

AUSSIE WITH A LIKELY TALE

BRIAN LUCAS, CANTERBURY TRAILS, CANTERBURY

Canterbury Trails' owner-operator Brian Lucas never felt truly at home in Australia, despite spending most of his life there.

"I felt I was a Kiwi born in the wrong country," he says. Not many Aussies would happily say that, but after 20 years working in the Australian public service, he decided to make the move across the ditch.

"I had wanted to move from Australia to New Zealand for a long time and had a passion for New Zealand's countryside, hikes and walks," he adds. So when he finally crossed the Tasman for good and settled in Christchurch, it was inevitable that he would establish a touring company to take visitors to some of the scenically breathtaking places and incredible walks South Island has to offer.

It's been 11 years since he made the move and what started out as a small company taking walks and hikes has moved upmarket. "We weren't very successful in the beginning," Brian explains, "hence the change to the luxury safari style we use now."

Take a tour with Brian and you'll get to stay in exquisite lodges in or near some of the country's most beautiful wilderness areas. You'll be part of a small, personally guided group – ideal for those who don't want to travel on their own.

"Part of the attraction of our tours are the low numbers we take," adds Brian, as this offers more opportunities for input from clients and a warm friendly atmosphere."

And if you think an Aussie couldn't possibly know New Zealand as well as a native guide, think again as Brian knows his adopted country inside-out. "New Zealand is a very special place for me," says Brian. "I have travelled extensively and feel that New Zealand is a pocket edition of the world. It is a wonderful area to run a business – it offers a range of environments to encompass any and all interests travellers may have, from spectacular beaches, hikes in pristine forests, wildlife safaris such as penguin watching as well as a huge variety of scenery around every corner."

Brian loves being his own boss and the independence this brings, but he says the best aspects of his work are the "beautiful environment and meeting a wide variety of clients and getting to know them on a personal level."

It's hard to beat a positive and passionate attitude like that!

