

NEWS RELEASE

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Flower power train steams to Taranaki Rhododendron & Garden Festival



Garden lovers can add a little travel romance with a three-day package traveling by an historic steam train to this year's Taranaki Rhododendron & Garden Festival running from Friday October 29 to Sunday, November 7 in New Zealand.

Packaged by Kiwi Tours, the JA1271 steam train operated by Steam Incorporated will leave Paekakariki station just north of Wellington on Friday October 29 and stop at all major stations en route to New Plymouth to pick up passengers.

Limited to 200 passengers, the \$2450 package includes returns airfares from Melbourne to Wellington, three night's hotel accommodation, luxury coach transfers, entry and travel to nine Festival gardens, three cooked breakfasts and two lunches.

Nearly sold out in its first year last year, Kiwi Tours managing director, Stewart Erb, says the romance of traveling to the Festival by steam train really captured garden lover's imaginations.

"We had passengers driving or flying in to Wellington from all over New Zealand just to experience the steam train," says Mr. Erb.

"The journey really delivered on expectations and was a really magical experience. And we've put together a cross-section of gardens in the package to give visitors the real New Zealand garden experience that is a little different from last year."

While the steam train was built in 1956, it will be hauling four historic passenger cars and a buffet car that have all been refurbished and date back as early as 1908.

Now in its 23rd year, the 10-day Taranaki Rhododendron & Garden Festival will open the garden gates to around 50 stunning gardens including gardens of National and International Significance as designated by the New Zealand Gardens Trust.

While Festival details will be unveiled at the official launch of the programme on July 8, visitors will also be able to enjoy guest speakers, guided walks, wine and jazz functions, and the every-popular Landscape Design installation.

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