

SEE FOREVER IN THE DARK OF NIGHT IN NZ

A comfy chair, a warm blanket, an unspoilt beach and dress-circle views of the entire universe. “The scenic setting, with the dusty, sparkly streak of the Milky Way above gives an awareness of the distances between the stars and the time scale of the universe,” says Hilde Hoven, co-owner and director of **Good Heavens Dark Sky Experiences** (goodheavens.co.nz), which operates the Look Up and Get Lost stargazing tour on Great Barrier Island, about 100 kilometres north-east of Auckland. Hoven’s highlights include spotting the Clouds of Magellan and Matariki, a shimmering star cluster that heralds the Maori New Year. “It makes us feel like tiny specks in this massive expanse of time and space.” ALEXANDRA CARLTON



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YOU’LL FEEL WONDER UNDERWATER IN ANTARCTICA (BUT MAYBE NOT YOUR LIMBS)

Zodiac inflatable boat and into Antarctica’s near-freezing waters. Amazingly, he’s right. After the initial gasp-inducing shock, my body starts to acclimatise. Of course, it helps that I’m wearing a \$3000 dry suit. For 20 minutes I gaze at the sapphire-blue undersides of icebergs, watch penguins fizz around like torpedoes and get a fleeting glimpse of a fur seal. It’s weird, wild and wonderfully improbable. ROB MCFARLAND

“It’s cold when you first get in,” says **Aurora Expeditions’** (auroraexpeditions.com.au) polar dive guide Peter Szyszka, “but then you go numb.” With his encouraging words ringing in my neoprene-clad ears, I tumble backwards off the

PLEASE REMOVE YOUR SOCKS BEFORE MAKING WINE IN MCLAREN VALE

Tickled by gentle sea breezes in the foothills bordering McLaren Vale, South Australia, **Poppelvej** (poppelvej.com) produces wines that are more delicate than many of its peers.

“It’s a lighter, more European take on Australian wines, which makes sense,” explains Danish winemaker Uffe Deichmann with a chuckle. “After all, I am European.”

Deichmann’s secret weapon is stomping the grapes by foot rather than using mechanical presses, which results in a far gentler extraction of tannin and colour. “It’s also how I get to know each particular ferment,” he says. It needs to be done twice a day so he’s always grateful for extra feet. Visit the winery between February and April and you’ll be invited to roll up your trousers and help out.

Jump into the fermenter and you’ll slowly sink up to your thighs as grapes burst underfoot, releasing streams of juice that run between your toes. It’s a strange sensation and the winery often resounds with laughter or delighted screams “because it’s something that a lot of people have dreamed of but they’ve never had the chance to do”.

Deichmann knows that an hour of stomping is a decent workout so when guests are finished he thanks them by showing them around the winery, pulling samples from ferments and barrels to display how the wine evolves over its lifetime. Then he pops a few bottles to show that all the hard work is worth it. ALEXIS BUXTON-COLLINS