



SOUTH ISLAND NZ

The Best of Autumn | 10 – 19 April 2025

A photographic journey with Grand Master of Photography Paul Hoelen and Rachel Gillespie

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Grand Master Photographer Paul Hoelen and accredited NZ photographic leader Rachel Gillespie have custom designed a trip to journey through some of the grandest and most spectacular scenery the South Island has to offer at the most colourful and stable time of the year.



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They will guide you through a myriad of superb shooting locations over 10 magnificent days through some of the most visually diverse and dramatic landscapes in this part of the world. From astonishing glacial lakes and river deltas, grand alpine peaks, ancient moss-covered rainforest, hidden coves and ravines, historical huts, quiet reflective lakes, visiting the Arrowtown Autumn Festival, taking the unmissable Milford Sound Cruise, and with options for aerial photography in two of the best locations in the country, this trip has it all!

While travelling through such a rich and majestic array of breath-taking features and variety of landscapes, you'll be sure to come away with both rich memories and wonderful imagery to enjoy and celebrate for many years to come...



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DAY 1 | 10 APRIL

Pick Up: Christchurch Airport – 10:30am

Journey to Lake Tekapo

Accommodation: Lake Tekapo – 1 night

Explore: Lake Tekapo, Lake Alexandrina and Church of the Good Shepherd.

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DAY 2–3 | 11–12 APRIL

Aoraki Mt Cook region

Accommodation: Twizel – 2 nights

Explore: Mt Cook Road, Hooker Valley,
Tasman Glacier, Lake Ruataniwha,
Wairepo Arm, Lake Poaka and Lindis Pass.

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Rachel Gillespie
ADVENTURE TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHER

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Optional: Aerial flight over Mt Cook

Rachel Gillespie
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DAY 4-6 | 13-15 APRIL

Queenstown region

Accommodation: Kawerau – 3 nights

Explore: Arrowtown Autumn Festival, Glendu Bay, Wanaka Tree, Glenorchy sister's trees, Glenorchy Wharf and Lagoon Lookout, Lake Hayes Jetty, Shotover River Gorge, Moke Lake and Crown Range.

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DAY 7–9 | 16–18 APRIL

Fiordland Region

Accommodation: Te Anau – 3 nights

Explore: Milford Road, Mirror Lakes,
Eglington Valley, Marian Falls Track, Homer
Tunnel Lookout and Milford Sound Foreshore.

Rachel Gillespie
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Included: Milford Sound Boat Cruise

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Optional: Scenic flight over Milford Sound

Rachel Gillespie
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DAY 10 | 19 APRIL

Te Anau to Queenstown drive

Shooting along the way we'll enjoy a beautiful drive with an early evening finish in Queenstown on May 1 where we can drop you off at your own pre-organised accommodations.

Rachel Gillespie
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Flexibility to Suit the Conditions

The shoot locations above are suggestions only. Paul and Rachel will put their local knowledge and planning skills to excellent use guiding you to where the perfect locations are each day based on the light, tide, and weather to allow you the very best opportunities to come away with a folio of wonderful imagery.

Variety and Scope

As conditions present themselves over the course of the trip, we will have the potential to explore a wide range of photographic genres including Landscapes, Seascapes, Forest, Waterfalls, Wildlife, Macro, Long Exposure, Nightscapes, Milky Way, Aurora Australis.

Education and Tutoring

Paul and Rachel, while running the trip, will aim to make themselves available to support all aspects your technical and aesthetic approach to image taking. Whether it's long exposures, focus stacking, astro photography, macro, or wildlife there will be ample opportunity to experiment and explore them all. There will be scope for individual and collective image critique during the trip and potentially some postproduction, though the general emphasis will be focused on location shooting and camera craft.

They will share their shoot planning techniques and approaches so you can feel more empowered

to apply these insights and skills to your own photography sessions in the future to better get yourself in the right place at the right time, wherever you choose to go.

Fitness Level

Moderate or relaxed, we will be mainly driving to the shooting locations and photographing relatively near the vehicle or within a shorter, non-technical walk.

Food

We will all be taking care of ourselves on this trip. Firstly, this helps to keep the cost down but most especially gives us the flexibility to stay with the light and conditions when it's good and not have to leave just to fit into the local chef's timing. Almost all accommodations will have kitchens available or dining out options close by.

Cost

\$8495 NZD twin share

Deposit

\$1000 upon booking to confirm your place.
Balance due April 10.

Includes

All accommodation after pick-up in Christchurch, all transport with private coach driver, parks entrance fees, Milford Sound Boat cruise, all tuition and instruction.

Doesn't Include

Flights to and from the trip start and finish, accommodation before pick up or after workshop drop off, meals, alcohol, travel insurance.

Note

Aerial flights at Mt Cook and Fiordland are an optional extra, though we have negotiated a special commercial rate for you.

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About Paul

A talented working professional portrait, travel, and landscape photographer for several decades now Paul has been acknowledged as a Grand Master of Photography in the NZIPP, won innumerable awards for his work, judged regularly at a state, national and international level, runs photo workshops worldwide and written for numerous publications. An experienced wilderness guide, educator, speaker, and entertaining storyteller to boot – with an approachable, down to earth style – you'll thoroughly enjoy your time and learn a bunch while travelling with Paul on any journey you choose to take with him.

Paul Hoelen

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About Rachel

Rachel Gillespie runs an accredited full time Guiding and Tourism Photography Business roaming the length and breadth of the South Island. Born and bred here and with a great passion for landscape photography, she's the perfect person to guide us through her backyard to more magical locations than you'd ever know were there. Astrophotography is also a great love of hers and she is a whole-hearted advocate for the Aoraki Mount Cook Dark Sky Reserve and running focused astro workshops. She thoroughly enjoys supporting people to master the fundamentals of all aspects of landscape photography, get results they're happy with and is always up for some really great adventures along the way!

Rachel Gillespie:

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Disclaimer

Waiver and Medical Form required to be filled out and signed pre-trip. Please ensure you have adequate medical, equipment and travel insurance.

Deposits refunded only under extenuating circumstances or placed towards a future trip.

Boat and aerial trips subsequent to weather and sea conditions.

We recommend not flying the day of pick up or drop off as the time window leaves little flexibility for flight disruptions.

Follow-up and trip preparation

Gear Lists, Waiver forms and more trip details will be provided closer to the trip.

CONTACT

Paul: paulhoelen@gmail.com

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