

Home away from home



AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Population: 1.377 million

Size: 1,086 km²

Climate: An average of 23°C in the summer, while winter drops to 14°C

Official currency: NZ dollar



As featured in
The CEO Magazine
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It's a cross between a Ralph Lauren showroom, a private penthouse, and a retreat in the Hamptons, yet somehow it still exudes the quintessential flavour of New Zealand. This is St Marys Residence.

WORDS SKYE HOKLAS

Hidden in and among the pretty, character-filled houses lining the streets of Auckland's St Marys Bay sits a unique accommodation offering. St Marys Residence is a discreet haven in an utterly picturesque setting; a stylish option for the discerning traveller looking to get away. It exudes elegance and class, yet it still evokes a feeling of being right at home.

It's the grand vision of Michael Coutts and Manjit Kaur brought to life. The pair have turned their former home—a three-storey property with uninterrupted views of Auckland's harbours—into St Marys. Catering for the increasing number of high net-worth visitors—including celebrities, CEOs, and royalty—coming to Auckland for both business and pleasure, it's a welcome addition to the city's luxury accommodation scene. Influenced by their own worldly travels and the skills gained from their professional careers (Michael in hospitality and Manjit in recruitment), the two have created a customer-centric space that offers a first-rate and unrivalled experience. >>



Fast fact
St Marys Residence is located just a stone's throw from Ponsonby, a stylish suburb which is home to chic cafés, restaurants, boutique shops, and the McLaren Auckland showroom.

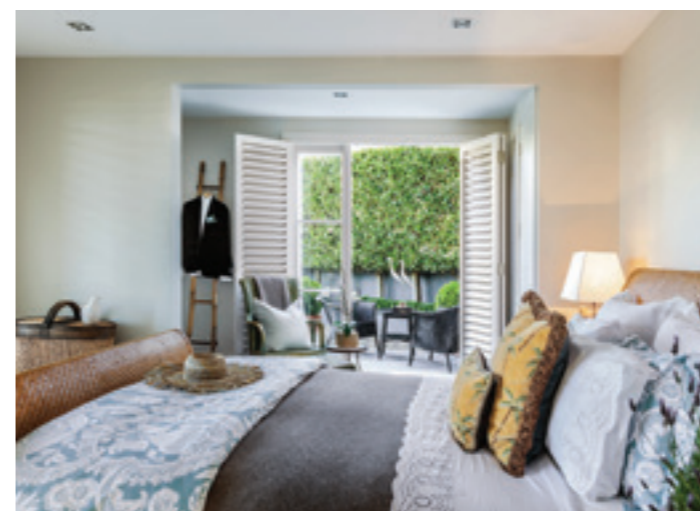
St Marys sleeps up to six people and, unlike a hotel, it has a one-party policy. There are three bedrooms, including the Pacific Ocean Master Suite—which comes with a private lounge and a bar stocked with fresh juices, Nespresso coffee, New Zealand wines, and French Mariage Frères tea—and the Courtyard Garden Suite. Additionally, there are plenty of cosy nooks both inside and out. The Roof Terrace is an ideal spot to watch the superyachts bob about in Viaduct Harbour, while the downstairs Den is filled with a bevy of entertainment options, as well as a personal writing desk.



The colour palette throughout St Marys is soft and natural, with freshly picked orchids adding subtle bursts of colour. There's a Swarovski chandelier dangling from the ceiling, antique French oak floors, alpaca wool carpet, and organic linen. Quality is certainly not skimped on here at the residence. Michael and Manjit have thought of every tiny detail, even in the light-filled kitchen, where a resident chef is always on hand to whip up tasty treats for visitors.

"Food must be pleasurable at any time of life, and especially at an experience like St Marys," Manjit says. "We get a brief from the client prior to their stay, which is very thorough, including information on any allergies or dietary requirements, and then we get into a discussion about the menus. We want to create a home away from home, even with regard to sustenance for our guests. We use organic produce where possible, as well as artisanal and local ingredients.

"For example, breakfast could be lots of little tastings, a progressive-eating style, or a big, healthy bowl of couscous with nuts, seeds,



chia, and goji berries. Or it might be a beautiful salmon from a glacial stream—which is very muscular—served with quail eggs and avocado. Our resident chef might bake an almond and lemon loaf with New Zealand honeycomb, or put together a mixed cheese platter. Everything we serve has been curated to serve the wants and needs of our guests."

St Marys is also happy to host events for its visitors, including weddings, cocktail functions, and dinner parties. With the living area (fittingly called The Great Room) seamlessly opening up into the garden space, it makes for easy entertaining.

Manjit says the definition of luxury has changed in recent years, and St Marys is the epitome of that. "It's no longer about ostentatiousness," she notes. "Rather, it is

about living a lifestyle that you've worked hard for while spending time with your loved ones. That's what St Marys Residence is all about.

When people choose to stay in a place like this, we want them to have a sense of belonging. We want our guests to open their mind to discovery while we enrich their experience of Auckland.

"The city used to be seen as the gateway to New Zealand, but that's not the case anymore. Auckland is holding its own as a destination, and travellers can enjoy a first-class experience here. It's the grand tour of New Zealand, and St Marys Residence is the host." ■

stmarysresidence.co.nz

"Auckland is holding its own as a destination, and travellers can enjoy a first-class experience here."

- Manjit Kaur

Previous page, from left Private chef-prepared gourmet breakfast on the Roof Terrace; St Mary's Residence exterior; private garden. **Opposite, from left** Residence atrium chandelier; Pacific Ocean Master Suite; luxury designer ensuite. **Above, from top** Michael Coutts enjoys spectacular Auckland ocean views from the Roof Terrace; Courtyard Garden Suite; delectable cheese platter.