

Famil Waikato, September 5, 2026

A small group of ProGuides members joined **Famil Professional Sharron Hickman** to explore some **Wonders of the Waikato**. Who would have known that Hamilton has its own beach or that there are a number of alternative and very attractive stopovers when you're on the way to either Hobbiton, Waitomo or Rotorua. We learned about the Dutch heritage in the area, the success story behind the only tea plantation in New Zealand, the determination of staff at Zenders Café as well as the latest additions to the Hamilton Gardens, the beautiful artwork at Inspirit Studio and the Temple Museum in Hamilton.

First up was a stop at **Woodlands Estate and Garden Grove Café**, a NZ Heritage homestead and event venue. The garden and the house are well worth a visit. The café has indoor and outdoor seating.

It is advisable to get in contact with them beforehand if you have bigger groups. And here are some fun facts: In the late 19th century, Woodlands was a 98,000-acre farming enterprise managed by Henry Reynolds, who founded the "Anchor" brand of butter, the name inspired by an anchor tattoo he saw on a sailor's arm at Woodlands.

Woodlands Estate
42, Whitikahu Road
Gordonton
ph 078243687

<https://www.woodlands.co.nz>

While in the area, we popped in to **Clandon Daffodils**, a family run business growing more than one 1million daffodil bulbs on 21 acres in Gordonton. Fresh-cut flowers are available from June through to early October. In the photos are owners Ian Riddell and his wife Marion on the right and the intrepid guides on the left with beautiful daffodils.



Clandon Daffodils
745 Gordonton Road, RD 1, Hamilton
phone Ian Riddell ph 0272133371
bulbdigger@gmail.com
www.clandondaffodils.co.nz

Famil Waikato, September 5, 2026

Next stop was **Zealong Tea Estate**

Zealong Tea Estate is the only commercial tea estate in New Zealand, producing 100% organic award-winning tea varieties - a world-leading destination for tea, art and hospitality.

Up to 12 people could enjoy a tea-tasting in the retail store and with a guided tea tour takes up to 1.5 to 2 hrs. The convention centre venues cater for all sizes of groups. Along a beautiful sculpture trail, you enter the elegant café-restaurant, which also has outdoor verandah seating. Catering for up to 40 people. The high tea experience is refined, elegant with truly extraordinary food prepared by a French chef.

Zealong Tea Estate
495 Gordonton Road, Hamilton,
Waikato, New Zealand
Ph +64 7 854 0988
info@zealong.co.nz
<https://zealong.com/>



Zenders, which was our next visit, is a family-built Euro-style venue and cafe, inspired by Dutch heritage. It is a good alternative stop on the way to Hobbiton or Rotorua, as it is less than one minute from the Ruakura Exit. Manager Sam assured us they can deal with large groups and buses with easy

Famil Waikato, September 5, 2026

access and ample parking. The Zenders team is focused on making “everything possible”, even if the group only stops for a quick/takeaway cuppa. Do give the team notice for a larger group’s stop, ideally a day ahead and then a quick call 30 minutes away.

Zenders Café
44 Hopkins Rd
Newstead, Hamilton
Ph. 07 5950640
info@zenders.nz.
www.zenders.nz



Caption

Next, we went to **Hamilton**

Street Beach. Yep, you are reading it right. Hamilton, the city that is far away from the ocean, has a beach. It is in Hayes Common, close to the **Hayes Common Café, 33 Jellicoe Stree, Hamilton.** Have a look:



Hamilton Beach on the Waikato River.

Famil Waikato, September 5, 2026



After that surprise stop, **Hamilton Gardens** was on the itinerary.

We had a guided tour with very knowledgeable Alison. The gardens, designed by Dr Peter Sergel, who imagined a place that would tell the story of humanity through landscape. Each garden represents a different time, culture, or way of thinking. Ancient civilisations, Renaissance ideals, modern concepts and imagined futures all sit side by side. Walking through the gardens is like walking through ideas. There is a documentary available.

Here is the link

<https://hamiltongardens.co.nz/about-us/gardens-stories/hamilton-gardens-is-the-star-of-new-acclaimed-documentary>

Hamilton Gardens
Hungerford Crescent
Hamilton

Ph. 07 838 6782

hamilton.gardens@hcc.govt.nz

<https://hamiltongardens.co.nz/>



Inspirit Studio & Gallery in Tamahere was our next stop. It's a "Celebration of Outstanding New Zealand Art & Design in a stunning rural location". Established in 2007 by Jenny Scown (pictured on the left), it is a spacious contemporary art gallery and multifunctional creative space. Photography, painting, indoor & outdoor sculpture, glass and a lot more can be explored. Jenny is happy to welcome groups who are interested in art. She enjoys "being part of the vibrant tourism sector and loves hosting group visits at the gallery".



Inspirit Studio & Gallery

360 Pencarrow Road,

Tamahere, Hamilton

Ph. 07 856 3170

Mob. +64 274 386 416

jenny@inspirit.co.nz

<https://www.inspirit.co.nz/>

Famil Waikato, September 5, 2026

New Zealand Temple Museum, our last destination, was kind of spiritual. It showcases The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints' arrival and growth in New Zealand and the Pacific Region through feature stories, artefacts and historical displays. It illustrates the work of volunteer "labour missionaries" (formerly known as Mormons) who built the nearby temple and the former Church College of New Zealand. Tours for groups larger than 10 should be scheduled in advance.

Matthew Cowley Pacific Church History Centre

465 Tuhikaramea Road,

Temple View, Hamilton

Ph. 07 834 9083

Mob. +64 21 537 498

pacificchurchhistory@churchofjesuschrist.org

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/my-home/areas/pacific/matthew-cowley-pacific-church-history-centre?lang=eng>

And at the end of the day, we drove past **Lake Kainui**. On the western side of a 45-minute track is a "Fairy Forest" where walkers will find tiny fairy houses, painted stones, and miniature decorations hidden among the tree roots. www.hamiltonnz.co.nz/lake-d-kainui

A big thanks to **Sharron Hickman** for lots of learning and discovery along the way.

Written by Doris Evans. Photos by Julia Thorne