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**An Exploration of the Boutique Accommodation
Experience in Nelson, New Zealand.**

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submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of
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Abstract

The boutique accommodation experience is explored in order to identify the types of experiences hosts and guests aim to provide and receive. Qualitative in-depth interviews, applying principles of the laddering technique used in marketing, were conducted with hosts and guests at 19 boutique accommodation establishments in the case study region of Nelson, New Zealand. In addition, quantitative self administered surveys were distributed to guests to confirm the findings of the interviews. Five dimensions of the boutique accommodation experience are identified: Unique character, personalised, homely, quality and value-added. These dimensions are explained from the host and guest perspectives to identify congruence and areas necessitating adjustment to the service offering. The importance of heritage buildings in adding to the overall experience of boutique accommodation met varying opinion. Implications and direction for future product development are reported by hosts through their experiences of developing boutique accommodation. This research concludes that tourists who choose boutique accommodation over more traditional forms of accommodation may be more discerning in the experiences they seek. Future research into this specialist sector is recommended in particular on the importance of heritage buildings to the overall experience at boutique accommodation places and also in terms of business advice for the development of heritage boutique accommodation product.

Preface

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Contents

	Page
Abstract	ii
Preface	iii
Contents	iv
List of Figures	vi
List of Tables	vi
List of Appendices	vi
<u>Chapter 1: Introduction</u>	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Objectives	3
<u>Chapter 2: Literature Review</u>	
2.1 Introduction	4
2.2 Research into Specialist Accommodation	4
2.3 Conclusion	9
<u>Chapter 3: Methodology</u>	
3.1 Introduction	10
3.2 Case Study Region	10
3.3 Sampling Methods	11
3.4 Interview Design	14
3.5 Questionnaire Design	15
3.6 Data Analysis	16
3.7 Host Profile	16
3.8 Guest Profile	16
<u>Chapter 4: Hosts - Results and Discussion</u>	
4.1 Introduction	17
4.2 Dimensions	17
4.2.1 Unique Character	18
4.2.2 Personalised	19

4.2.3	Homely	20
4.2.4	Quality	21
4.2.5	Value-Added	22
4.3	Heritage	22
4.4	Development	23
<u>Chapter 5: Guests – Results and Discussion</u>		
5.1	Introduction	25
5.2	Dimensions	25
5.2.1	Unique Character	26
5.2.2	Personalised	27
5.2.3	Homely	28
5.2.4	Quality	29
5.2.5	Value-Added	30
5.3	Heritage	31
5.4	Match Between Supply and Demand	32
<u>Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations</u>		
5.1	Conclusions	35
5.2	Recommendations	36
<u>References</u>		38
<u>Appendices</u>		
Appendix 1		41
Appendix 2		42
Appendix 3		43
Appendix 4		46
Appendix 5		49
Appendix 6		53

List of Figures

	Page
1 Map of New Zealand and the Nelson Region	11

List of Tables

1 Reasons for Choosing Accommodation	26
2 Features Experienced or Thought about During Stay	28

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter inviting hosts to participate in research	41
Appendix 2: Letter inviting guests to participate in research	42
Appendix 3: Host interview schedule	43
Appendix 4: Guest interview schedule	46
Appendix 5: Guest email interview	49
Appendix 6: Guest self-administered questionnaire	53

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Specialist accommodation is an emerging sector that provides an alternative to traditional forms of accommodation such as motels and hotels. Specialist accommodation is a broad term that encompasses farm stays, health farms, stately homes and bed and breakfasts (Morrison et al, 1996). The term 'boutique accommodation' has been adopted in New Zealand and Australia to describe specialist accommodation, hence the title and focus of this study. The experience provided by boutique accommodation has largely been described as unique, small and personalised; the use of heritage buildings is also a feature (Pearce and Moscardo, 1992). It can be argued that these and other features of boutique accommodation provide an experience that attracts a specific segment of the tourist market (Morrison et al, 1996). It is the specific aspects of this experience that this study seeks to explore.

There has been a growing demand for boutique accommodation in New Zealand over the last five years. UK travel operators have reported a "sizable increase in travellers looking for luxury and boutique accommodation in New Zealand" (United Kingdom Growing Strong, 2001). Likewise the demand for luxury lodge accommodation from the United States is reported to have risen 133% in the year ending September 2001.

This increase is reflected in statistics from the international visitors' survey report (2002), which show the number of people staying in luxury lodges rising from 28994 in 1999 to 47356 in 2002. This rise in demand has resulted in the introduction of a Qualmark rating that includes boutique lodges and the launch of many brochures dedicated specifically to promoting boutique and bed & breakfast accommodation (United Kingdom Growing Strong, 2001).

Although there has been research conducted on the experiences sought and provided by farm stays within the published tourism literature (see for example Pearce, 1990), there has been no significant published research, to date, conducted on tourist's perspectives of boutique accommodation. This research examines the dynamics of the boutique accommodation experience, from the point of view of both the manager and visitor, to determine what visitors demand and how this demand is perceived by operators. The findings of this research will therefore be extremely valuable for guiding future product development of this emerging specialist sector, as it will provide an insight into current success, given present visitors' demands and operators' service offerings.

Boutique accommodation can also be seen to fit under the umbrella of cultural tourism, an area that has been recognised as a core part of the New Zealand tourist experience (McIntosh, 2004). One of the primary aims of "Towards 2010", the New Zealand tourism strategy is to provide and enhance the New Zealand cultural tourism product and include it in the brand used to market New Zealand. The strategy advocates that researching the demand for cultural tourism product will benefit operators by providing exact information on the experience international visitors want (Towards 2010). The opportunity to experience New Zealand's culture is one of the main motivators for international travellers coming to New Zealand, yet at present there is a lack of awareness about what they can actually experience (The Cultural Cringe, 2003). The findings of this research will provide an increased awareness of the cultural product and, as such be of significant value to tourism knowledge, providing a stepping-stone for the achievement of the New Zealand Tourism strategies goals and desire to increase the economic benefit from international visitors.

1.2 Objectives

The lack of existing research on tourists' experiences of boutique accommodation drove the formulation of the research objectives. The perspective of both the hosts and guests was deemed necessary to gain an overall understanding of the nature of the experience. The development of boutique accommodation establishments in heritage buildings was noted as a common occurrence and as such the importance of this element was integrated into the research. The importance of heritage to the overall experience as perceived by hosts and guests was investigated.

Host experiences of developing accommodation in terms of cost, problems and tips for future development were also sought. The combination of this insight with an exploration of the overall boutique accommodation experience will provide beneficial information to guide future development of boutique accommodation product.

Stated explicitly this research aims to:

1. To gain insight into the type and sorts of experiences developers and managers of boutique accommodation wish to provide for visitors.
2. To gain insight into the experiences sought and gained by visitors staying in boutique accommodation.
3. To identify the importance of heritage buildings to the experience provided.
4. To gain insight into potential barriers, impediments and opportunities for further development of potential boutique accommodation product.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The accommodation a tourist chooses to stay in can be seen to be an extension of their experience of a destination (Wight, 1998). It could be argued, therefore, that studies on the experiential nature of tourism should therefore consider accommodation as an influential factor in a tourist's overall experience and satisfaction of a destination. The emergence of a specialist or boutique accommodation sector, providing a new type of accommodation experience necessitates the need for research into its dynamics.

However, previous research has not examined the boutique accommodation experience as discussed in a review of relevant literature below.

2.2 Research into Specialist Accommodation

The nature and experience of specialised accommodation can be seen to be distinct from that offered by more mainstream forms of accommodations such as hotels and backpackers. It has been recognised that as guests increasingly seek to integrate their accommodation and wider holiday experience they are choosing to stay in specialist accommodation instead of the more standard accommodation offering, (Johnston-Walker, 1999). An understanding of the experiences sought and provided by specialist accommodation must therefore be recognised in order to ensure customer satisfaction is achieved and to provide a guide for further development in this area.

The existing literature on traditional accommodation is examined below as well as that conducted to date on specialist accommodation. Demand and motivation has been measured in previous literature through tourists' perspectives of accommodation attributes, the nature of the host guest relationship and settings of the accommodation.

Traditionally, research on the accommodation experience has largely focused on traditional tourist accommodation, including hotels, motels and backpackers. Research into guest perceptions of hotels, for instance, has found the tangible components such as the comfort of the bed and the availability of a restaurant to be of high importance to guests, while the intangible aspects of friendly service and individual attention were of little concern (Saleh and Ryan, 1992). Further to this, the limits of social interaction facilitated by the nature of a hotel have been recognised (Wood, 1994). The nature of the hotel experience, then, can potentially be explained as a more formal experience than that provided by specialist accommodation.

A less formal means of interaction appears to occur in backpacker accommodation. In this situation the accommodation can be seen as central to the overall experience of the destination. Indeed, the tourist who participates in this form of travel has been found to have specific characteristics that differentiate them from other visitors (Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995). One such characteristic is the desire to travel for extended periods, resulting in the need for a budget (Riley, 1988). Studies investigating backpacker social interaction have revealed that the desire for social contact with other travellers is driven by the desire to gain information about destinations and is a motivator second in importance to the desire to save money, (Murphy, 2000). The provision of backpacker accommodation therefore is largely driven by the need for low budget alternatives to hotels and motels and again can potentially be seen to be distinct from specialist accommodation.

Increasingly over the last 20 years a small body of literature on the nature of more specialised forms of accommodation has developed. Research into different forms of

specialist accommodation has examined, for example, the nature of the host-guest relationship within bed and breakfasts, (Stringer, 1981 and Tucker, 2004), the farm stay experience (Pearce, 1990), and concepts of home (Lynch and MacWhannell, 2000). Comparison studies have also been conducted on the differing experiences between hotels and specialist accommodation such as B&B's (Johnston-Walker, 1999 and Morrison et. Al., 1996).

A framework defining specialist accommodation was proposed by Pearce and Moscardo, (1992). This included:

1. Personal service from a small core of host personnel
2. Some special opportunity for guests (through location, environment or activities)
3. Owner operated properties (Pearce and Moscardo, 1992, p 35).

This definition serves to highlight the ways in which specialist accommodation differs from more traditional accommodation. This is but one of many attempts to define specialist accommodation. Morrison et.al., (1996) discuss the defining of specialist accommodation in terms of room numbers, while Emerick and Emerick, (1994) compiled a list of defining characteristics ranging from the use of an owner operated home to the physical location and price. This is representative of the way much of the research and literature on specialist accommodation is directed. Further studies aiming to clarify what constitutes specialist accommodation have indicated that it may be the realisation of different experiences in different forms of accommodation that shape the motivation for specialist accommodation (Johnston-Walker, 1999; and Morrison et. al., 1996).

Further aspects such as the nature of the host-guest relationship have been analysed in accommodation studies. For example, in studies of bed and breakfast accommodation it is advocated that it is the desire for personal interaction that drives the demand for specialist accommodation (Lynch and Tucker, 2003, Stringer 1981). Implications of the development of such relationships have been found to extend to the point where strong friendships are formed and on return trips monetary exchange is considered inappropriate (Pearce, 1990). On other occasions conflicts and hosts methods of implicitly communicating expected guidelines have been noted. For example Tucker, (2004) found that following guests return to the accommodation late at night, the following morning stories were told of other guests who had returned late, creating a disturbance.

Assumptions of a more authentic experience of the people and culture of a destination have been found to be a motivating factor driving the specialist accommodation choice, (Lynch and MacWhannell, 2000; Stringer, 1981). Pearce (1990), for example, found that tourists staying on commercial farm stays were motivated by the opportunity to experience life on a New Zealand farm. This study noted guest expectations in comparison with what hosts had anticipated and found the two to be somewhat conflicting. In particular, Pearce (1990) noted that guests wanted a somewhat superficial level of involvement in farm life, preferring to avoid the experience of milking cows and seeing the paddocks, which the hosts expected they would want. Hence, there is a need to gain an understanding of what guest's demand of their boutique accommodation experience compared with that anticipated by the host. As such the study of hosts and tourists perspectives of boutique accommodation render important insights for an examination of the host guest encounter.

'Concepts of home' and hospitality have been explored because of the recognition that many specialist accommodation establishments are run from the home (Lynch and MacWhannell, 2000). The demand for accommodation that is run from a person's own home can be seen to be based on what the accommodation represents through its name. One such example is 'The Haven', a name that is seen to appeal to a nostalgic sense of home for the guest (Lynch and MacWhannell, 2000). The importance of the homeliness of boutique accommodation and the experience this provides for guests should therefore be explored.

Host's reasons for the development of accommodation in the home have been found to stem from the host's motivations to fill their home once their children have grown, or the desire to interact with, and learn about, people and cultures other than their own. Further to this, the benefit of any economic gain is often down played by hosts as a motivating factor (Pearce, 1990).

An examination of the setting of boutique accommodation has been further advocated by Emerick and Emerick (1994), in particular the development of specialist accommodation in heritage buildings has been noted. There has been no specific research conducted to date on the experience offered by heritage buildings that have been developed for boutique accommodation. However, the assumption has been made that the added historical or heritage features may be demanded as part of the overall boutique accommodation experience for some tourists (see Morrison et al., 1996; Pearce and Moscardo, 1992). In addition the heritage or historical setting of boutique accommodation necessitating the need for host insight or interpretation has been recognised (Warnick and Klar, 1991).

An experiential perspective of boutique accommodation can be seen to provide an insight into the dimensions of tourist experiences. In particular this has been noted in studies of cultural tourism (McIntosh, 2004) and heritage attractions (McIntosh and Prentice, 1999). Recognising this perspective has important implications for future development of boutique accommodation in terms of achieving customer satisfaction and competitive advantage.

2.3 Conclusion

A comparison of the literature on hotels and specialist accommodation indicates that the personalised style of specialist accommodation may be seen to be demanded by a specific segment of the travel market, characterised by their unique motivations, needs and expectations (Morrison et al. 1996). Research on the nature of specialist accommodation to date has attempted to define the accommodation in terms of its physical attributes and examine the nature of the host guest relationship. For this reason, an understanding of the experience offered in boutique accommodation, and in particular how it appeals to guests over more traditional forms of holiday accommodation must be sought in order to provide hosts with a better idea of how to cater to this market and ensure high levels of guest satisfaction, as well as competitive advantage. The importance of heritage in adding to the overall experience for guests will also be valuable in guiding future development of boutique accommodation. Likewise future development of boutique accommodation generally will benefit from insight into its experiential nature.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The process and rationale for the means of conducting this research are discussed below. Justification of the use of a case study region, Nelson in the South Island of New Zealand is given. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to collect the research data is explained including the process of interview and questionnaire design as a means of achieving the research objectives. The methods of data analysis and a profile of the accommodation and host and guest demographics are also identified.

3.2 Case Study Region

A regional study was selected as the most appropriate for this research given that there is very little existing information on the characteristics of boutique accommodation in New Zealand (see Page et.al., 1999). This methodology is supported by Patton (1987), as one that allows in depth analysis. It has also been used in similar studies seeking to examine the nature of the host-guest relationship or tourists' perspectives of small-hosted accommodation (see Lynch and Tucker, 2003; Stringer, 1981).

Nelson, in the South Island of New Zealand was selected as the case study destination in which to conduct this research. This was based on its selection as one of five regions in New Zealand to receive recent funding from Tourism New Zealand to develop and implement cultural tourism in conjunction with the New Zealand tourism strategy.

Nelson is also known for its “wonderful choices of boutique accommodation” (Nelson, n.d.) making it an ideal destination to research in terms of the quality and visibility of existing boutique accommodation. Future product development in this area will also

benefit from the knowledge gained through this research. The location of Nelson in New Zealand and the Nelson region can be seen below in figure 1.

Figure 1: Map of New Zealand and the Nelson Region



Nelson has developed as a tourist destination largely because of its reputation as the sunniest city in New Zealand. The area is surrounded by three national parks and numerous beaches and bays, making it an ideal destination to visit to take part in a wide variety of water and land activities. Nelson is also known for its abundance of arts and crafts and annually hosts the world of wearable arts awards (Latitude Nelson, 2003).

3.3 Sampling Methods

A combination of two methods was adopted to gain insight into the experiential nature of boutique accommodation. Qualitative in-depth interviews were selected as the most appropriate method to elicit responses from both hosts and guests about their expectations, experiences and benefits in their own words. The collection of data through a structured quantitative survey was undertaken to confirm the validity of the dimensions identified in the in-depth interviews. The use of such methods is consistent with the study of McIntosh and Prentice (1999) conducted on the structured scale of experiences in cultural heritage attractions.

Obtaining a sample of boutique accommodation providers for this research was achieved using a variety of sources: The Latitude Nelson website under the category of boutique/lodges, the Selections New Zealand Bed and Breakfast booklet 2002–2003 and the Heritage and Character Inns booklet 2003–2004. These sources provided 42 operators, several of which were listed by more than one source, hence they can be considered comprehensive. The 42 hosts were contacted initially by email (see appendix 1) to request their assistance and subsequently phoned to discuss their participation in the research. The characteristics of the 19 accommodation places involved in the study were compiled to develop an overall profile of boutique accommodation places in the Nelson area. The number of rooms at each establishment ranged from 1 to 26 with the average number of rooms being 5.7. All of the accommodation establishments included in the study were owner operated and 10 of these were part of the owners' own home. Breakfast was provided at 17 of the accommodation places. Prices of the accommodation ranged from \$120 to \$550 for two people per night and the average price was \$245. There was a total of 6 heritage or historic buildings and 13 were more modern and/or purpose built.

Qualitative interviews were conducted in Nelson on 2 consecutive trips, the first from November 28 to December 7 at the start of the 2003 – 2004 summer season and the second over the Easter Break in April 2004. Structured self-administered surveys were distributed to guests by accommodation operators on behalf of the researcher over the 2003 – 2004 summer period, from December 10 to February 29. The survey was introduced with a covering letter explaining the purpose of the research and the contact details of the researcher. An incentive to participate was offered in the form of a bottle of local wine and a guidebook of the Nelson area.

From the sample of 42 operators initially contacted, 19 agreed, or were available, to participate in the study. Interviews were conducted in a quiet room at the accommodation establishment and were recorded to ensure accuracy of responses. A total of 19 interviews were conducted with hosts in November.

To gain a sample of guests, the hosts at their discretion distributed a letter (Appendix 2) inviting their guests to participate in an interview. Guest interviews were difficult to obtain, due to early starts and long days spent partaking in activities in the area. Periods of stay were also short and many hosts felt it was inappropriate to ask guests to give up their time to participate in an interview. This resulted in the completion of only 3 guest interviews on the trip to Nelson in November 2003. To improve the response rate 14 further guest responses were obtained via email contact at a later date. The trip to Nelson in April 2004 enabled the collection of a further 5 guest responses, 4 of which were collected by email, contributing to a total overall sample of 19 qualitative guest responses. This constitutes a convenient sample (Powe and Willis, 1996), and is advocated in similar studies experiencing problems of this nature, Stringer, (1981). The benefits of obtaining guest responses after their stay is completed include the ability of the guests to comment on their experience in a more extensive manner, (Stringer, 1981).

The total number of interviews collected for means of qualitative interpretation is somewhat consistent with similar studies of this nature, advocating the need for no more than 30 to 40 in-depth interviews as the focus is on gaining rich, insightful answers rather than a large quantity of simplistic responses (Lynch and Tucker, 2003; McIntosh 1998). This study has a total of 19 qualitative responses from each group of subjects, hence the findings can be considered demonstrative not substantive.

A total of 200 surveys were given to operators to be distributed to guests. 47 responses were received, corresponding to a response rate of 23.5%. This fairly low response rate may be due to the operators not distributing all or any of the questionnaires, a problem similarly experienced by Johnston-Walker (1999). To improve the number of responses, it may have been advisable to distribute a second batch of questionnaires for distribution, however time constraints did not allow for this.

3.4 Interview Design

Qualitative interviews were conducted on both hosts and guests to explore the motivations, expectations, experiences and benefits of both hosting and staying in boutique accommodation in the hosts and guests own words. The design of the interview schedule was based on the principles of the laddering technique advocated by Reynolds and Gutman, (1988). This technique focuses on deriving the underlying values of the respondent using probing questions such as “why is that important to you?” (Reynolds and Gutman, 1998, p12). The importance of gaining this insight is recognised as the values of hosts and guests will shape the types of boutique accommodation experience both provided and sought.

The host interview schedule (Appendix 3), focused on identifying the reasons for setting up a boutique accommodation establishment and the benefits they felt they had gained from hosting to gain insight into the issues relevant to further product development. Questions about problems they may have experienced in setting up their accommodation and ways they would do things differently were also raised. Inquiries were included about their feelings on quality ratings and the importance of heritage, where applicable, to the experience they provide. Hosts were also asked to describe the

specific type of experience they aimed to provide for their guests, so as to compare with guests perceptions of the experience they receive, a method similarly conducted by Beeho and Prentice (1996).

The interview schedule designed to question guests on their experiences (Appendix 4), had a focus similar to that used by McIntosh and Prentice (1999), and aimed to identify the type of experience and benefits that guests felt they received from their stay in boutique accommodation. Their reasons for choosing boutique accommodation were also questioned, along with the importance of a quality rating in informing their choice. For those staying in a heritage building the importance of this feature in adding to their overall experience was queried. They were also asked to identify what they felt were the key characteristics of the accommodation. Explanations of the highlights and any disappointing aspects in relation to their expectations were also sought. The guest interview was adapted for the purpose of email responses (see Appendix 5).

3.5 Questionnaire Design

Ideally the design of the quantitative structured questionnaire would be informed by the data collected through the qualitative interviews, however time constraints meant the questionnaire was designed prior to the completion of the interviews. For convenience, the data collected from the first five interviews informed the development of the questionnaire, which focused on confirming the types of experiences sought and gained by guests (Appendix 6). In particular, dimensions of the experience as mentioned by the initially interviewed respondents were incorporated in the form of opinion statements to test their generality (McIntosh and Prentice, 1999). The questionnaire also contained open-ended questions, which gave the respondents an opportunity to comment in their

own words on the highlights of their experience and specific aspects of the accommodation that appealed.

3.6 Data Analysis

The qualitative results obtained from the in-depth interviews were content analysed to identify the recurring themes that emerged relating to the experience provided and sought (Patton, 1990). The themes or dimensions of the experience are detailed in the findings and explained using quotes from respondents. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS computer software. Univariate analysis was conducted to confirm the importance of dimensions to guests and the data is demonstrated in tables that confirm the qualitative responses.

3.7 Host profile

The host demographic profile was largely consistent with that found in similar studies such as Morrison et. al., (1996). Hosts were predominantly couples whose children had left home. The majority of hosts were educated to the tertiary level and had worked in managerial, education and computer positions. However, in contrast to other findings the average age of hosts was between 50 and 64.

3.8 Guest profile

The demographic profile of guests was also consistent with that found by Morrison et. al., (1996). That is, guests were found to be well educated, 85% of respondents had a tertiary qualification and 62.5% of these had postgraduate qualifications. The majority were aged from 50 to 64 and were travelling with their spouse or partner staying in boutique accommodation for an average of 2-3 nights.

Chapter Four: Hosts – Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

In-depth interviews with 19 hosts revealed five common themes that explained the experience that hosts were repeatedly providing for guests. These five themes have been termed the dimensions of the boutique accommodation experience, however, it should be noted that as the sample studied is quite small, further research is required to substantiate their validity. The 5 dimensions: unique character, personalised, homely, quality and value-added, are explained from the host point of view. This chapter therefore, explains the results relating to objective one: to gain insight into the type and sorts of experiences developers and managers of boutique accommodation wish to provide for visitors. The host's perspective of the importance of heritage is also discussed in relation to objective three: to identify the importance of heritage buildings to the experience provided. Finally the implications of development, as reported by hosts, are discussed to provide a guide for future development, hence meeting objective 4: to gain insight into potential barriers, impediments and opportunities for further development of potential boutique accommodation product.

4.2 Dimensions

The five dimensions explained below represent an insight into the nature of the boutique accommodation experience. Dimensions have been used to explain the experience of visitors in gaining an appreciation of the culture of indigenous people, where, similar to these findings, personal interaction is a common feature (McIntosh, 2004).

4.2.1 Unique Character

In describing the nature of the experiences they felt they were providing for their guests, hosts described 'unique character' as a feature that distinguished boutique accommodation from more traditional forms of accommodation. The dimension of unique character was evident through the ways in which hosts had designed or decorated their accommodation and through the services they provide. Many of the hosts had an active interest in the unique arts and crafts of the Nelson region and decorated their homes with their own personal or local artist's work. One establishment, for example, was run by a French couple who gave French language and cooking lessons and another establishment was built in the shape of a boot, inspired by a nursery rhyme, and designed for romantic or special occasions.

The hosts described why they chose to make their accommodation distinct from traditional accommodation "If you go to a motel, you're not going to get so many colours painted on the walls or funky gear, and that's why we've done it like this, it's a bit of fun; it's a point of difference, overall impact". The unique style is also discussed as a means of making the accommodation more than just a house to stay in "We're boutique firstly because we are a different environment, a better standard than you would expect generally, with a certain character; it has style, it's not just a house that has guest rooms and the guest rooms are furnished in a typical style, every room is a little bit quirky; it's a home". This finding is consistent with similar studies in that the unique character of specialist accommodation has a higher probability of attracting guests over more traditional accommodation (Morrison et al., 1996; Pearce, 1990; Pearce and Moscardo, 1992).

4.2.2 Personalised

The host's reasons for setting up boutique accommodation were reportedly motivated by the desire to interact with people: "we enjoy people, I think that's the most important thing about this and that's why we do it, finding out about how other people live their lives just seemed really appealing". The personalised nature was also compared with that of a hotel and it was indicated that boutique accommodation was favoured because of the extra involvement and help that hosts could offer guests as "There's a lot more interaction in a boutique sort of environment than there is in a hotel; it's the little extras that you can do for guests". These findings are consistent with that of Lynch and Tucker (2003), who noted that hosts are likely to be 'people's people' and Pearce (1990), who found that hosts are motivated by the desire to interact with people and learn from other cultures.

The personalised experience offered through boutique accommodation was further explained by hosts who described the importance of interpreting how much interaction the host wanted: "You have to be quite good at assessing how much involvement somebody wants you to have in their holiday". The extra effort that hosts put in to make their guests stay as enjoyable as possible was described: "We endeavour to go that extra mile, it's the people that make the accommodation process; being able to respect their privacy or making sure they want to interact with you; you're forming a relationship". The need for hosts to allow the guest to dictate the amount of interaction was also explained. One host commented "It's also a private experience, I didn't want to have a home stay or a farm stay or a bed and breakfast where you are hovering over them; I wanted something where they could be as independent as they wanted, or as supported as they wanted". Similar studies have found that the complexity of the host guest

relationship creates a demanding role for hosts in specialist accommodation (Pearce, 1990, Stringer, 1981).

The personalised nature of boutique accommodation has been found to result in the forming of long lasting friendships. Indeed, several hosts noted that upon planning their overseas trips they received numerous offers of accommodation in guest's personal homes and had to arrange their itineraries to allow for visiting the many friends they had made through their accommodation (Lynch and Tucker, 2003; Pearce, 1990). The return visits of guests who had developed into friends resulted in the absence of any monetary exchange as the hosts no longer regarded them as customers (Pearce, 1990).

4.2.3 Homely

That many of the operators set up their accommodation in their personal home is perhaps a reason why homely character is found to be an important feature of boutique accommodation. Host's comments indicated that creating a homely atmosphere was important for them so their guests would be as comfortable as possible through "just the little things you might do for them that don't cost anything; taking them some nibbles to have with their drinks outside, offering home-made chocolates and biscuits; there's always home baking in the kitchen so it's much more home-like". One host even noted that "It's all about the home-like environment you create for them". Another commented on the importance of making the guest feel as though they were friends by keeping the accommodation homely and informal: "It's homely and relaxed; it's not formal in any way; the fact that I've got a Hoover on the floor there and an ironing board over there; I want them to feel like friends that have come for a visit, that they can kick their shoes off, put their feet on the sofa if they want to without being

reprimanded”. Similar studies have reported that the creation of a ‘homely’ environment is a key feature of specialist accommodation (Stringer, 1981).

4.2.4 Quality

Boutique accommodation can be distinguished from other accommodation through its pricing, at the upper end of the market, and its exclusiveness (Morrison et al, 1996). The quality dimension therefore reflects the standard that hosts set for their accommodation which is often achieved by spending large amounts of money in order to “bring it up to this sort of standard in that it is well decorated, it’s got all the facilities, it’s nice and light and airy and it’s got a nice feel to it”. Further guest comments indicate the need to ensure the previous dimension of homely does not reduce the standard. On host commented “It may be home-like but you have to keep it up to standard, otherwise it can get shabby and people are not so impressed”; “You have to have the finest quality and most comfortable décor”.

The need for a balance between the homeliness and quality of the accommodation was further highlighted by one host comment: “You have to be homely and comfortable; I mean, you don’t have to see the slippers there and the book there; it has to be luxury but if it’s too luxurious, people don’t feel comfortable in case they break something or make a mark on something; you need luxury items but the experience must be comfortable”.

This finding is important for future development of boutique accommodation and should be taken into consideration so as to provide a comfortable, quality experience for guests.

4.2.5 Value-Added

A value-added dimension was revealed that represents not only the physical location of the accommodation and the convenience or benefit that this offers but also the knowledge of the wider region that hosts can provide their guests with. Hosts described their role as being one of an information source or a facilitator and as such many indicated that they spent their time in the low season travelling around experiencing various activities throughout the country so they can provide their guests with up to date accounts of what activities are worthwhile. One host commented for example “we make a big effort of actually doing lots of stuff over the winter so that when the new season starts we can say look this is really great its just started”. One host commented that on many occasions she has spent significant periods of time rearranging itineraries to better cater to guests needs and wants “[I] spent about 5 hours rearranging dates, times, planes, ferry’s, trains, hotels the lot, completely reorganised his itinerary and he was so chuffed”.

4.3 Heritage

The operators who developed their accommodation, or purchased existing accommodation in a heritage building were questioned on their opinion of the importance of heritage to their guest’s experience. The responses indicated that hosts considered that the heritage of the building was important. They also believed that guests were interested in learning more about the history as the following comment shows: “We really wanted to put together the story about the house for guests to see because everybody asks us, so we’ve been out to the museum and to the archives”.

The extra cost of developing accommodation in a heritage building was noted, indicating that heritage may be highly valued by those who have developed this type of boutique accommodation: “We chose a graded building as we realise the importance of keeping old style buildings, but that increased the cost of the building operation”.

Another host noted that having a heritage graded building could be an inconvenience, as you “Can’t do what you want to the house without applying”. The general consensus was made that heritage offered a point of interest and was worth the time and cost because of the character it added to the accommodation experience for guests.

4.4 Development

A total of 15 of the 19 operators interviewed had developed their accommodation personally. This meant that first hand comments could be obtained on the difficulties they had experienced. The most significant comment that was consistently made by hosts was the need to plan, develop and implement a marketing plan as early as possible in the development process. Many operators had let the start of their marketing coincide with the opening of their accommodation and as such had had to wait for up to two years before they received regular bookings. The need to “get the marketing out there at least a year before” was advocated because “one thing that really held us back was the lead times on the advertising”.

In terms of specific building difficulties there were no reports of problems “other than just normal building glitches”. As mentioned previously, heritage buildings required larger sums of money to develop as they often required far more extensive refurbishments in terms of removing walls to create extra space in bedrooms and the creation of ensuites while keeping in style with the era in which they were built. Some

operators noted that if they were to set up their accommodation again they would do so on a smaller scale as initially “we tried to grow we tried to get lots of rooms and we’ve actually gone the opposite way now we’ve actually reduced the number of rooms”. This was elaborated with the explanation that “we try to keep [guest numbers] to 8 cause we find that the hosting side suffers”.

In terms of future development, the demand for boutique accommodation that is separate from the owners’ home was identified explicitly by three hosts “If we were to set up now with the benefit of 8 years experience we would put up a series of chalets or cottages”. It was also noted that 11 of the accommodation places had a self-contained option separate from the main house although they still supplied breakfast or the makings of breakfast. The general consensus of those hosts who stated this concept was that this type of accommodation was “becoming hugely popular, partly for the honeymoon side but also for guests who just like the idea of being close to us but having a bit more privacy”.

The majority of accommodation places studied were relatively new to the market, being open for approximately 5 years or less. However, it was noted by those accommodation providers that had been in the business for longer periods that burn out was a significant problem due to the extremely heavy workload required to keep the accommodation running. This is because of the demanding nature of the personalised approach coupled with maintaining a high standard of quality throughout the accommodation. The result being that often hosts sell their accommodation after a relatively short period of ownership, for example 5 years or less. These results could explain the short period of time that the 12 of the 19 hosts have been operating for.

Chapter Five: Guests – Results and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The expectations and experiences of tourists staying in boutique accommodation were identified through a combination of in-depth interviews and a self-administered survey. The five dimensions of unique character, personalised, homely, quality and value-added will be discussed from the guest perspective in this chapter. The extent to which this research has met objective two: to gain insight into the experiences sought and gained by visitors staying in boutique accommodation, will be discussed. The importance of heritage to the guests overall experience will also be discussed, meeting the second part of objective three: To identify the importance of heritage buildings to the experience provided. Finally, the guest comments will be discussed in relation to the types of experiences operators of boutique accommodation wish to provide for their guests. It should be noted throughout this section that these results must be substantiated with further research, as this sample size is quite small.

5.2 Dimensions

The dimensions below are reported from the guest's perspective. The findings of studies conducted to date have touched on these dimensions as reported by guests. For example, Johnston-Walker (1999) identified homeliness, social interaction, experiencing the lifestyle and learning about New Zealand culture as factors that explain accommodation choice. There is a general consensus between the way in which these dimensions are explained by guests and reported by hosts.

5.2.1 Unique Character

The uniqueness, character and individuality of the physical surroundings and service were identified by guests in relation to the efforts made in decorating or designing the accommodation that were voiced by hosts. The unique character of boutique accommodation was found to be a significant factor influencing accommodation choice because, “We wanted something a bit out of the ordinary” and, “we thought it would give us a chance to stay in something that wasn’t like every other spot”. The distinction between specialist accommodation and more traditional accommodation was made by guests just as it was by hosts, “dislike run of the mill type accommodation interiors, individual character and interest usually means we are more likely to meet interesting and individual hosts”. The importance of the unique character and experience in informing final accommodation choice was found to be significant through the analysis of the quantitative surveys also. Table 1 summarises the responses from guests as to their reasons for choosing boutique accommodation, clearly showing that the unique experience offered is the most influential factor.

Table 1: Reasons for Choosing Accommodation as identified by quantitative surveys (N=47).

Reason for choosing accommodation	Yes	No
Unique experience I can't get elsewhere	53.2	46.8
Close interaction with others	44.7	55.3
Luxury accommodation	44.7	55.3
To experience a New Zealand lifestyle	42.6	57.4
Locally distinctive	38.3	61.7
To relax	38.3	61.7
Prefer home environment	34.0	66.0
Convenient location	34.0	66.0
Personally Recommended	29.8	70.2
Meet people and make friends	23.4	76.6
Saw in guide book	17.0	83.0
Particular interest in arts and crafts	14.9	85.1
Particular interest in history	12.8	87.2
Particular interest in architecture	10.6	89.4

Similar to unique character is the finding that an element of novelty is found to be a factor influencing accommodation choice (Johnston-Walker, 1999). This can be explained as an experiential benefit other than the core offering of friendly or efficient service (Johnston-Walker, 1999) and as such explains why boutique accommodation is chosen over more traditional accommodation.

5.2.2 Personalised

The personal touch was repeatedly mentioned not only as a motivating factor in people's decisions to stay in boutique accommodation but also as a highlight of their stay and a benefit that they felt they took away with them. One guest, for example, explained their accommodation choice as "we felt we'd have much more personal service and that we'd feel like an individual there... it wasn't like a mass, like a big hotel or something where you're just any old person". Other responses described the benefit that the guest obtained from the interaction with the hosts "The facility is important, but the hosts and their inter-action was more important... what experience we were left with". Again specialist accommodation was distinguished from traditional accommodation "I like the personalised touch, one is not just a room number". The finding that the personalised nature of specialist accommodation is a feature demanded by guests is supported by past studies of both bed and breakfasts and farm stays (see Johnston-Walker, 1999; Pearce, 1990; Stringer, 1981).

Table 2, below, shows the results of the self-administered survey question "During your stay at this accommodation did you experience or think about any of the following?" A list of features were given for the respondent to indicate if they had gained a lot, somewhat gained or not gained the specific experience. Warm hospitality was found to

be the most significant feature in this regard with 91.5% of respondents indicating they gained a lot. This feature can be directly related to the personalised dimension, thus confirming that the personal interaction facilitated in boutique accommodation is a core part of the service offering and one that is particularly enjoyed by guests.

Table 2: Features Experienced or Thought about During Stay as identified from quantitative surveys (N=47)

Features experienced or thought about during stay	Gained a lot	Somewhat Gained	Not gained
Warm hospitality	91.5	0	4.3
Relaxation	76.6	17.0	2.1
Luxury	63.8	23.4	2.1
Authentic New Zealand experience	53.2	34.0	2.1
Home away from home	51.1	36.2	2.1
Unique experience can't get elsewhere	46.8	36.2	4.3
Stories of Building	38.3	34.0	17.0
Forming Friendships	29.8	46.8	14.9
Stories of Nelson	21.3	29.8	36.2
Nelson's culture	21.3	29.8	31.9
Nostalgia	17.0	31.9	36.2

The amount of interaction each individual desired was central to the derived quality of his or her personal experience. The guest's appreciation of the host recognising the amount of interaction they required is evident "Relaxing host, taking an interest, and disappearing at the appropriate point". The highlights of many guests stay often reflected the emphasis and importance of the personal interaction in boutique accommodation "the chance to speak French with our hosts", and "being provided with a welcome home, together with wine and cheese at the end of the day out so we could relax and chat".

5.2.3 Homely

The small scale combined with the welcoming personalised nature of boutique accommodation created a feeling of being in "a home away from home" for the

majority of guests. Comments from guests described how the features of the home made them feel. “Delightful, homely ambience, feel like you’re in someone’s home, more like house guests” and “We felt at home and very comfortable”. One guest even went so far as to say that she felt the accommodation was “just like home should be but we never have the time”. This finding confirms the belief of hosts that guests want to experience homely comfortable accommodation. Relaxation may also be a benefit that is derived from the homeliness of the accommodation “we felt at home and very relaxed”.

Relaxation was ‘gained a lot’ by 76.6% of people who responded to the quantitative survey (Table 2, p28), indicating that this is an important benefit of the boutique accommodation experience. The nature of home and the recognition that the majority of boutique accommodation establishments are run in the owners personal home, can be seen to be central to the experience derived by guests (Lynch and MacWhannell, 2000). The homeliness of boutique accommodation, therefore, is clearly an important recognition for the future development of boutique accommodation.

5.2.4 Quality

The quality of boutique accommodation was recognised by guests who state that their accommodation was “more than just oh, somewhere to sleep”. The standards expected by tourists who choose boutique accommodation indicate that these tourists are more discerning in the experiences they seek “Boutique accommodation is the minimum standard I expect and they have met my criteria of being comfortable, spacious, warm and homely, well equipped and well presented”. The extra attention to detail that hosts stated as a means of providing high quality was recognised by guests “The little touches like fresh flowers in the bedroom and bathroom and chocolates on the pillow” and “the

little touches that turn a themed building into one of personal influences and intelligent thoughtfulness”.

Guests also indicated that the level of quality in boutique accommodation was favoured over traditional accommodation “this is...luxury and a little bit of luxury when you’re travelling is nice, it’s nice to be pampered almost, rather than sitting in a five star hotel you’re in a five star house and its yours for your entire booking, its brilliant”.

Hosts recognised that a balance between luxury and quality was also required by guests “It’s a high quality experience but without all the sort of ‘raz and dazzle’ or formality of a big hotel where you feel like you have to dress for dinner”. Luxury was reported as being gained a lot by 63.8% of respondents through the quantitative surveys (Table2, p28). A comparison of the guests’ perceived levels of luxury in hotels and boutique accommodation is required here to determine if this feature is one that results in the demanding of boutique accommodation over more traditional accommodation.

5.2.5 Value-Added

Guests indicated that their accommodation choice was driven by the desire to gain lots of information and knowledge on the wider region “we wanted to find out lots of information so it was good to be at one where we felt that the owners would be able to give us extra advice and help with things”. The desire to also become immersed in the New Zealand way of life was another influential factor, “Our experience was to “really” get acquainted and make some friends and acquaintances, to get to experience the real Kiwis”. The importance of this value-added dimension is summed up as “Wanting to stay at B & B’s and getting acquainted and personal and learning about the culture, the local activities, etc. was very important”. Further to this finding is that of the

quantitative surveys where it was indicated that the authentic New Zealand experience was 'gained a lot' by 53.2% of respondents (Table 2, p28).

The notion that accommodation is part of the wider experience of a region is supported by Wight, (1998). The importance of boutique accommodation in connecting the guest to the people and the culture of the area is explained by one guest as, "driving through you see the motels...and to me you could be anywhere staying in a motel like that at least this belongs to a local and you feel you are experiencing the kiwi experience in so much as you're in a home". Indeed it has been noted that boutique accommodation offers some special advantage to guests through location (Pearce and Moscardo, 1992). This finding has been identified in studies of both the bed and breakfast accommodation experience and the cultural tourism experience. Johnston-Walker (1999) found that those tourists who choose bed and breakfast accommodation are twice as likely to be motivated by a desire to experience the lifestyle of the wider area and learn about the New Zealand culture and people. Findings of McIntosh (2004) indicate that tourists found it very important to see how Maori people live in everyday life.

5.3 Heritage

The third objective of this research was to identify the importance of the heritage building in adding to the guest's overall experience. In assessing this aspect a variety of comments were noted from guests. Some were enthralled by the way the accommodation had been restored "We had an experience of history, restoration of heritage, a sense of peacefulness like being part of another time; to see how beautifully the family had restored their home added immensely to our vacation"; "We were able to appreciate the work, time and effort that goes into restoration of one's home and to

appreciate the willingness to restore and preserve a country's heritage; all this added to the meaning, experience and charm of staying here". Other guests were more neutral in their responses "The history of the accommodation is interesting but it's not necessarily important, just interesting". Others still, did not appear to gain any benefit from staying in a heritage building "the heritage building aspect is less important to me" and "It wasn't important to me at all to stay in a heritage building".

Those people who did not choose heritage buildings did not seem to have a strong opinion as to why "I have no idea why we haven't stayed in a heritage...I don't know why it wouldn't be high on the priority list". The quantitative surveys recorded a similarly low rating of the importance of history in informing potential guests' accommodation choice. A total of 12.3% of respondents indicated that this feature had an influence on their decision (Table 1, p24). The lack of any significant result in terms of the importance of heritage to the overall experience for guests may simply be due to differing tastes and preferences. These findings advocate the need for further specific research into the importance of heritage accommodation through a larger sample of boutique heritage accommodation places.

5.4 Matching Supply and Demand

This research sought to meet two objectives, which were related in terms of supply and demand. Objective one: to gain insight into the type and sorts of experiences developers and managers of boutique accommodation wish to provide for visitors has been discussed in chapter 4, and objective two: to gain insight into the experiences sought and gained by visitors staying in boutique accommodation is discussed above in relation to the offering of hosts.

The five dimensions have been discussed to identify that there is a strong congruence between the service and experience offered in boutique accommodation and what guests expect. The comments from guests indicate that they are very satisfied with their experiences as their expectations are met and often exceeded, “The assistance we received in booking dinner reservations, planning a day trip and securing a spot on a kayaking trip were more than we anticipated”, “it was better than expected, gracious hosts, great ambience” and “The surroundings and the people who ran the home add dimensions of warmth, charm, information and wonder to our trip, far better than we had ever imagined”.

The hosts identified that they often make a conscious effort to market their product very modestly in order to ensure their customers expectations will be exceeded “we consciously try to undersell in the hope that they will be delighted with what they find”. The finding that what is provided in the boutique accommodation experience meets and often exceeds the demand of tourists is a positive indication of the way in which this emerging specialist sector is directed. This has positive implications for hosts in assuring customer satisfaction is achieved and also for competitive advantage. Future product development, then, can continue much in the way it has done to date.

The importance of heritage buildings in adding to the overall experience is the only area where opinions differed between hosts and guests and also amongst guests. This identifies a potential mismatch of supply and demand. Therefore additional research is required to determine how heritage accommodation can be positioned to add greater appeal to guests.

In summary, the findings of the qualitative in-depth interviews with hosts and guests coupled with the quantitative data obtained from structured self-administered surveys of guests provide evidence that the boutique accommodation experience is one that is demanded by a particular type of tourist. The tourist who demands boutique accommodation over more traditional forms of accommodation seeks a wider authentic New Zealand experience through close interaction with hosts who can provide insight to the wider region. This type of tourist also demands a quality accommodation experience that is homelike. While the limited number of responses can not be considered substantive and require further validation, they offer an insight to the way in which the boutique accommodation experience is structured by hosts. Further to this, an insight of the expectations and the perceptions of the experience as reported by guests is valuable in indicating the success of boutique accommodation to date in achieving customer satisfaction.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

An exploratory study into the experience constructed in boutique accommodation establishments has revealed five main dimensions of the service offering that are both provided by hosts and sought by guests. A study of 19 boutique accommodation operators in Nelson, New Zealand revealed five dimensions: unique character, personalised, homely, quality, and value-added of the boutique accommodation experience that have been explained from the hosts; perspective and then discussed as reported by guests.

The personalised interaction that is experienced in boutique accommodation was found to be an influential factor driving guest's accommodation choice. This research therefore, agrees with the study conducted by Lynch and Tucker, (2003), who's findings indicate that it is the experience of a personal relationship with hosts that is central to the demand for specialist accommodation.

Tourists who demand boutique accommodation are seen to be more discerning in the experiences they seek, preferring to integrate their accommodation with the wider experience of the region they are staying in, a finding that is consistent with Pearce (1990). Indeed, tourists demand boutique accommodation over more traditional forms of accommodation for the unique, homely environment and the authenticity of the experience.

The importance of heritage to the experience provided is valued highly by hosts who are willing to spend larger quantities of money and time to develop heritage buildings to a boutique accommodation standard. For guests, the unique point of difference offered through heritage may not be as important as that anticipated by hosts. The implications of this for future development, then, should be considered.

The future direction of boutique accommodation is seen by hosts to be directed towards a more independent form of stay away from the host's personal home, but still with a strong level of personalisation. Whatever the development, the importance of developing a marketing plan is advocated by hosts in the initial stages of development to ensure a smooth transition into the running of the business in terms of regular bookings.

The findings of this study will be valuable in providing a guide for future product development, in particular to ensure that high levels of customer satisfaction are achieved and to gain competitive advantage.

6.2 Recommendations

This research has attempted to come to a conclusion about the importance of heritage to the overall boutique accommodation experience. Responses from guests particularly have not been conclusive, indicating that this is an area that requires further research in order to predict and guide future demand. Further research is required with guests on both a greater scale and in more depth to confirm a guest perspective that is indicative of the wider population of tourists staying in boutique accommodation. Gaining further advice and insight into the development of heritage buildings for the purposes of

boutique accommodation would also be valuable in aiding the decisions of how to develop future boutique accommodation, in particular in terms of cost and functionality, for example, to determine the benefits of modern purpose built buildings against heritage buildings.

A confirmation of the findings of this research on a larger scale would be beneficial in order to substantiate the experiential nature of the boutique accommodation experience identified in this study. The completion of this study in an alternate case study region is also recommended. This may reveal different results relating specifically to the culture or benefits of the location and the way in which these affect the boutique accommodation experience.

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26 November 2003

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Anna Siggs and I am a postgraduate student at Lincoln University. I am currently conducting a summer research project on the boutique accommodation experience in the Nelson area. I have chosen the Nelson area as it has recently been selected by Tourism New Zealand to develop its cultural tourism product. As such this research has the support of Latitude Nelson, as the findings of the research will be beneficial to both accommodation providers, in improving your service offering, and the region as a whole.

In order to conduct my research I will be traveling to Nelson to conduct interviews with both visitors to and providers of boutique accommodation from Friday the 28th of November to Saturday the 6th of December. I would like to request your assistance with this research by allowing me to come and interview yourself and any visitors to your accommodation who are willing.

Prior to my traveling up to Nelson I will contact you by phone to discuss your participation including an appropriate time to visit you, if you wish to be involved. Should you have any further questions or wish to discuss this research further please don't hesitate to contact myself on siggsa2@lincoln.ac.nz or 03 981 3335 or my supervisor Dr Alison McIntosh on mcintosa@lincoln.ac.nz or 03 325 3838 ext: 8767. I look forward to meeting with you if you wish to participate in this research.

Yours Sincerely,

Anna Siggs

Hello,

My name is Anna Siggs and I am a postgraduate student at Lincoln University (Christchurch, New Zealand). I am currently conducting a summer research project, focusing on the experiences of tourists at boutique accommodation in the Nelson area.

This letter is an invitation to participate in my study. This will involve an interview (approximately half an hour) in which I would like you to discuss your experience here. The knowledge gained from my research will be valuable in providing more beneficial experiences to future visitors such as yourself.

The results of this project may be published, but you can be assured of complete confidentiality of all responses, your name will not be made public. All responses will be coded using a numeric system and stored securely on completion of this research.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee.

If you would like to participate please contact me on 021 351 396 or email me at siggsa@lincoln.ac.nz and we can schedule a convenient time.

Thank you and I look forward to meeting with you

Anna Siggs

If you have any concerns or wish to speak to someone other than myself about this research please contact my supervisor:

Dr Alison McIntosh
mcintosa@lincoln.ac.nz
Ph. 3253838 ext. 8767

In-Depth Interview with Operators of Boutique Accommodation in Nelson

The aim of this research is to investigate the experiences sought and provided by visitors to, and providers of, boutique accommodation. It will endeavour to identify any mismatch between the demand and supply of boutique accommodation experiences and any barriers to setting up boutique accommodation. All responses will be completely confidential and anonymous.

1. How long have you been an operator of this accommodation?
2. Can you tell me how you set up your business?
 - 2a. Did you seek any support in establishing this business?
 - 2b. Why did you choose this
 - a) location
 - b) Building
3. Do you run this accommodation on your own?
 - 3a. Do you have links/work with any other businesses in the region?
(Latitude Nelson/ Heritage Inns?)
 - 3b. How do you promote your accommodation?
(Why is that important to you?)
4. What experience did you and/or your partner have in this area prior to this?
5. Why did you decide to set up a boutique accommodation business?
(Why was that important to you?)
6. Please describe the characteristics of the lodge itself?
(What are your reasons for running it in that way?)
(How do you see your role in the experience you provide to your guests?)
7. On the whole has your experience running a boutique accommodation business been enjoyable/worthwhile?
 - 7a. How have you yourself benefited from hosting guests?
8. Can you please explain any difficulties you had or barriers you came across in setting up and developing this accommodation? *(Why?)*
 - 8a. If you were to set up this type of accommodation again how would you do things differently? *(Why?)*
(If a heritage building)
9. How do you think having your accommodation in a heritage building adds to the overall experience for your guests? *(Why? Why is _____ important?)*
 - 9a. How important do you think quality rating/heritage listing is to boutique accommodation?

10. How would you describe your accommodation to someone who had never stayed here before? (*Why?*)
11. In your opinion, what makes your accommodation a 'boutique' business?
(*why/how is it defined as 'boutique accommodation'?*)
12. What type of experience do you aim to provide for your guests
- 12a. What are the key attributes of the experience?
(*Why? Why do you think it is important to provide _____?*)
13. What are the behaviours of guests while staying here?
14. What are the expectations of guests? (*Why?*)
15. What are the experiences guests seek? (*Why?*)
- 15a. How do you think they benefit from staying here? (*Why?*)
16. Have you had any difficult situations with guests? *Can you please explain?*
17. Are there any changes that you would like make to improve your accommodation or the experience you offer to your guests? (*Why?*)
18. Given the following list of dimensions for this accommodation please rank them in order of importance to your guests.
- A. Uniqueness (something special that sets this accommodation apart from any other)
 - B. Personalised experience (Forming a relationship with the host and receiving specialised attention)
 - C. Luxury (The finest quality and most comfortable décor, furnishings, food etc.)
 - D. Relaxation (A complete break from any work, worry or stress)
 - E. Home-like (comfortable,
 - F. Heritage building (Preservation of history, providing character and/or charm)
 - G. Cultural experiences (experiencing the everyday ways of life of New Zealand people)
 - H. Other – please specify
- 18a. Please rank the above in order of importance to you.
19. Are there any further comments that you would like to add about your accommodation?

a) How many rooms are there in your accommodation?

b) This accommodation is a) Modern boutique accommodation

b) Heritage boutique accommodation

c) How many people can you accommodate at any one time? _____.

d) Who are your typical guests? (Nationality? Age?)

e) Are you: male female (circle one)

f) Please indicate your age group?

_____ 16-19	_____ 20-24	_____ 25-29	_____ 30-34
_____ 35-39	_____ 40-44	_____ 45-49	_____ 50-54
_____ 55-59	_____ 60-64	_____ 65-69	_____ 70-74
_____ 75-79	_____ 80+		

g) What is your highest formal Qualification?

- _____ Up to three years of secondary or high school
- _____ Secondary or High school qualification
- _____ Partially completed tertiary qualification
- _____ Tertiary qualification (Polytech, University, College of Education)
- _____ Postgraduate Qualification
- _____ Trade Certificate
- _____ Other

Thank you for your Time

In-Depth Interview with Guests to Boutique Accommodation in Nelson

The aim of this research is to investigate the experiences sought and provided by visitors to, and providers of, boutique accommodation. It will endeavour to identify any mismatch between the demand and supply of boutique accommodation experiences. All responses will be completely confidential and anonymous.

1. Can you please tell me a bit about yourself (country of residence, profession, lifestyle)
2. Can you please tell me a bit about your intended stay in Nelson (activities, experiences)
3. Is this your first time staying in Boutique accommodation? (if no go to 2a)
 - 3a. How many times have you stayed in boutique accommodation before?
 - 3b. Can you please explain what your previous experiences in this type of accommodation have been? (*Why was that important to you? How did that influence your decision to come here?*)
4. Why did you choose to stay in this type of accommodation?
(*Why was that important to you?, Why was _____ important to you?*)
- 4a. What are the key attributes of this type of accommodation?
(*Why do you see those as important to you?*)
5. How would you describe the experience you are seeking?
(*Why? Why is that important to you?*)
- 5a. Can you please tell me in a few words, what sort of experience you have had so far in this type of accommodation.
6. How would you describe the dimensions of this accommodation?
- 6a. What experience do these dimensions offer?
7. Can you please tell me how your experience has met your expectations?
(*Why? Why not? In what ways?*)
8. What has been the highlight of your accommodation experience?
(*Why? Why is that important to you? How did it make you feel?*)
9. I want you to think about the most enjoyable aspect of your accommodation experience. Can you name this aspect?
Thinking of this aspect can you please tell me in a few words how you felt, what thoughts came to your mind?
10. How do you think you have benefited from your stay here?
(*Why? Why is that important to you? Think of the aspect that satisfied you the most. What benefits did it provide*)

11. How do you think others in your party will have benefited?

(Why is it important to you that they gain _____?)

(If a heritage building)

12. How does staying in a heritage building add to your overall accommodation experience?

(Why? Why is _____ important?)

13. What has been the most disappointing aspect/part of your accommodation experience?

(Why?)

14. Has your experience fallen short of your expectations and if so how?

(Why?)

15. What changes would you make to this accommodation to improve the experience?

(Why? Why is _____ important to you? What would have made your stay more satisfying?)

16. Given the following list of dimensions for this accommodation please rank them in order of importance to you.

A. Uniqueness (something special that sets this accommodation apart from any other)

B. Personalised experience (Forming a relationship with the host and receiving specialised attention)

C. Luxury (The finest quality and most comfortable décor, furnishings, food etc.)

D. Relaxation (A complete break from any work, worry or stress)

E. Home like (comfortable, welcoming)

F. Heritage building (Preservation of history, providing character and/or charm)

G. Other – please specify

17. Would you recommend this accommodation to a friend or relative visiting this area?

(Why?)

18. Are there any further comments you would like to make about your accommodation experience?

a) Are you: male female (circle one)

b) Where do you usually live? Town/City: _____

Country: _____

c) Who are you on holiday with?

- _____ Alone
- _____ With my partner/spouse
- _____ With (a) friend(s)
- _____ With a family member/family group

d) How many nights are you spending in Nelson? _____.

e) How many nights are you staying in New Zealand? _____.

f) What is your main form of transport while In New Zealand? _____

d) Please indicate your age group?

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| _____ 16-19 | _____ 20-24 | _____ 25-29 | _____ 30-34 |
| _____ 35-39 | _____ 40-44 | _____ 45-49 | _____ 50-54 |
| _____ 55-59 | _____ 60-64 | _____ 65-69 | _____ 70-74 |
| _____ 75-79 | _____ 80+ | | |

e) What is your highest formal Qualification?

- _____ Up to three years of secondary or high school
- _____ Secondary or High school qualification
- _____ Partially completed tertiary qualification
- _____ Tertiary qualification (Polytech, University, College of Education)
- _____ Postgraduate Qualification
- _____ Trade Certificate
- _____ Other

f) What is your main occupation? _____.

g) Which of the following best describes your household?

- _____ Flating with others
- _____ Couple with no children
- _____ Couple whose children have left home
- _____ Living alone, children have left home
- _____ Family with children mainly under 16 years
- _____ Family with children mainly over 16 years
- _____ Older person living with family or extended family
- _____ Adult child (over 16) living with parents
- _____ Other

Thank you for your time

Dear

Recently you stayed at a boutique accommodation place in Nelson, New Zealand. The operator of your accommodation passed on your name and details to me as I am currently conducting research into the experiences sought and received by guests to boutique accommodation. This research is being undertaken as part of an honours degree in Tourism management at Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand.

I would like to invite you to participate in a survey, which I have attached below. All responses will be completely confidential and anonymous. The information you provide will be valuable in assessing the existing boutique accommodation experience in Nelson and identifying any mismatch between the demand and supply of boutique accommodation. Boutique accommodation is small, specialised accommodation with a point of difference, offering a unique, high quality, specialised service.

To complete the survey, simply copy the survey below (Questions 1-14) and paste it directly into a reply message. Then fill in the blanks with an [X] as applicable and make written comments where required taking as much space as needed. Send your reply back to the researcher siggsa2@lincoln.ac.nz. If you hit reply on your email server rather than typing in the researchers email address your response will only go directly back to the researcher as no distribution list or carbon-copying functions were used when the initial email survey was sent.

If you are having problems reading the text formatting of my survey, this may be due to difference in email servers, please let me know and I can resend this survey as an attached word document for you to complete. Thank you for your time and contribution to this research.

If you do not want to participate in this research I would appreciate it if you could simply reply to me stating that you do not want to be involved so I can be assured that you received my email.

Thank you for your time

Kind regards
Anna Siggs

Survey of Guests to Boutique Accommodation in Nelson

1. Can you please tell me a bit about yourself (country of residence, profession, lifestyle)
2. Can you please tell me a bit about your stay in Nelson? (activities, experiences)
3. How many times have you stayed in boutique accommodation before?
- 3a. Can you please explain what your previous experiences in this type of accommodation have been?
4. Why did you choose to stay in this type of accommodation?

- 4a.** Why was that (your answer to question 4) important to you?
- 5.** What were the key attributes of this accommodation?
- 5a.** How are those key attributes important to you?
- 6.** How would you describe the experience you were seeking from this type of accommodation?
- 6a.** Why was it important that you had that experience?
- 7.** Can you please tell me in a few words, what sort of experience you had in this accommodation?
- 8.** How would you describe the dimensions of this accommodation?
- 8a.** What experience do these dimensions offer?
- 9.** Can you please tell me how your experience has met your expectations?
- 10.** I want you to think about the most enjoyable aspect of your accommodation experience. Can you name this aspect?
- 10a.** Thinking of this aspect can you please tell me in a few words how you felt, what thoughts came to your mind?
- 11.** How do you think you have benefited from your stay in boutique accommodation?
- 11a.** Why is it important to you that you have benefited in this way?
- 12.** How do you think others in your party will have benefited from their stay in boutique accommodation?
- 13.** Has your experience fallen short of your expectations and if so how?
- 14.** What changes would you make to this accommodation to improve the experience?
- 14a.** How would (your answer to question 14) improve your experience?
- (If you stayed in a heritage building)
- 15.** How does staying in a heritage building add to your overall accommodation experience?
- 15a.** Why is (your answer to question 15) important to you?)

16. Given the following list of dimensions for this accommodation please rank them in order of importance to you. (1-6)

- [] A. Uniqueness (something special that sets this accommodation apart from any other)
 [] B. Personalised experience (Forming a relationship with the host and receiving specialised attention)
 [] C. Luxury (The finest quality and most comfortable décor, furnishings, food etc.)
 [] D. Relaxation (A complete break from any work, worry or stress)
 [] E. Home like (comfortable, welcoming)
 [] F. Location
 [] G. Other – please specify

16. Would you recommend this accommodation to a friend or relative visiting this area?

16a. Why?

17. Are there any further comments you would like to make about your accommodation experience?

a) Are you: male [] female []

b) Where do you usually live?

c) Who are you on holiday with?

- [] Alone
 [] With my partner/spouse
 [] With (a) friend(s)
 [] With a family member/family group

d) How many nights did you spend in Nelson? []

e) How many nights did you stay in New Zealand? []

d) Please indicate your age group?

- | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| []16-19 | []20-24 | []25-29 | []30-34 |
| []35-39 | []40-44 | []45-49 | []50-54 |
| []55-59 | []60-64 | []65-69 | []70-74 |
| []75-79 | []80+ | | |

e) What is your highest formal Qualification?

- [] Up to three years of secondary or high school
 [] Secondary or High school qualification
 [] Partially completed tertiary qualification
 [] Tertiary qualification (Polytech, University, College of Education)
 [] Postgraduate Qualification
 [] Trade Certificate

Other

f) What is your main occupation?

g) Which of the following best describes your household?

Flating with others

Couple with no children

Couple whose children have left home

Living alone, children have left home

Family with children mainly under 16 years

Family with children mainly over 16 years

Older person living with family or extended family

Adult child (over 16) living with parents

Other

Thank you for your time

Survey of Guests to Boutique Accommodation in Nelson

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. By completing this survey you will go into a draw to win a Nelson guide book "Art in its Own Place" and a bottle of wine from a local vineyard. The information you provide will be valuable in assessing the existing boutique accommodation experience in Nelson and identifying any mismatch between the demand and supply of boutique accommodation. Boutique accommodation is small, specialised accommodation with a point of difference, offering a unique, high quality, specialised service.

Please ensure that you fill out the entire survey and either place it in the freepost reply paid envelope supplied and post it yourself, or, leave it in the sealed envelope with your accommodation provider. The survey should take you about 10 minutes to complete.

All information you provide in this survey is confidential and data will be treated in aggregate form only. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee.

If you wish to discuss this research further please contact us:

Anna Siggs
siggsa2@lincoln.ac.nz
Ph. 03 981 3335

Dr Alison McIntosh
mcintosa@lincoln.ac.nz
Ph. 03 3253838 ext. 8767

I understand that my participation in this survey is voluntary (please tick) Yes No

Section A: Your Accommodation Choice

1. Is this your first time staying in boutique accommodation in New Zealand? (Please tick)

- Yes (go to Q.2) No (go to Q.1a)

1a. How many times have you stayed in boutique accommodation in New Zealand before?

(Please tick the single most appropriate response)

- Once 6 - 10 times
 1 - 5 times 10 + times

2. Do you intend to visit boutique accommodation during the rest of your stay in New Zealand?

(Please tick)

- Yes No Maybe

3. How did you find out about the accommodation that you are currently staying in? (Please tick all that apply)

- Word of mouth/recommendation
 Guidebook - which one _____
 Visitor information centre
 Website
 Other _____

4. Which of the following reasons best describe why you choose to stay at the accommodation that you are currently staying in? (Please tick all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. It was personally recommended to me | <input type="checkbox"/> h. It offers a unique experience that I can't get in other forms of accommodation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Saw it listed /recommended in a travel guide book | <input type="checkbox"/> i. It provides luxury accommodation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. I have a particular interest in historic places | <input type="checkbox"/> j. It has a convenient location |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. I have a particular interest in architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> k. To stay in accommodation that is locally distinctive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> e. I have a particular interest in arts and crafts | <input type="checkbox"/> l. To meet people and make friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> f. I prefer to stay at accommodation where there is the opportunity for close personal interaction with hosts and other guests | <input type="checkbox"/> m. To relax |
| <input type="checkbox"/> g. I prefer to stay in a home like environment | <input type="checkbox"/> n. To experience New Zealand Lifestyle |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> o. Other (please describe) _____ |

Appendix 6

5. Would you describe this accommodation as

- Modern/contemporary
- Heritage/historic
- Other *(Please describe)* _____

6. In your opinion what makes this accommodation place 'boutique'? *(Please describe)*

7. From the following list please indicate which activities you have or intend to participate in during your stay in the Nelson region

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Craft shop/studio | <input type="checkbox"/> Scenic/local walk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art exhibition/gallery/studio | <input type="checkbox"/> Beaches/bays |
| <input type="checkbox"/> World of Wearable arts and collectable car museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Cafes & restaurants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vineyard/wine tasting | <input type="checkbox"/> Antiques |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden visits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National park | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

8. What features of the present building or its interior décor do you most like? *(Please describe)*

9. What features of the present building or its interior décor do you most dislike? *(Please describe)*

10. Given the following list of dimensions for this accommodation please rank them in order of importance to you. *(1= most important – 8= least important)*

- A. Uniqueness (something special that sets this accommodation apart from any other)
- B. Personalised experience (Forming a relationship with the host and receiving specialised attention)
- C. Luxury (The finest quality and most comfortable décor, furnishings, food etc.)
- D. Relaxation (A complete break from any work, worry or stress)
- E. Homely
- F. Heritage building (Preservation of history, providing character and/or charm)
- G. Location
- H. Other – please specify _____

Section B: Your Accommodation Experience

1. During your stay at this accommodation did you experience or think about any of the following? *(Please tick the box which is most applicable)*

	Not Gained	Somewhat Gained	Gained a lot
Relaxation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nostalgia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stories of the accommodation building/land	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stories of Nelson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forming friendships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nelson's culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An authentic New Zealand experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A sense of warm hospitality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A sense of luxury	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A 'home away from home'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A unique experience that I can't get at other accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other <i>(please describe)</i> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Have you gained any of the following from staying at this accommodation? *(Please tick the box which is most applicable)*

	Not Gained	Somewhat Gained	Gained a lot
I increased my knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I gained an appreciation of local history	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I gained an appreciation of New Zealand lifestyle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I gained an appreciation of local art/crafts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I formed new relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved relationship(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relaxation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other <i>(please describe)</i> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Please describe the highlight(s) of your experience of staying in this accommodation?

4. Please describe the most disappointing aspect of your experience at this accommodation?

(Please circle the statement that applies)

5. My experience at this accommodation has exceeded my expectations

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. My experience in this accommodation has not met my expectations

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. I would use this accommodation again

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. What changes would you make to improve the experience provided for guests at this accommodation?

9. Please provide any further comments you have about your stay at this accommodation below

Section C: About Yourself

1. Please indicate your gender:

(please tick) Male Female

2. Please indicate your age group?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16-19 | <input type="checkbox"/> 20-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 25-29 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35-39 | <input type="checkbox"/> 40-44 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 45-49 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-54 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55-59 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 60-64 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65-69 | <input type="checkbox"/> 70-74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 75-79 | <input type="checkbox"/> 80 + | |

3. What is your highest formal Qualification?

- Up to three years of secondary or high school
- Secondary or High school qualification
- Partially completed tertiary qualification
- Tertiary qualification (Polytech, University, College of Education)
- Postgraduate Qualification
- Trade Certificate
- Other _____

4. What is your main occupation?

5. Where do you usually live?

Town/City: _____

Country: _____

6. Which of the following best describes your household?

- Flating with others
- Couple with no children
- Couple whose children have left home
- Living alone, children have left home
- Family with children mainly under 16 years
- Family with children mainly over 16 years
- Older person living with family or extended family
- Adult child (over 16) living with parents
- Other _____

Section D: Your Holiday in New Zealand

1. How are you travelling through New Zealand?

- A packaged tour (all transport/accommodation arranged)
- A semi-packaged tour (only part of the above)
- Free and independently
- Other (please specify) _____

2. Who are you on holiday with?

- Alone
- With my partner/spouse
- With (a) friend(s)
- With a family member/family group
- With children (please indicate how many) _____

3. How many people are in your group including yourself?

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> 10+ | | |

4. How many nights are you staying in Nelson? _____

5. How many nights are you staying in New Zealand? _____

Would you be willing to talk to us in a little more in-depth about your experiences at this accommodation?

 Yes No

If yes, please provide us with a contact address that we can reach you at within the next week to talk with you. Alternatively please provide a contact address to go in the draw to win a Nelson Guide book and bottle of wine from a local vineyard.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact phone: _____

Email: _____

Thank You For Your Time