

# A Kiwi shrine to design

This is for lovers of style and comfort, writes **Rachael Oakes-Ash**

**N**EW Zealand luxury traditionally involves lodges perched atop waterside cliffs with sweeping countryside on three sides.

Folk here wear baubles to dinner after gin and tonic at five. It's all very old school and lost in time and hard not to suppress a yawn.

Not any more. There's nothing yawnworthy about The Spire Hotel in Queenstown.

This 10-suite shrine to uber-design has local wannabes and international press salivating to get in.

**Where is it?**

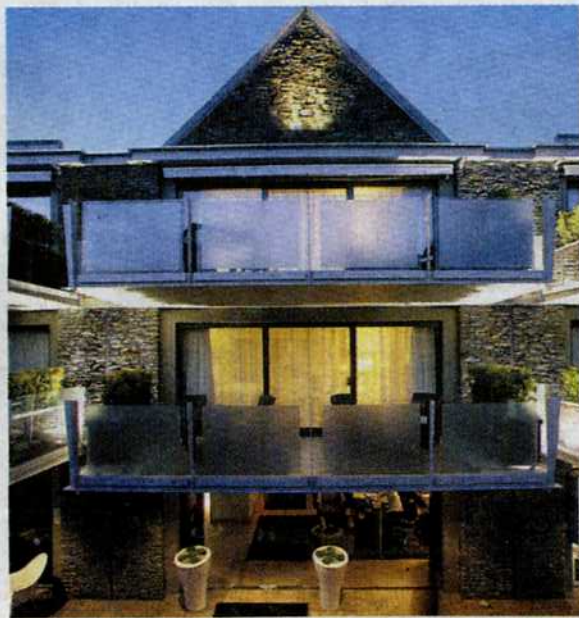
Church Lane is one of a plethora of alleys and lanes in lakefront Queenstown, and a brief walk from the town's 120 licensed establishments.

**Who goes there?**

Lovers of style, comfort and intimate service.

**What's inside?**

Stark lamps blend with Flos lights and Eames chairs in front of the



Tiramisu fireplace in each of the hotel's 10 spacious guest suites.

Did we mention the huge plasma screen with Windows Media, bathtub built for two, massive balcony with Dedon furniture, shag rugs, loads of leather and wall-hugging red hue? We're staying in.

**Serve it up**

Dining is exclusive with no more than

20 guests for nightly degustation. Just like your own private dining room. Choose from seven or 10 courses with matching wines from the menu created by New Zealand's leading chef and Gordon Ramsay protege, Rex Morgan.

Cost? \$NZ135 (\$A113) for 10 courses without wine or \$NZ195 including wines or \$NZ95 for an a la carte-style

seven courses with chef's surprises, wine extra.

**Still hungry?**

Do it all again come sun up. Breakfast for guests is a lengthy, relaxed affair with baked muffins, brioche and sourdough, vanilla rice pudding with peach, prosciutto and buffalo mozzarella egg dishes.

**Thirsty work**

Copper is the new black in The Spire's bar where metal work provides the bling. DJs, jazz, Latino and rhythm and blues musos provide the soundtrack and everyone dresses designer down. Hotel guests go to the front of the queue.

**Extras**

Chocolates are so passe, turn-down time means miniature tubes of New Zealand springwater eye gel left on your pillow — a blessing at the end of a typical Queenstown night of Otago wines and fireside banter.

**The history**

The Spire was supposed to open in November 2004 but didn't open until May 2005. Christiaan Palsenbarg and his business partner, Eric Wegman, wanted to get it right the first time.

A prototype suite was constructed for faux guests who gave feedback. Another prototype, more feedback, a third prototype and their work was done.

In the first year of opening, the property has graced the pages of style-setting *Wallpaper Magazine* and was the only Kiwi property to make the hot list of both the British and US *Conde Nast Traveler*.

**The Spire Hotel, Church Lane, Queenstown**

Tel + 64 (0) 3 441 0004

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

[queenstown@thespirehotels.com](mailto:queenstown@thespirehotels.com)

Suite rate: \$NZ885 plus tax.