

# NEW ZEALAND 2025 - PART XI

## KAIKOURA - HANMER SPRINGS - AKAROA

On our way from Blenheim to Kaikoura we stopepd a couple times along the shoreline drive to enjoy the scenes.

At the Ohua Point Lookout on Half Moon Bay we stopped to watch a large fur seal colony. The Kaikoura area is known for the seals but they are all along the coast line in this area as well. This particulat spot is very popular with both tourists and fur seals as the walkway above provdes good views while also providing security for the fur seals. The fur sales have become used to the human activity and ignore it.



The half moon at Half Moon Bay



Driving along the winding coastal highway, we required protection from falling rock in a few places.



Wally Weka is the name given to a weka bird that was discovered in Taranaki, New Zealand, where it had been extinct since the 1930s.

**How Wally Weka and Daffas Dingo Stopped the Men from Dingoland Poisoning the Magic Forest**

**W**ally Weka lived in the Magic Forest in a nest under the bushes that lay under Bobs

Daffy Dingo is a character from the Looney Tunes cartoons, known for his comedic antics and personality. A series of story books was created using the names.

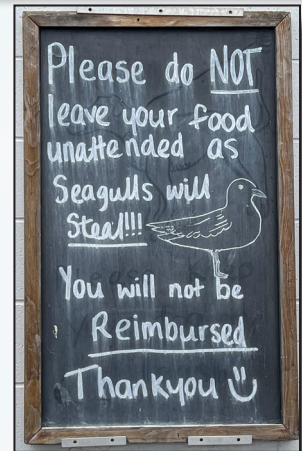
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Kaikoura is located on a long rocky beach on Ingles Bay. We spent a few days birding and exploring this area. A popular excursion from Kaikoura is to take a boat to see dolphins. While we didn't take the tour we would have our own encounter when we left Kaikoura for next stop.



The weather while during our three day stay in Kaikoura varied from sunny and warm to cool, windy and stormy. We had thought weather in our homeland of the Pacific Northwest changed rapidly but New Zealand takes it to a whole new level. We canceled our albatross boat tour here due to stormy seas but we would eventually see some from land later in the trip.



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On our way from our days in Kaikoura to our next base camp Hanmer Springs we stopped to watch dolphins playing just to the south of Kaikoura.



From the clear, warm and sunny skies of the dolphin display we headed inland a few miles where the landscape was more rolling hills and the weather was more cloudy.



As we rolled into Hanmer Springs we noticed this interesting transformer delivery truck.



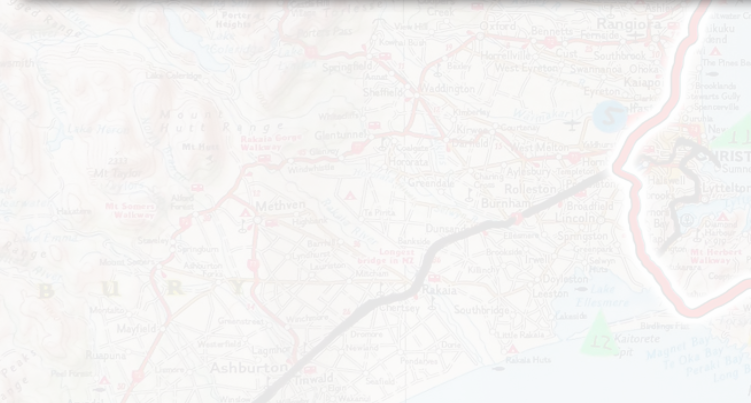
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Our lodging in Hanmer Springs was a home turned art gallery that rented rooms. Our space included a nice reading room that Wendy took advantage of..



There were other rooms and hallways we were allowed to use that included art as well.



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We found a highly rated restaurant, (MK Restaurant) that specialized in dumplings. It was one of our many great meals in New Zealand. We would have gone back again, but it was closed one of the two evenings we stayed in Hanmer Springs. Tripadvisor rated the MK Restaurant as one of the top 1% worldwide.



*"Our goal is to craft the most delicious dumplings, celebrated worldwide, by blending modern cooking techniques—such as molecular gastronomy—with traditional methods."*

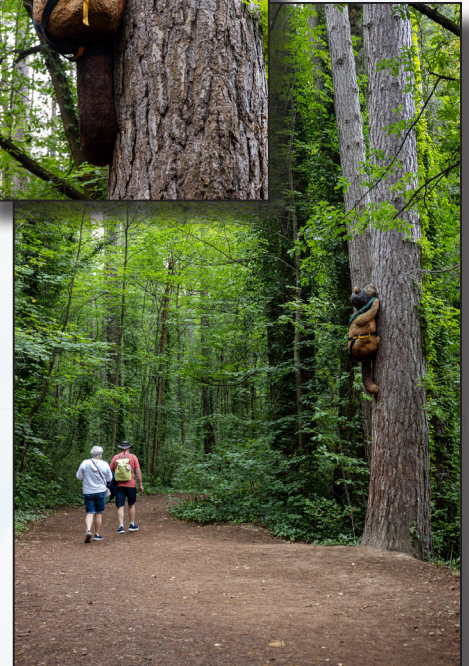


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As much variety as most New Zealand stores had of pet food, we saw no dumplings for pets.

We also did a little birding, taking the Forest Amble Sculpture Walk through The Hanmer Heritage Forest. It has a range of large wooden art sculptures to find along the way. The wooden sculptures were created out of a redwood tree that had to be removed from the nearby Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools and Spa.



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From Hanmer Springs we headed to our next stay, Akaroa, just southeast if Christchurch. We would return to stay and explore in Christchurch after our stay in Akaroa.

We stopped for lunch at the Little River Inn in Little River along with a few car enthusiasts. Below is a mid 1950s (I think a 1956) Dodge Kingsway Custom. As with many cars we saw, they looked familiar but had names that were not familiar. Many cars that were exported from the USA were renamed.

This Dodge Kingsway is an automobile built by Dodge for export markets. The Kingsway name was adopted for the 1940 models. Before that, the export models based on Plymouths had no unique model names.

Kingsways were re-badged Plymouth vehicles, although they were often equipped with Dodge bumpers and trim, like the hub caps on this one. They were supposed to help overseas Dodge dealers to sell cars in a lower price class. The first export models were made in 1935, and they continued through the 1959 model year, with many different body styles and variations depending on the market they were intended for and which Plymouth models were available at the time. It was interesting to see these kinds of USA re-badged cars, mostly in the car museums we visited but sometimes out on the road like this one.



The yellow hot road was more than a re-badged export though. With two four barrel carburetors on top of a hi-rise manifold fuel economy was not a factor in building this one.



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Akaroa is a small harbor town with a population of somewhere between 600 and 700 people. Only about 50 miles from Christchurch, it is a popular destination.



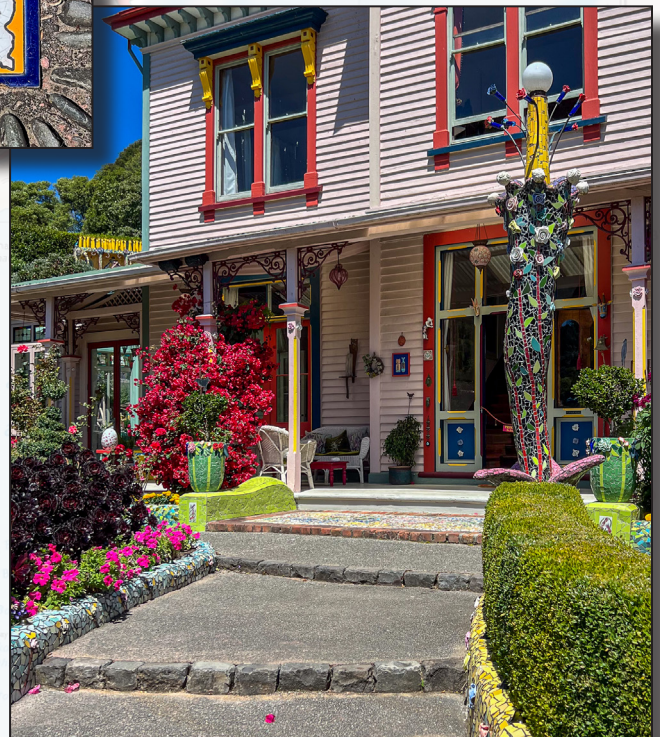
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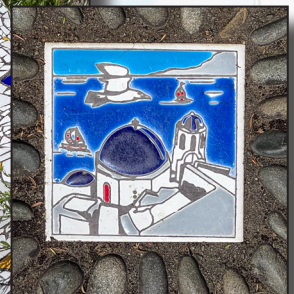
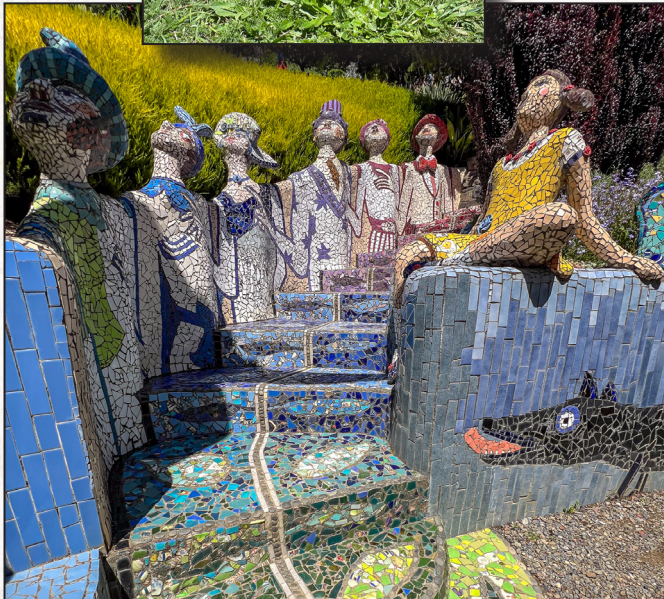
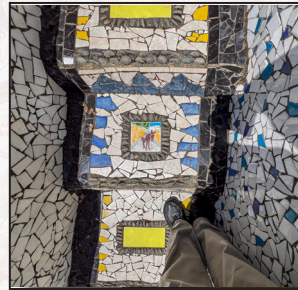
We did some more birding and walking as with most of our stops. Most memorable was our visit to "The Happiest Garden On Earth", *The Giants House*. The garden is a seriously playful, extraordinary wonderland, with a fully integrated combination of art works and gardens. It has been awarded and recognized as a Garden of International Significance since 2018.

Over 2 decades ago Josie Matin, an artist and horticulturist, began creating this significant New Zealand attraction. The ceramic sculptures are primarily large mosaic art installations. I have to say, that while there are many plants, the mosaic ceramic art seems like it has taken most of the space now.



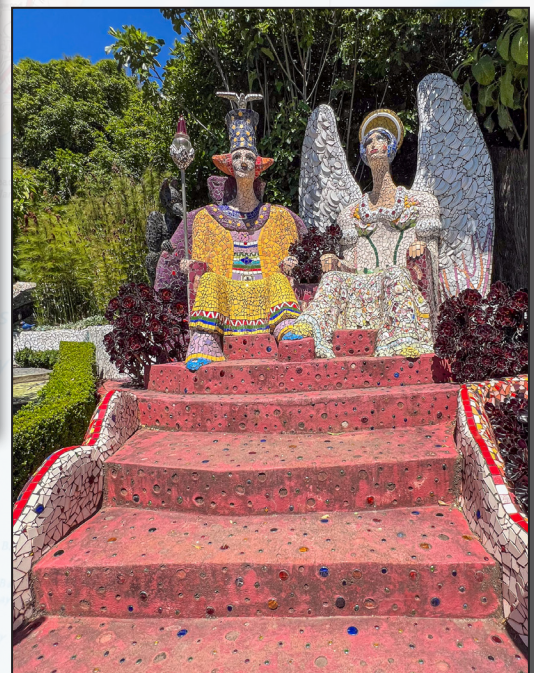
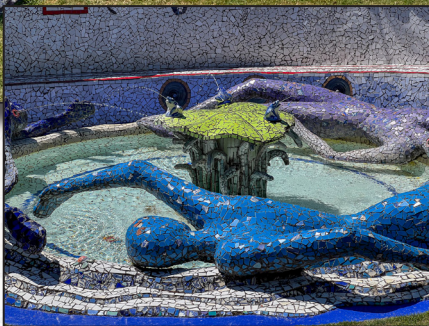
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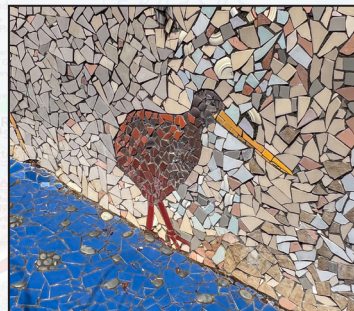
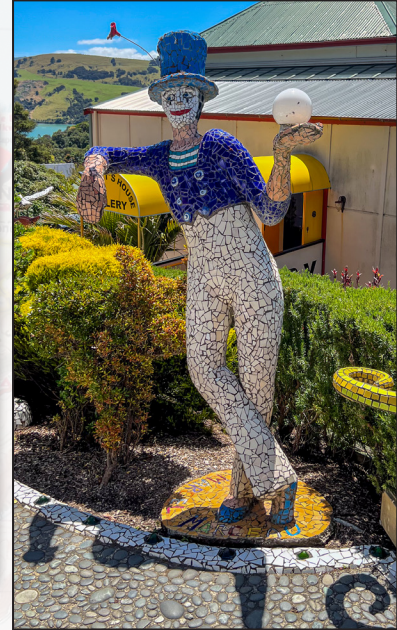
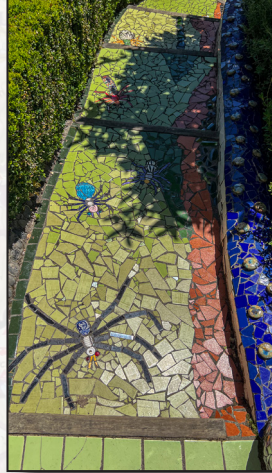
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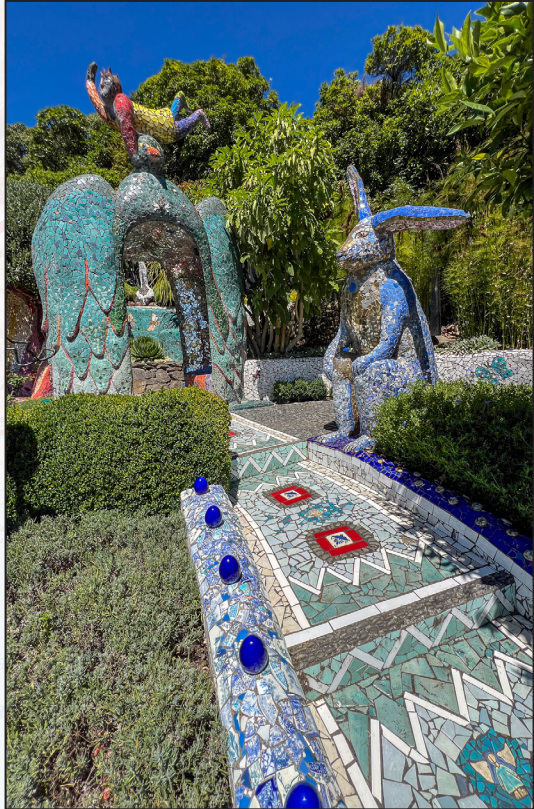
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