

NEW ZEALAND 2025 - PART XIII

DUNEDIN - CURIO BAY - TE ANAU - MILFORD SOUND



Our next base camp was Dunedin, the second-most populous city on the South Island. The Dunedin name comes from Dùn Èideann, the Scottish Gaelic name for Edinburgh, capital of Scotland.

Dunedin is noted as the 1980s birthplace of the *Dunedin Sound* (which influenced grunge, indie and modern alternative rock). Do an Internet search on "*Dunedin Sound*" or "*Flying Nun Records*" to learn more.

The Dunedin railway station below is a prominent landmark and tourist attraction. It is speculated by locals to be the most photographed building in the country, as well as the second most photographed in the southern hemisphere, after the Sydney Opera House. So I did...



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DUNEDIN MURALS PUBLIC ART

As a UNESCO Creative City, Dunedin has a rich history in the arts and making it freely available to enjoy. Home to New Zealand's first public art gallery, Dunedin embraced the street art movement, taking art out of the galleries and into the streets.

The Dunedin Street Art Festival kicked things off in 2014 when local and international artists were invited to add some color and culture to ten city walls. Now, murals are popping up all over the city, with more than 50 pieces of commissioned work in Central Dunedin, the area where we had lodging. Every walk we took seemed to include some murals.

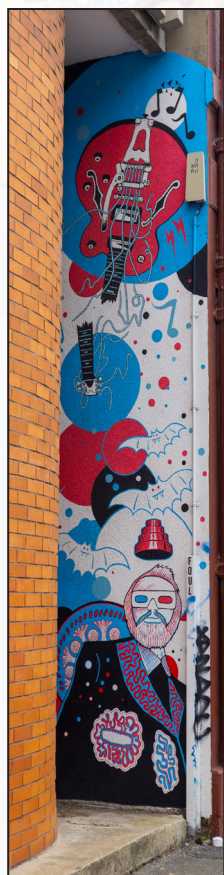
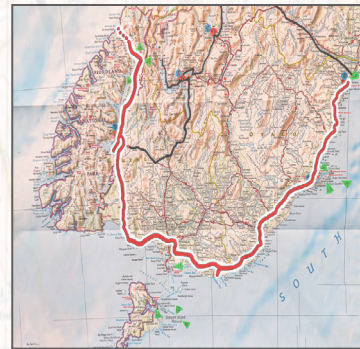




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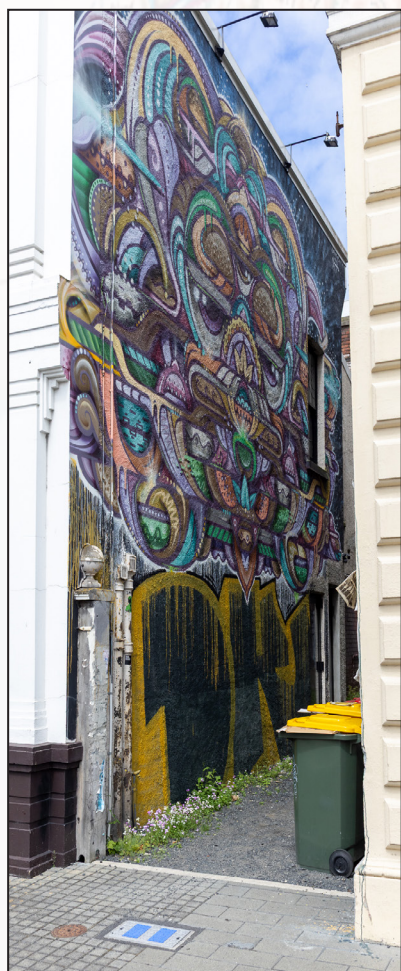
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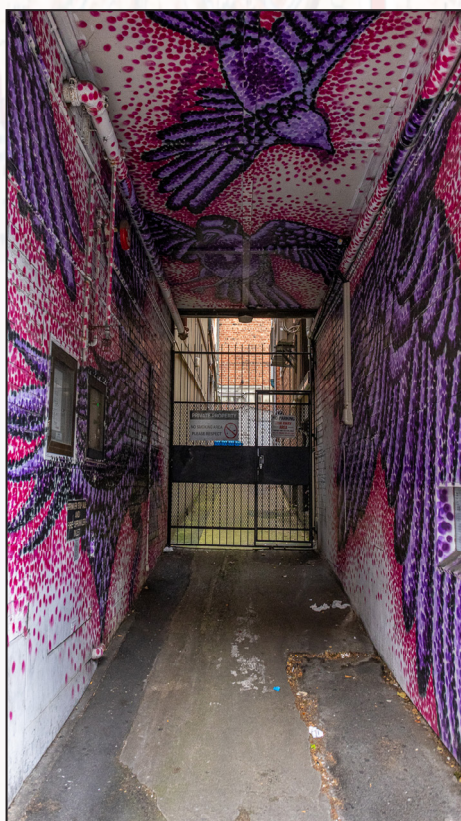
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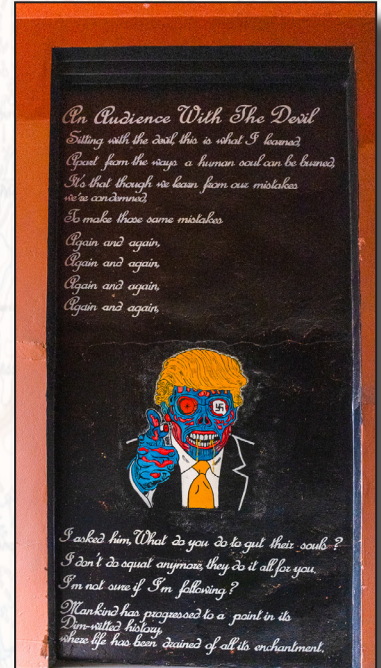
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And is if they had run out of blank walls in Dunedin, the art has migrated to vehicles parked and left unattended.



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On our walks around central Dunedin there was lots of ornate architecture to see.



Throughout our New Zealand travels I focused on the local Pinot Noir as my adult beverage of choice. There was always plenty to choose from and very seldom did I make a poor choice.

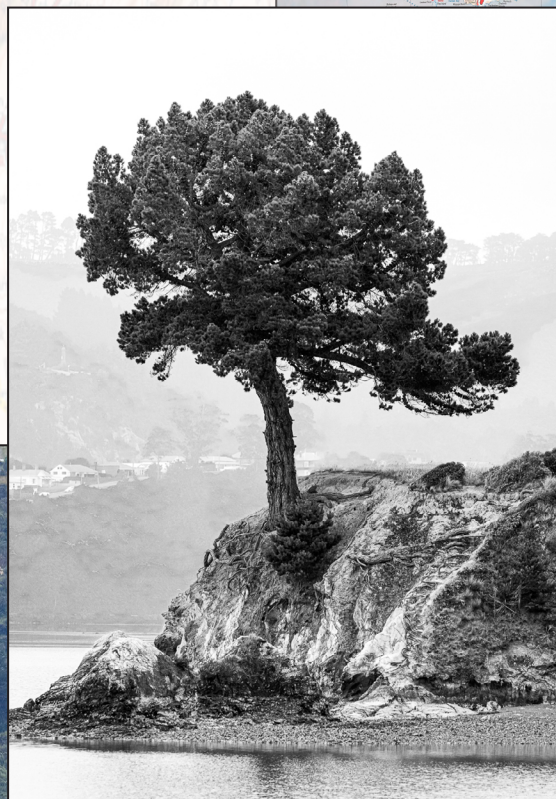


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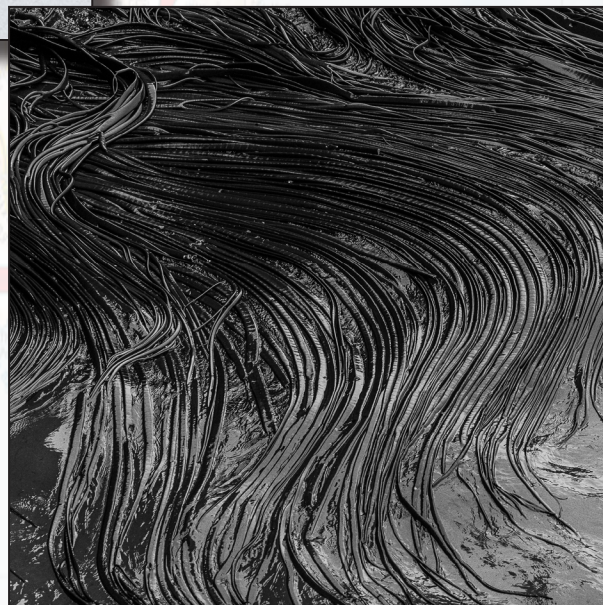
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One of our day trips out of Dunedin was to the Royal Albatross Center at the tip of the Otago Peninsula. The Otago Peninsula is about 12.5 miles (20 km) long and about 5.5 miles (9 km) wide at its greatest width. We made many stops for birding and sightseeing along the way.

About halfway out to the end of the peninsula we passed Port Chalmers across the water. This is where the cruise ships dock and their Dunedin shore excursions start. The cruise ship Westerdam happened to be docked there, a ship that our Poulsbo neighbors had recently taken from Seattle to Japan before it continued on to this region. The ship we will take back to the USA at the end of our New Zealand travels is about that size. We were apprehensive about being on something that size with that many people, yet, we were looking forward to the experience as it was something very out of the ordinary and something we not normally do. In retrospect, it was an experience we are unlikely to ever repeat again, but are not sorry we tried it.



There were huge kelp beds along the way the were fun to photograph for the patterns and texture.



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There were many New Zealand roads we traveled like this one that made me wish we had rented a more enthusiastic vehicle.



This vessel had become a cormorant habitat and so we renamed it the *MV Cormorant*.



We found New Zealand to be generally very tidy so additions to my *Road Art* portfolio were few.





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This was another of the pelagic birding tours that we canceled due to the chance of the sea being rough and risking injury upon injury to Wendy's back. At the Royal Albatross Center we did take a walking tour and saw the object bird, the Northern Royal Albatross. In fact, we saw many and some nesting and lots of flying views and photo opportunities.

Below, the typography of the Otago Peninsula looking south.



After our Dunedin days, we headed south to our most southerly stop in New Zealand, Curio Bay. As we drove south we stopped several time for the views and for some short birding walks.





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At one stop I was so focused on the birds I was trying photograph that I almost tripped over this sleeping seal in the sun warmed sand. It hardly cared, barely opening one eye to warn me off. I think it's flies were more concerned of me than it was.



Once checked into our beach front Curio Bay lodging, we enjoyed the views and took a couple walks on the beach.

Curio Bay best known as the site of a petrified forest some 180 million years old, but it also hosts a Yellow-Eyed Penguin colony, arguably the rarest of all penguin species, and that was why we were here. The bay, along with neighboring Porpoise Bay, is home to the endemic Hector's dolphin.





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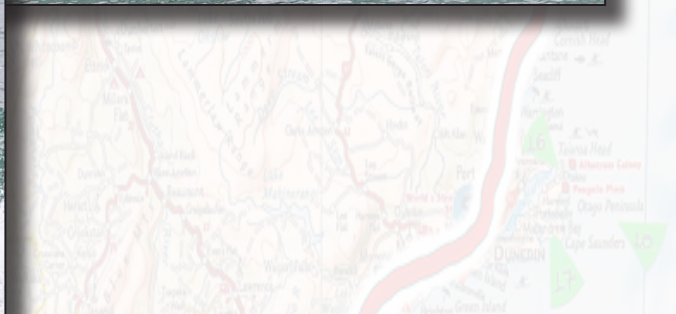
From our room we found that 'our' beach was a popular surfing spot. Not only for the human species, but also for Hector's Dolphins. We had a great time watching and photographing them from the comfort of our own room and front yard.





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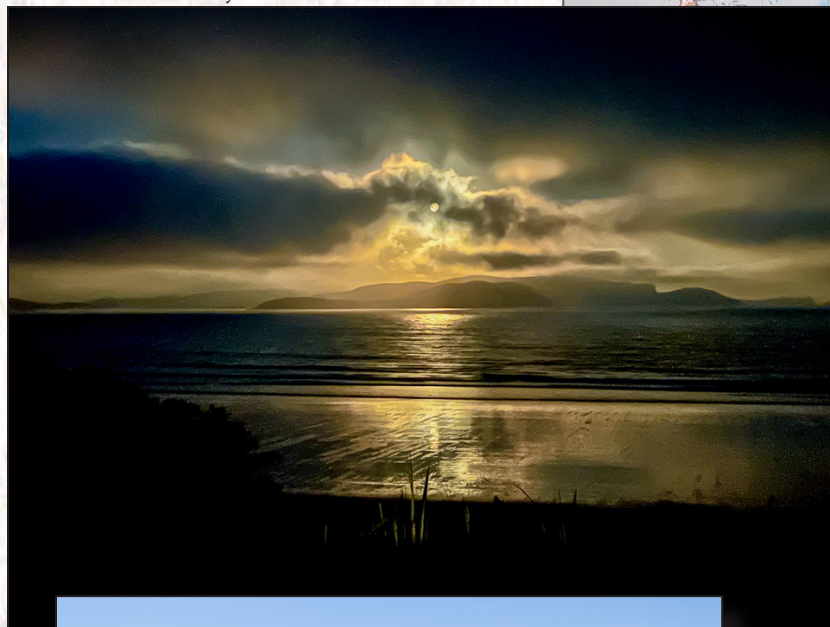
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We did get to see a Yellow-Eyed Penguin, albeit at distance. But with our binoculars a good and long viewing. We also got to do a nice birding walk on a trail the started just across the street from our lodging. We enjoyed a last wonderful sunset before we headed northwest and our journey north. We considered Curio Bay the halfway point of our New Zealand travels as we were the furthest south we were going to get in New Zealand (we were actually very near the southern most point on the South Island) and also about two months into our four months driving around New Zealand. From Curio Bay we would be making our way north over the next two months.

We stopped at McCracken's Rest and for a few minutes endured the sandflies for the great views of the bay below and the open waters towards Antarctica.

The *Austrosimulium australense*, known as the New Zealand black fly or more commonly sandfly (namu in Māori) is a species of small biting fly endemic to New Zealand. Females consume blood for nutrients to produce eggs. They pestered us (and bit us) on most of our South Island travels.



"...no sooner had the sun risen, and we issued from our tent to wash by the river side, than those peculiarly vexatious pests, the sand-flies (namu), commenced their attacks on our bare hands and feet. The sand-fly is a small black insect, and swarms in such myriads, that one is never free from their vengeance, if remaining for a single instant in the same position: whilst sketching, my hands are frequently covered with blood, and their numbers being inexhaustible, one at last gets weary of killing them.... The horrid sand-flies attacked us to-day more unmercifully than ever, and in such clouds that I should imagine them to be a species very nearly allied to those that constituted the fourth plague of Egypt."

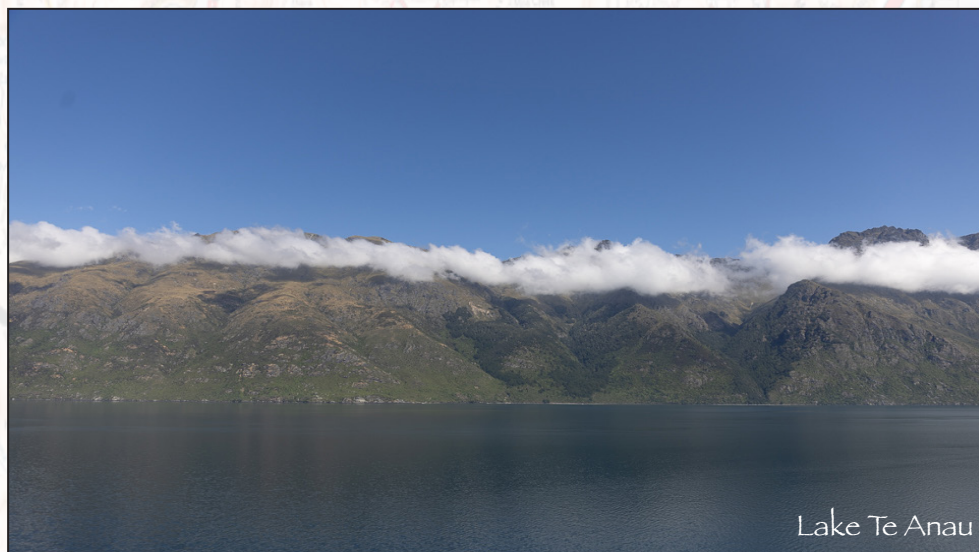
From the account of A. australense near the Waikato River, September 29, 1844 --- It could have been any day we were there as well.

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Te Anau was our base camp for visiting Milford Sound and the other local sights. In Māori, Te-Anau means the Place of the Swirling Waters. On the shore of Lake Te Anau in Fiordland, tourism and farming are the predominant economic activities in the area. Situated at the border of Fiordland National Park, it is the gateway to a wilderness area famed for hiking, spectacular scenery and to the nearby famous Milford Sound and Doubtful Sound fiords. The start of the famous 33 mile (54 km) Milford Track begins at the head of Lake Te Anau and ends in Milford Sound at Sandfly Point (we assume significant tolls of blood are collected by sandflies for access to the trail). In 2014 Te Anau was voted as the best location in New Zealand for hiking opportunities.

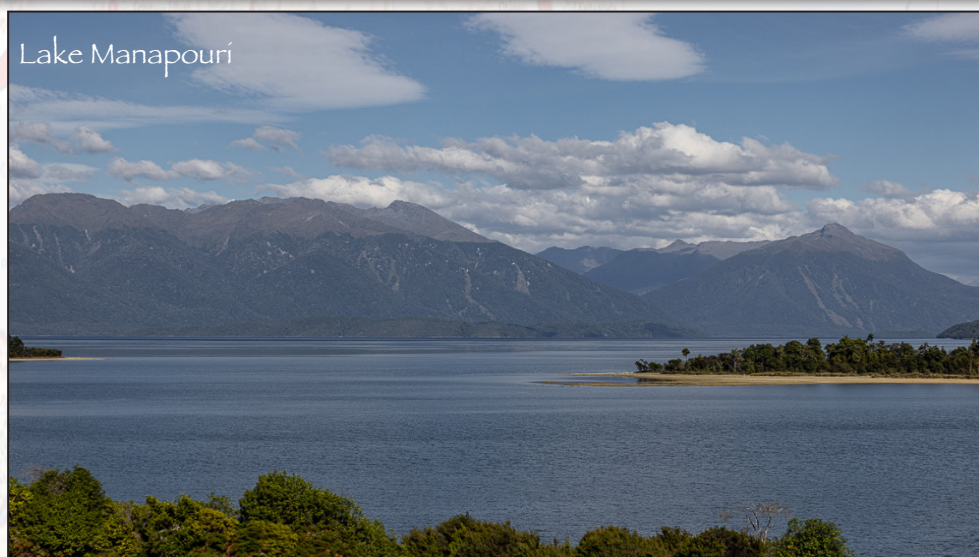


Lake Te Anau



Lake Manapouri

We took a short drive over to Manapouri on Lake Manapouri, where one would catch a ride to the Doubtful Sound trail heads, lodges, and other boat tours.

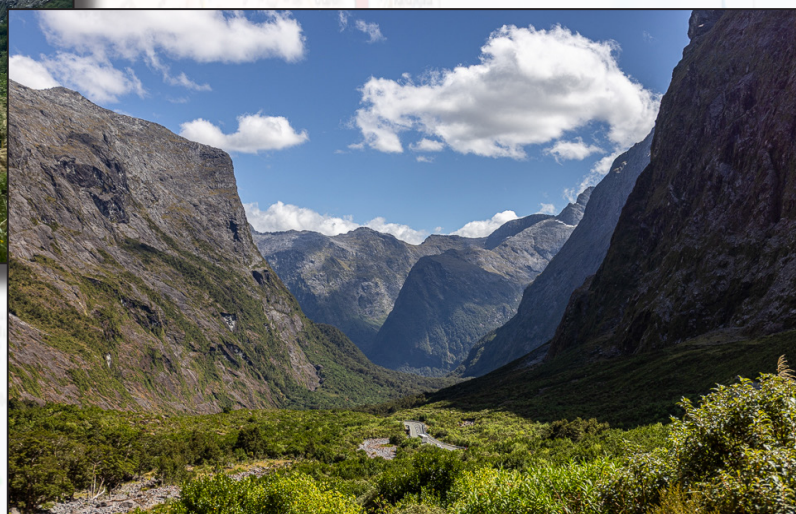
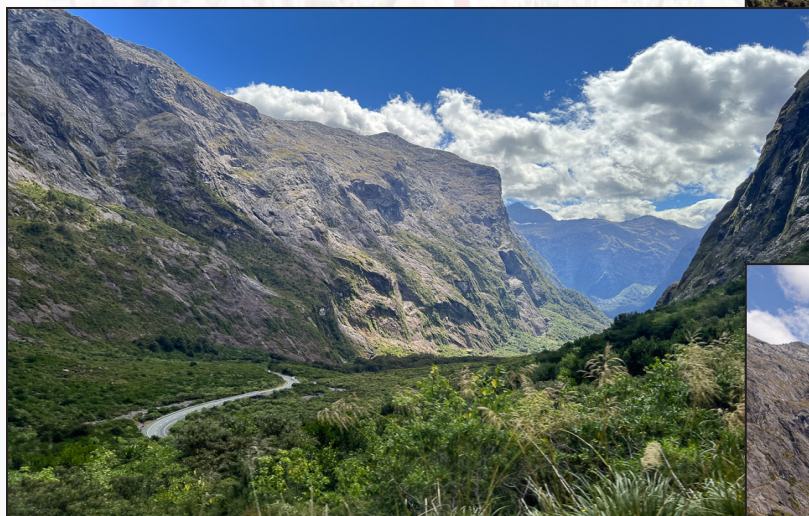


Lake Manapouri

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We decided not to drive to the Milford Sound from Te Anau on our own after reading about the perils of the traffic and parking due to it's popularity. We opted for a bus with glass windows in the top which would drop us off right at the cruise center to catch our boat. The bus stopped a few places along the way for photo-ops too.





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Our boat ride out to the mouth of Milford Sound was on a boat similar to these.





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This is as far as we got. The Tasman Sea was a bit too rough to venture any further. Outside of that, we felt we got very lucky with the sunny weather as there are so many stories of canceled boat trips and boat trips where it rained so hard one couldn't see anything.

One could take a plane to and from the Milford Sound boat tours, or even as a tour itself. It looked a bit too close to terra firma for my taste.



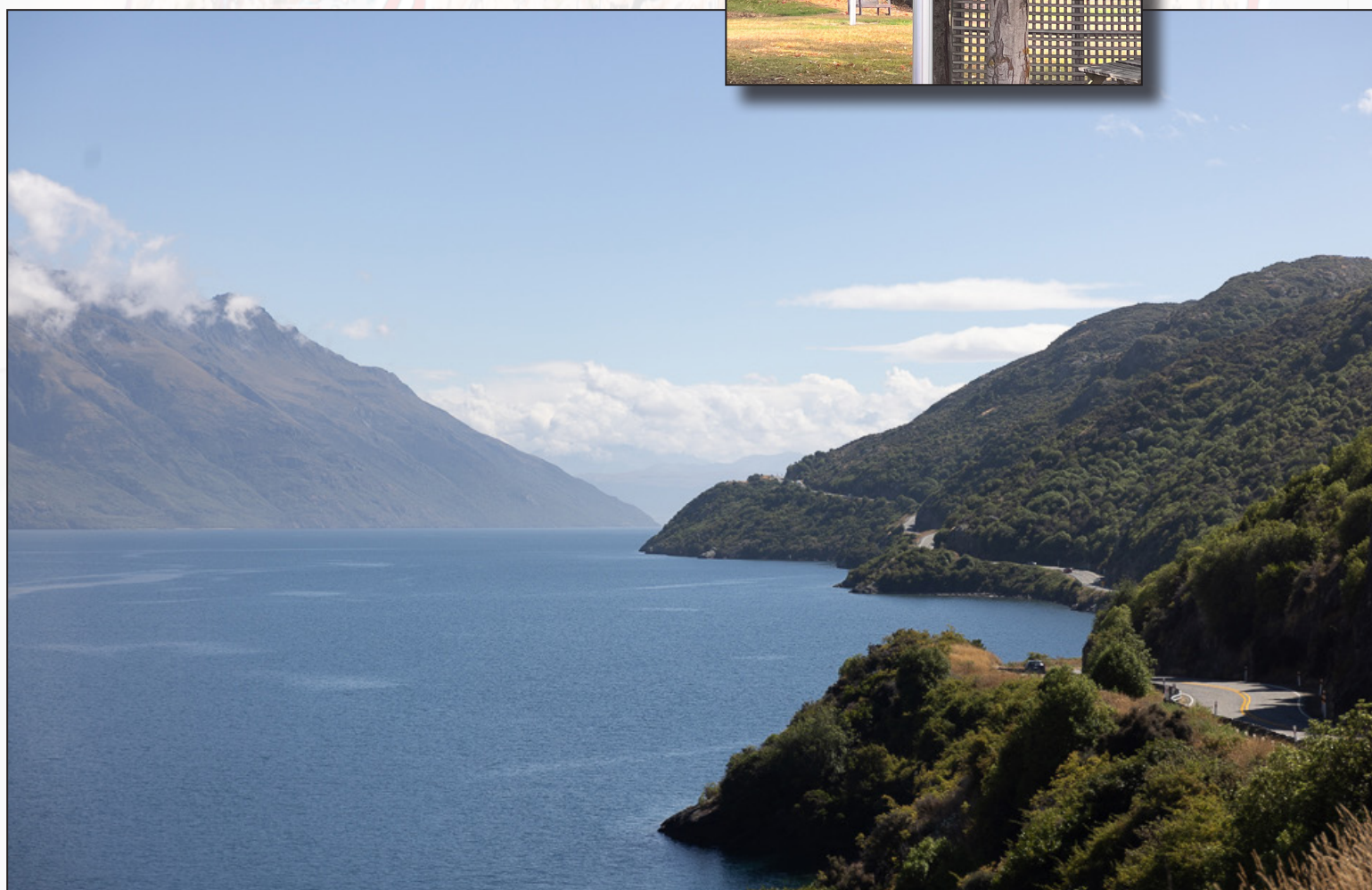


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After our days at Te Anau, we headed towards our next stop, Queenstown. We stopped in Garston, New Zealand's most inland village for lunch.

Coming into Queenstown we drove along some of Lake Wakatipu's bendy bits of tarmac that beckoned for a more enthusiastic rental car.



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