

New Zealand:

where sheep outnumber

people

Joseph Sieh visited New Zealand in April, 1992 and fell in love with the country's rural charms. He flew first to Auckland from Hong Kong, then ventured south by bus, making selected stops along the way. A ferry transported him to the South Island and he continued his exploration by train as far as Christchurch.



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by Joseph Sieh

The land of Edmund Hillary, Ngaio Marsh and Kiri Te Kanawa; New Zealand lies midway between the Equator and the South Pole. It consists of two islands, the North Island and the South Island which are mainly hilly and mountainous; yet a third of the land is made up of fertile plains, especially the broad Canterbury Plains on South Island.

The country is sparsely populated (only 3.3 million folks) with the number of sheep outnumbering people by a ratio of 20 to one. It is beautiful, unspoiled and seemingly the least polluted place on earth. The mostly British New Zealanders (nicknamed Kiwis) and the native Maoris live peacefully together, each group sharing the different and rich cultures of the other.

New Zealand is the largest producer of lamb and mutton and the biggest exporter of dairy products in the world. Natural resources are its strengths but industries are also expanding at a rapid rate.

Auckland, with a population of one million, is the largest city, an appealing blend of colonial and modern architecture highlighted by the Harbour Bridge linking the northern suburbs. Parks are evident throughout, with a Central Park-

like domain providing a harmonious escape for nature lovers. The China Oriental Market is a huge warehouse filled with



Wellington: capital of New Zealand.

Asian delicacies, food-stuff and fruits while nearby Parnell Village offers visitors fancy boutiques and posh restaurants which would possibly relieve you of your money supply very quickly. The Harbour is filled with

yachts and sailboats and on the weekend everyone seems to be heading for the open seas under sunshine and warm weather. Worried about the worldwide recession? No way!

Further south is Central North Island. At the famous Waitomo Cave one can experience the Glowworm Grotto from a boat in complete darkness illuminated by the brilliance of thousands of bluish tail-lights belonging to the glow-worms. Like countless stars on a clear night, it's a spectacle never to be forgotten.

Rotorua, the "Sulphur City" is the centre of thermal activities famous for its Whakarewarewa Thermal Reserve with boiling mud, geysers and steam everywhere. Bathing in the sulphureous water is rumoured to be a cure for all kinds of diseases, including cancer.

On the outskirts of Rotorua stands the Agrodome, daily shows of sheep shear-

