



Coconut palms reach from lush green forests toward the sea surrounding Fiji. Fish in frenzied colors dart between coral growing in Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

Mango and Bananas

A visit to the fabled South Seas arrives on dreams and departs on memories and warm tropical breezes.

The land and seas down under, *Australia, New Zealand and Fiji*, live in a quadrant of the globe that seldom passes the eyes and minds of most Americans. Occasionally there's a striking film or a piece of news to tease us, but for the most part they appear to slumber quietly. Perhaps it's better that way, because the reality is that their cities and awesome natural beauty do very well on their own. And the chance to taste them is a feast for the entire spirit.

Plein air watercolor impressions and reflections on them by artist, author, teacher and traveler

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Australia



The iconic Sydney Opera House struts into the harbor surrounding it, a quantum leap away from the formerly very conservative culture that conceived it.

In the Coral Sea just beyond the tropical waterfront streets of Cairns lays the Great Barrier Reef, the largest living thing on the planet. Signs on the esplanade there warn of the danger of crocodiles and toxic jellyfish.



Totally in line with the country's nautical heritage, Sydney features one of the finest harbors in the world, where bright ferries, tugs and all manner of waterborne transportation move in constant animation.



Along Australia's Eastern Seaboard reside the heirs of convicts and other independent thinkers who began the country in Sydney. The ruling British government worked to expel the worst of its society there until it realized people wanted to go. Today the country embodies an independent spirit not unlike America of the early Twentieth Century.



The bark HMB Endeavour rides rather grandly on the harbor swells next to a retired Aussie destroyer and submarine. They're all part of the impressive Australian National Maritime Museum on the harbor in downtown Sydney.

Before Kuranda was founded in 1876 it was home to aborigines. It's now essentially a tourist market surrounded by the tropical rainforest skirting Australia's northeast coast.



In Queestown, morning's first light disrupts cloud patterns across the face of the Remarkable Mts. and the waters of Lake Wakatipu.

A trolly line crossing the Avon River in Christchurch seems to unite the old and new character of a very English city.



New Zealand





Looking like live pages in a Bronte novel, Christchurch is an academic hub and a rather hip city. Its Peacock Fountain brightens the city's lovely Botanical Garden.

New Zealand is a place of fairy tale backdrops where whole panoramas appear to be lifted from literature and hung across the entrance to valleys or fjords or occasionally the main street of towns and cities. Even in the most urbane settings, the mind can be disoriented by bustling downtowns with the clean perfection of Lionel model train sets and the charm of Victorian England.

In 1862, gold discovered in the Arrow River drew a crush of frenzied fortune hunters. Today, Arrowtown's scrubbed facades pull them in more discretely.





Auckland, on New Zealand's north island, sparkles with a vitality befitting its relatively youthful position on the world stage. As home to more yachts than any other city in the world, it's known as the "City of Sails". Viewed from Devonport across the harbor, its skyline displays the tallest structure in the southern hemisphere.

Auckland's c.1911 Town Hall on Queen Street rubs shoulders with some of the city's most contemporary architecture.



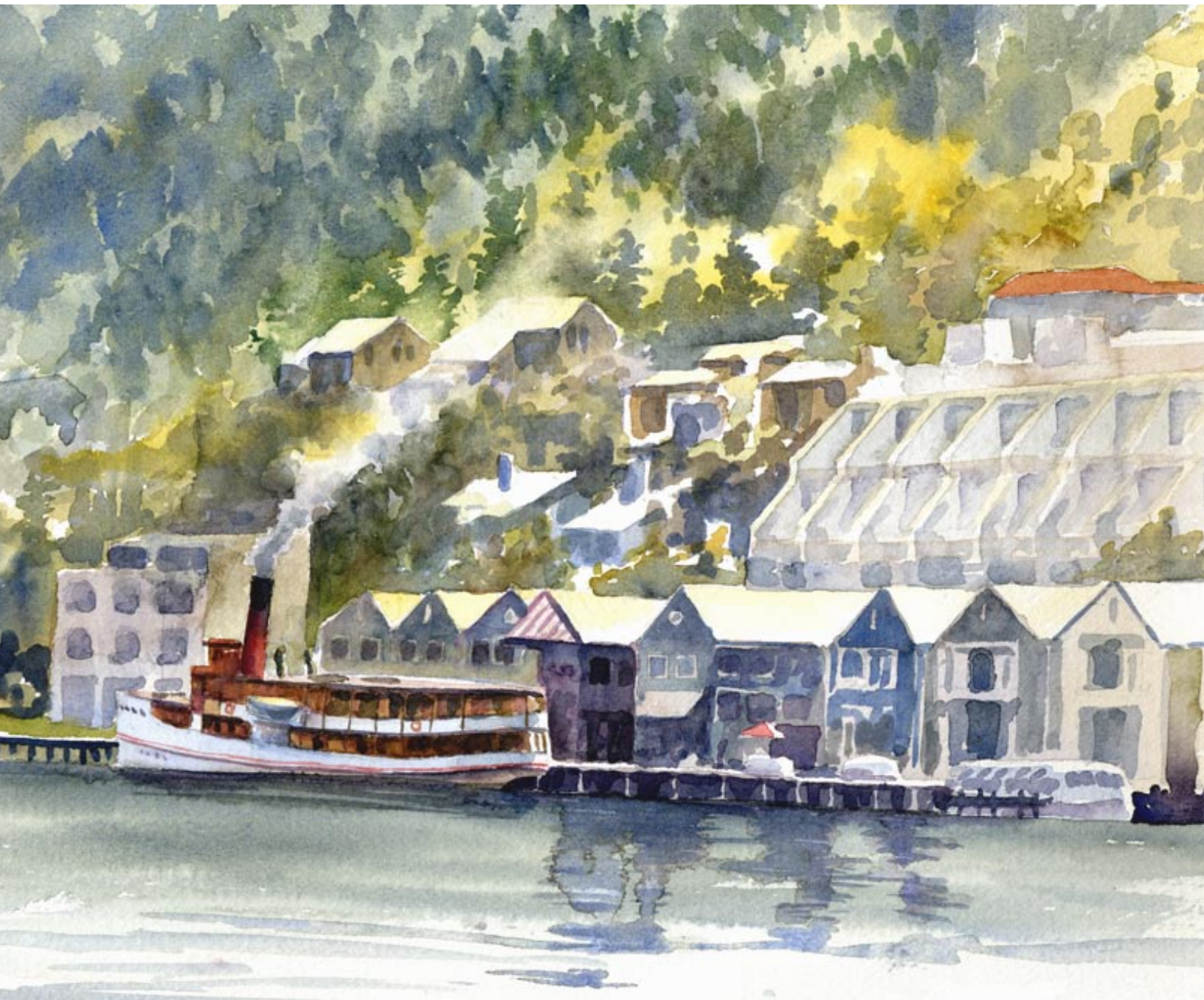
Golden tussock grass gives Lake Tekapo its Maori name. On the shore of the lake the Church of the Good Shepherd is framed by the Southern Alps.





In Christchurch, former university buildings maintain their home country allegiance to Oxford, but now house the city's Arts Center.

Tourists and assorted cargo book the TSS Earnslaw, a coal powered 1912 steam ship plying Lake Wakatipu from Queenstown to Walters Peak High Country Farm.





On Viti Levu, Fiji's principal island, the sea clamors at the embracing reef, leaving the lagoon and palm trees largely undisturbed. Some native Fijians sell bananas, citrus and spinach in the market at Sigatoka, while others offer handicrafts under beach front shade trees.

Fiji

If there is a place where languor takes its name, it must be Fiji. In spite of a sanguine history, many indigenous people now get by on subsistence farming and a traditional use of much of the native vegetation.

