

INEXPENSIVE ACCOMODATION, GOOD FOOD, NICE STAFF

Northern Club of Auckland, NZ

by Lew Toulmin

I stayed at the Northern Club (NC) in Auckland, New Zealand for two nights in September 2013, and compiled the following report.



History

The Northern Club was founded in 1869, and for its quarters took over the Wood's Royal Hotel, which had been built in 1841. The clubhouse was expanded during its early days, and was again expanded recently with a very modern addition. Begun like most clubs as a gentleman's club, women were admitted as full members in 1990.

The NC has about 2000 members, and has reciprocal relations with about 120 similar clubs around New Zealand and the world. It also has reciprocal relations with a further 30 additional golf and non-residential sports clubs via the International Associate Clubs network.

Location and Parking

The Club is fairly well located on a hill above the main business district. It is a short five to seven minute walk to the main shopping street, Queen Street, or to the waterfront. Parking near the club is difficult, with on-street parking nominally available but hard to secure. The club is about 45 minutes by taxi from the airport, and the typical airport taxi cost is about \$45 USD.

Public Rooms and Facilities

The building is four stories high, and is about 100 feet wide and 80 feet deep. It is built in stone in classical style, covered with ivy. This looks attractive in summer but rather odd in winter, when the ivy leaves die off and only dry twigs and vines



remain. There are no gardens, and the view out the back from the major public rooms is over a large car park.

Several of the public rooms of the Club are attractive and done in classical style, while the new addition contains a very modern, rather cold black and white meeting room. This room can be



divided or subdivided in many ways, and is frequently used for weddings and large events. The NC has a formal restaurant on the main floor and an informal restaurant (“Bankside”) in the basement. There are two bars, a library, gym, billiards room and small business center/computer room.

Bedrooms

My bedroom was comfortable, recently refurbished but rather plain. It had a good, comfortable queen bed, modest sized wide screen TV, small refrigerator, desk, and heater but no air conditioning. The room was about 13 x 13 feet – a moderate size. The en-suite bathroom had a large shower, with no tub. The shower temperature fluctuated quite a bit. The Internet reception in the bedroom was poor. I rated the accommodation as a B. The nine bedrooms cost about \$130 NZ (\$105 USD) per night plus a 10% service charge for singles, \$145 NZ for doubles, and \$160 NZ for a deluxe room. This rate is perhaps 40-60 percent lower than nearby downtown hotels, and is thus a good deal.

Food

In the Bankhead restaurant I had a mushroom and gnocchi vegetarian main course for \$23 NZ – it was very good. Most mains range from \$25 to \$30 NZ. Service was not as good as the food, with a few glitches. The restaurant décor was rather plain.

Service

Front desk staff were very helpful and were quite absorbed with the America’s Cup, which was then being broadcast. They introduced me to club members and invited me to watch the yacht races with all of them, which was terrific.

Rules

Business attire (jacket and collared shirt, with tie) is not required in the main floor public rooms of the club before six pm. After six business attire is required on the main floor but not in the informal Bankside restaurant, where business casual suffices.

In summary, the Northern Club is well located, has a very friendly and accommodating staff, inexpensive bedrooms and good food.

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