeat adventure, white-knuckle at times, taking us as promised from an area of snow-capped peaks all the way down into the Amazon basin, with its waterfalls, birds and butterflies, to the jungle town of Yolosa.

Over lunch we view the video of our death-defying descent, which somehow fails to capture the heart-in-mouth nature of some of the riding. But, damn it, we descended Death Road and we've got the bragging rights.

## CHECKLIST

**Getting there:** [LAN Airlines](#) flies daily from Auckland to Santiago de Chile with onward connections to La Paz.

**Death Road:** Our party rode Death Road as part of a Bike the Andes tour with Wanaka-based South American specialists [Latin Link Adventure](#).

[Gravity Assisted](#) packages start from about \$145 a person and cover transport from La Paz, lunch and all equipment including a full-suspension mountain bike, gloves, helmet and free T-shirt.

*Grant Dyson paid his own way through Bolivia.*

**Press release sent to Bay of Plenty media:**

## Waimarino Scoops Up Three OSCARs

Friday, 18 February, 2011

**Media Release: Tauranga company Waimarino Limited wins three OSCAR Awards**

Waimarino Limited has received three OSCAR Awards – which recognise the Bay of Plenty Adventure Park as an outstanding out of school care and recreation provider.

The annual awards, divided into six categories, are made by the Oscar Foundation, to recognise and celebrate achievement in the out of school care and recreation sector. Winners of the nine regional OSCAR Awards become finalists for the national awards.

The triple win from three out of the four categories we entered is a hugely gratifying result for the hard work our staff have put in into developing these programmes, says Managing Director Blair Anderson.

After only one and a half years, this bag of awards gives us some very early, official recognition as the best out-of-school care and recreation provider in the region - which runs from Taupo, right through to Thames, says Blair.

“We were up against some stiff competition from some very experienced enterprises,” he adds.

“Waimarino’s success makes it hard to be humble; it’s great to have our achievements recognised, and we will continue down the same path to offer the best programmes and continue our relationship with families, to enrich children’s lives and work with other OSCAR providers.”

The three OSCAR Awards were:

- **Family Award:** Recognises an OSCAR programme that’s thoroughly focused on the families of their OSCAR children.
- **Best New Programme Award:** For an outstanding OSCAR programme who has been operating for less than two years.
- **Youth Award (Matthew Blockley):** Recognises someone aged between 16-21 years-old who has shown a commitment to the OSCAR sector.

Blair Anderson says that as Waimarino will now go up against regional winners to contest the national awards, “please encourage your OSCAR provider to vote for us, as it is clearly a vote for quality services.”

This is the right moment to reach out to other potential users of our OSCAR programmes, says Blair. “We are pleased to extend a general invitation to come and visit and see what our inclusive, innovative and creative OSCAR programmes are all about – now recognised as among the best around.”

Waimarino Adventure Park ([www.waimarino.com](http://www.waimarino.com)) was founded by Barry Anderson on the banks of the Wairoa River at Bethlehem (north of Tauranga) in 1975. The family business with unique facilities including New Zealand’s only kayak slide, now run by Blair and

Charlotte Anderson, has grown to become the district's leading adventure park and out of school and recreation provider, with a staff of nearly 30. Waimarino's mission statement is 'to provide a unique outdoors experience to the wider community, to develop confidence through recreation and sport.'

Waimarino offers a big variety of outdoor experiences ranging from kayaking and kayak slide, The Blob (inflatable sausage catapults users into river) pedal boats, body zorbs and water walkerz. The park also offers activities such as archery, target shooting, and dirt surfers.

Waimarino is also a major sponsor of Tauranga adventurer Tim Taylor who is part way through the first continuous, sea kayak circumnavigation of New Zealand ([www.nzkayaker.com](http://www.nzkayaker.com))

### **Comments on Waimarino's OSCAR programmes:**

"I think you all do an exceptional job, your programme is the BEST we have come across. I wouldn't change a thing. You guys are amazing. Jack comes home absolutely bursting with enthusiasm and excitement. 'Thank you all' for doing such a FAB job. We are looking forward to your Xmas function.

#### ***Robyn Scues***

"Our family is hooked, Liam's little sister is going to attend next year, she too is now ready to attend the most awesome holiday programme in Tauranga." **Allanah Roberts – [craigsip.com](http://craigsip.com)**

"I'm really happy with the Holiday programme and after school programmes. I love the way the kids are kept busy in an outdoor, active manner. I'm forever telling people about the programme and how pleased we are with it –job well done!!"

#### ***Carmen Kleinsmith***

Liam has attended two other programmes in the past, your programme for him far surpasses the others in both the content and staff members. He has a fantastic time, is excited and challenged by the activities and comes home happy and worn out. I often recommend both the holiday and after school care to others.

#### ***Decke Family***

**Further Information:**

Carla Blockley, Waimarino Manager, or Blair Anderson, Director:

**Phone:** 07 576 4233 or 0800 GLOW WORM, Cells: 021-378 825 (Carla) 0274 210 435 (Blair)

Email: [club@waimarino.com](mailto:club@waimarino.com) or [blair@waimarino.com](mailto:blair@waimarino.com)

High res photos available on request.

Waimarino is located at 36 Taniwha Place, Bethlehem (north of Tauranga).

**SAMPLE PHOTOS – OSCAR PROGRAMMES AT WAIMARINO ADVENTURE PARK**



Please contact us for high res versions:

**Email:** [club@waimarino.com](mailto:club@waimarino.com) or [blair@waimarino.com](mailto:blair@waimarino.com)

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Press release sent to [Scoop.co.nz](http://Scoop.co.nz):

## EOL Plans Wireless Expansion

Tuesday, 27 July 2010, 4:57 pm

### Press Release: EOL Plans Wireless Expansion With World-Beating Israeli Technology Eliminating Need For High Towers

Award-winning Tauranga-based wireless broadband company EOL has partnered with a world-leading Israeli technology company in its latest steps to expand its network.

Enternet Online Limited (EOL) has teamed with the Israeli company Wavion, a leader in urban and rural Wi Fi - along with Airoma, a New Zealand distributor of wireless hardware. Terry Coles, EOL Managing Director, says one of the big advantages of Wavion technology is that it doesn't require the construction of large and costly, potentially controversial towers.

"In contrast to more conventional equipment, Wavion base stations can be installed discretely on street lamp poles and buildings – a far more environmentally sensitive approach," says Coles.

EOL has just upgraded most of its network, shifting from conventional access points to Wavion WBS 2400 SDMA base stations, which are used in conjunction with off-the-shelf Wi Fi client devices.

"As an award winning wireless ISP, we owe much of our recent success to the use of Wavion's technology in our network. It has greatly increased our capacity, reliability and performance," says Coles.

Wavion's CEO Tal Meirzon says his company is proud to partner with Airoma and EOL in the New Zealand project.

"We are pleased that our superior coverage, capacity and reliability have significantly contributed to EOL's success. It is yet another proof of the added value of our unique and powerful beam-forming technology – for wide area coverage in urban and rural settings," says Meirzon.

Coles says the Wavion equipment provides EOL with a real edge in its efforts to work with the Government on rural broadband initiatives. EOL plans to partner with network players including established broadband providers, and regional electricity lines companies, to provide wireless links for the Government's Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI).

“We have well-proven capabilities - and we’re well positioned to deliver seamless, high-speed wireless services to the central North Island’s rural communities,” says Coles.

EOL is also preparing to launch an internet telephony (VOIP) service. Unlike most other ISPs, the company owns its network so is able to separate voice and data traffic from the customer’s wireless connection to EOL’s exchange, and give voice calls higher priority, producing a high quality result.

EOL recently became the only Internet Service Provider surveyed by Consumer Magazine to receive 100 percent customer satisfaction. The company has also been consistently rated the fastest

wireless ISP in New Zealand for both uploads and downloads, by the benchmark website [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net)

The successes have come as the company celebrated its 15th birthday as an independent Tauranga wireless broadband company.

ENDS

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**From infonews.co.nz:**

## **Steve Bird Winery & Vineyard Expands Asia Portfolio**

14 July 2010

**By The World Class Wine Company**

**100 views**

New Zealand boutique wine producer Steve Bird Winery and Vineyard is entering another new Asian market –Thailand.

The company has secured distribution for their MANU label with The World Class Company Ltd. – another step in the company’s plans to grow its share of the Asian market.

MANU Wines is a joint venture between top winemaker Steve Bird, and U.S. wine merchant David Duckhorn, whose family founded the esteemed Duckhorn Winery in California’s Napa Valley.

MANU is a premium varietal wine from the Marlborough region which is sold in the U.S., as well as Asian markets including Japan, Singapore, and China. Bird Winery also has plans to enter the Korean market.

“We see great potential for MANU (Maori word for ‘bird’) in Thailand, building on the Asian base we’ve already established, where the wines have been very well received,” says Bird. “And World Class Wine Co – formed by Thai and American wine enthusiasts - will give us access to a wide range of businesses, from up market restaurants to wine shops and hotels.”

Wine now accounts for more than 20 percent of the total alcoholic beverages Thailand imports annually.

“Wine has a growing level of acceptance among Thai consumers and wines from Australasia have a great reputation, regarded as providing value for money.”

Thai consumers favour red wine, but both red and white wines are popular with the country’s large expatriate population, and foreign tourists, Bird says. Bird Winery will be exporting MANU’s Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir to cater for those tastes.

Bird says their entry into Thailand is in line with the company's export focus, which is to concentrate on Asia alongside his existing markets.

Bird Winery is a privately-owned family company based in Tauranga, which exports to countries including the United States and Japan. In recent years, the company’s overseas markets have expanded to include Sweden, Germany, Poland, Brazil, Canada, and Australia.

Bird has been a winemaker for nearly 30 years, dedicating all his working life to the New Zealand wine industry.

[www.birdwines.com](http://www.birdwines.com)

[www.facebook.com/birdwines](http://www.facebook.com/birdwines)

#### **About The World Class Wine Company**

World Class Wines was recently established as the distribution arm of the California Wine Company Limited.

Established in 1996 by a group of California wine enthusiasts in Thailand and California, CA Wine imports quality wines for wine shops, hotels, and restaurants.

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**From Q Jumpers website: [www.qjumpers.co.nz](http://www.qjumpers.co.nz)**

## **QJumpers Takes Off with New Fuel Partnership**

**TAURANGA, Wednesday 9 July 2010:** Online recruiting company QJumpers has partnered with a leading advertising company Fuel Advertising in a move that recognises the importance of combining traditional advertising with online, to better service their clients.

QJumpers is a web-based recruiting firm that handles the complete recruitment process online. Its e-recruitment system allows employers to easily source staff through the major online job sites, then manage, and communicate with the resulting applicants.

QJumpers Marketing Manager Simon Oldham says the new partnership with Fuel is in response to continued growth in both the number and size of the company's clients.

"While we've made our name as a web-based recruitment company, using our own unique software, we acknowledge the need to use more traditional media as well, to deliver the most

comprehensive recruitment strategies for clients.

"By joining forces with Fuel we are now able to offer professional print design and advertising as part of a total recruitment campaign for our clients. We are a one-stop shop for recruitment services" says Oldham. "There is no easier way to recruit staff."

Fuel specialises in employment marketing, branding, recruitment communications and candidate attraction.

Director of Fuel Advertising Jason, Marra says the partnership is a perfect fit, as both companies are passionate about ensuring their clients recruit in the smartest way possible to ensure that they are getting value for money and great individualized service.

"Online recruitment technology has made it so much easier to manage a job vacancy in-house. By partnering with QJumpers, Fuel can now offer this technology to its clients," says Marra.

Simon Oldham says that clients can be assured the agreement won't mean radical changes to their proven methods, rather it will enhance them.

"QJumpers will handle exactly as much of the recruitment process as required on a case-by-case basis, without any placement fees," he says.

He says that QJumpers remains the most efficient way to recruit staff, "and now our clients will receive only one invoice when supplementing their campaigns with print."

### **About QJumpers**

QJumpers provides a range of recruitment services through innovative online solutions. Its recruitment services utilise highly effective job boards and deliver applicants through an easy to use online application management system. QJumpers offer businesses a smart alternative to recruitment agencies and traditional recruitment methods.

Their range of online recruitment solutions cater for the needs of SME's through to larger multi-national businesses, and have proven success in saving time and cost to clients. QJumpers delivers their services through an easy to use web platform, and there is no requirement to install any software or sign contracts. Just smart methods, combined with fixed pricing.

QJumpers' New Zealand-first recruitware solutions have become the only way to recruit staff for over 2500 New Zealand business

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## **Bolivia: A hotel worth its salt**

By Grant Dyson

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Bolivia's celebrated Luna Salada Hotel sits on a ridge overlooking the vast, gleaming white expanse of the salt flats at Uyuni in the country's south-west. A strong candidate for the world's weirdest hotels list, it is built from hefty, trimmed blocks of solid salt.

Entering the hotel feels like wandering into a deluxe snow cave, such is the unearthly gleam from salty walls and floor, a whiteness tempered only by bright splashes from multi-coloured mats and cushions.

Large white grains of salt crunch underfoot, as we make our way down the salty hallway to find a comfortable room warmed by a gas heater. Only the bathroom is partly "normal", with floor tiles for obvious water-proofing reasons, and a standard toilet, shower and hand basin.

Our bed consists of a modern mattress atop a formidable salt platform, and the bedside tables are hewn from thick blocks of salt. You can pick at the walls in places, and break off small bits. And yes, it may be frowned upon, but I did lick a tiny piece of wall for the sake of verification.

Luna Salada, with its distinctive thatched roof (laid over tin), is on the "shore" of the vast Salar de Uyuni, the biggest salt flats in the world, at an altitude of 3656m.

It spreads like a giant, white inland sea over 10,000sq km - around 25 times bigger than the famed Bonneville salt flats in the United States, used for land speed record attempts.

A whopping 215,000 blocks of salt were hacked from the flats to construct the 23-room hotel that sleeps around 50 people. Another 120,000kg of grain salt was used in the construction, along with a final 50,000kg of fine salt. Even the white material filling gaps between blocks is a mix of salt and water which dries hard.

The award-winning hotel has all the facilities of other four-star hotels, including a games room, cocktail bar, conference centre and craft shop selling local handicrafts and textiles. Next day, our tour of the salt flats takes in sights ranging from pink flamingo-dotted lagoons and shrunken mummies, to what is surely the world's only salt museum.

The tour begins with a visit to nearby Calcachi to see one of around 20 local family salt processing businesses. They harvest the salt using only picks and shovels to scrape it into piles, before loading it onto trucks. Earth-moving machines would contaminate the salt with metallic residues. It is bagged by hand as well, with Chilean iodine added before it is sold mainly on Bolivia's domestic market.

Our next stop is one of the original salt hotels built in the early 1990s in the middle of the salt flats. It was closed down because of pollution issues and now serves as a salt museum. Outside, a white mound is studded with the flags of different nations flying from poles.

The salt flats have been labelled by some as hallucinogenic, because of the distorted perceptions they produce. Expect some strange sensations out in the blinding white glare, including typical desert mirages with distant land forms seeming to float above non-existent water. The extinct volcano Tunupa appears to be quite close, but is actually 90km away.

It's easy to lose all sense of direction: after a time on the hard, marbled surface, with only distant, hazy mountains for perspective, one direction begins to look pretty much like another. People have died out on the salt flats after vehicles have broken down. "If your car breaks down please don't walk - not a good idea," says our guide Osvaldo Duran, grinning.

Bizarrely, five Israelis and six Japanese tourists died in 2008, he tells us, when two vehicles heading in opposite directions - with no other vehicles or buildings in sight - somehow collided.

We next head to the rocky, cactus-studded "island" of Incahuasi and slog up a track to the top to marvel at giant cacti which grow about 1cm a year, to heights of up to 12m. There are panoramic views over the salt flats, which formed from a series of prehistoric lakes, the last of which existed between 13,000 and 18,000 years ago.

After rolling mesmerised over endless whiteness we arrive at a sacred site on the volcano of Tunupa. The scrubby slopes grazed by llamas, are criss-crossed by ancient stone walls built by pre-Incan people. Inside a small cave guarded by a locked metal door perched against the walls are the pre-Incan mummies of Coquesa, dating back to around AD1000.

Back at Luna Salada the sun sets quickly but spectacularly over a sharp-edged horizon. It's a fitting end to an extraordinary day in a harsh and surreal landscape.

## **CHECKLIST**

**Getting there:** The nearest international airport is at La Paz. Buses travel to Uyuni, which takes from 12 to 15 hours. There are also bus/overnight train connections from La Paz via Oruro four times a week.

**Where to stay:** The Luna Salada hotel has single rooms for US\$85 (\$119.50 per night), doubles US\$110 (\$155).

**Tours:** We visited the salt flats on a Bike the Andes tour with Wanaka-based Latin Link Adventure. It was one of 15 stops on a 29-day tour which also included the Inca Trail, Machu Pichu, and the notorious Death Road in Bolivia. Ph 0800 528 465 or visit [latinlink.co.nz](http://latinlink.co.nz). Independent travellers are urged to price tours of the salt flats carefully, and get a written contract with a day-by-day itinerary.

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