



Intimate And “X-Clusive” Tours

When tourists explore Auckland with Néill and Ceillhe Sperath they're made to feel like they are being shown around by family friends rather than 'being on a tour'. A Mercedes-Benz Viano X-Clusive plays a key role in the highly personalized and interactive experience. Along with showcasing Auckland's unique sightseeing spots, TIME Unlimited Tours' clients might go fishing or exploring in kayaks, take wilderness walks in the Waitakere Ranges, try the world-first visitor experience of kite fishing, become integrated into Maori culture or make personally guided trips to places like the Bay of Islands, Rotorua, Taupo, Coromandel Peninsular or Waitomo Caves. TIME Unlimited Tours have also just been pronounced overall winner in the public vote section of the global Indigenous Tourism and Biodiversity Website Award 2010 in conjunction with the United Nations. The North Shore couple recently headed to Berlin to receive this great accolade for their company during an award ceremony as part of a major international tourism trade fair. "It's simple really - we love New Zealand

and the experiences we've had here and we want to share them with both domestic and international tourists" explains Néill. Established in April 2005, the company's slogan is "for the time of your life". The acronym TIME also stands for 'To Integrate Maori Experiences', given Ceillhe is a direct descendant of the famous Ngapuhi paramount chief Patuone. Néill describes himself as "a New Zealander by choice." Of Irish and German descent, he came to the country as a tourist before immigrating. Both Neill and Ceillhe have extensive business backgrounds. They realised early on that to make true gains in tourism meant you had to understand your product offering and seek out innovative ways to market that to your target audience. You also have to work on building strong relationships and foster great networks at all levels of the sector. It is also vital to pay attention to what clients really want, which means being 'visitor centric' in how they do business. In essence they want to make it easy for people to engage and be hosted during their time in Auckland and NZ.

An authentic Maori experience and appreciation of New Zealand's pristine environment underpin the success of TIME Unlimited Tours. This along with treating all clients as VIPs, as well as being great hosts and ambassadors to make the tours relevant, personalised and authentic for each client. The business is founded on three pillars of Maori culture - manaakitanga (hospitality), whakawhanaungatanga (relationships) and kaitiakitanga (guardianship). When growth of the business led to the purchase of a second vehicle to augment the operation's Toyota Highlander the eventual choice of the Viano X-Clusive clearly reflected the couple's values. For example, Néill and Ceillhe initially considered a 12-seat Mercedes-Benz Sprinter but decided that the limit posed by the six-passenger Viano was more in keeping with their philosophy of small, personalised groups to gain a truly interactive experience and allowing clients to discover the real NZ. "We did look at the whole market and talked to various suppliers, but we kept coming



Ceillhe & Néill Sperath



back to the Viano," Néill says. "It makes a positive first impression with our clients and that's also important to many of our industry and hotel partners who have standards of service delivery in line with ours'. The features like the automatic sliding doors and leather seats are pretty impressive - the Viano makes our clients feel they are being spoiled." With self-levelling air rear suspension as part of an all-independent system the Mercedes-Benz also delivers on ride comfort, which is particularly important on longer trips to places like the Bay of Islands or Rotorua. Néill adds that the Mercedes-Benz brand stands for excellence "and we want to align ourselves with excellence in everything we do."

TIME Unlimited Tours also investigated the environmental attitude of Mercedes-Benz as a

company and the environmental performance of the Viano before finalising their purchase. "People are becoming more environmentally aware and this is very much part of our tours. Our clients also book with us specifically because of our environmental credentials," he explains. "We know our environmental stance does help and like all other purchasing decisions we make it has to be a sustainable option for the long term benefits it can provide" TIME Unlimited Tours is Qualmark endorsed and has recently received the highly prestigious Qualmark Enviro Gold award, putting it among the top 200 of New Zealand's 16,000 tourism businesses for environmental friendliness! With its powerful 3.0-litre V6 diesel engine exceeding the Euro Four emissions standard the Viano meets the company's environmental as well as performance and economy expectations. The 204hp diesel engine drives through a five-speed automatic transmission with Tipfunction manual override.