

insider

DESTINATIONS
TRENDS
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MORE

The quaint Stone House Cottage has plenty of charm.



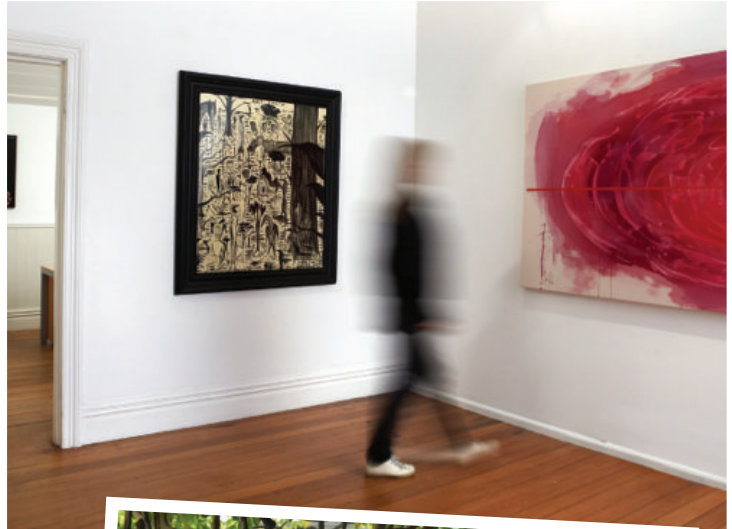
BOOM TO BUST TO BOOM. A NEW ZEALAND GOLD MINING SETTLEMENT, ARROWTOWN, CELEBRATES ITS 150TH BIRTHDAY THIS OCTOBER. **BY KARRYN MILLER**

COURTESY OF LINDSAY SOMERVILLE

FROM A BOOMING GOLD SETTLEMENT TO A NEARLY deserted ghost town, Arrowtown has gone through a few changes since its establishment in 1862. What haven't changed are the quaint schist buildings and timber abodes that line the main street. This quiet country town on New Zealand's South Island has retained much of its bucolic charm. Surrounded by the pristine natural scenery the area is known for, Arrowtown has more than 70 protected structures ranging from former miners' cottages to converted horse stables.

"We had around 7,000 people after gold was discovered in Arrow River," explains David Clarke, director of the town's Lakes District Museum. "In 1960, the population dropped to around 100. Now we're one of the fastest growing towns in New Zealand with a population of 2,500."

With the town's 150th year anniversary celebrations set for October 19–22 and complete with gold panning, historical walks, cottage tours, jazz performances, a golf tourney and even a beard-growing competition, this preserved piece of history will get to show how far it has come without forgetting its past (arrowtown150.co.nz). »



DOWNTOWN REVIVAL
Clockwise from top left:
Saffron restaurant;
Nadene Milne Gallery;
outside Somebody's
Darling design shop;
fishcakes at Provisions.



EAT Provisions (65 Buckingham St.; 64-3/442-0714; lunch for two NZ\$40) serves modern bistro fare in a converted miner's cottage. Choose a savory pie or sandwich like the hot smoked salmon and brie bagel with Provisions chili-apple jelly—the owners make their own gourmet preserves—and grab a seat on the terrace overlooking pear trees in the grassy backyard. Be sure to save some room for dessert. The gooey, sweet sticky buns with homemade apricot jam were called “obscenely good” by Australian MasterChef judge Matt Preston.

On the other side of town is **Saffron** (18 Buckingham St.; 64-3/442-0131; saffronrestaurant.co.nz; dinner for two NZ\$160), a fine-dining restaurant housed in a building constructed of corrugated iron. Head chef and owner Peter Gawron creates contemporary, seasonal menus. Dishes are crafted from local ingredients like blue cod from Stewart Island served with a green-lipped mussels and kaffir lime fishcake, paired with fried soft shell crab and a tamarind dressing.

DRINK Since 1863, there has always been a pub on the site where Arrow Brewing Company's **Oak Bar** (48-50 Buckingham St.; 64-3/409-8849; arrowbrewing.co.nz; drinks for two NZ\$15) now operates. Having opened four years ago, the friendly craft brewers take pride in their ales and lagers—so much so that you might get an impromptu tour of the beer fermenting out back. If not, catch the afternoon sun in the courtyard out front or sit at a high table indoors. The metal pipe that's holding up your tabletop was once used to transport gold from the river.

Arrowtown's famed **The Blue Door**, (18 Buckingham St.; 64-3/442-0131; saffronrestaurant.co.nz/bluedoor; drinks for two NZ\$30) which shares a phone with Saffron, has a Prohibition-era vibe, tucked away in an alley down the road from Oak Bar. Enter through a wooden door with chipped blue paint into a cozy wine cellar-like setting with a central fire and clusters of leather chairs. There's a good selection of local wine here, but whiskey feels more appropriate.

SHOP Nadene Milne has a penchant for the past. Her namesake gallery (16 Buckingham St.; 64-3/442-0467; nadenemilnegallery.com) was once home to mercantile storeowners from the Gold Rush era. Besides a fresh coat of paint, virtually nothing about the building has changed since. Though the New Zealand art displayed and sold is contemporary, it too is linked to the country's heritage. “We look for rigor, historical relevance, contemporary comment, beauty and mastery over materials in the work we exhibit,” says Milne.

Local artisans Holly Hargreaves and Sara Muntz run gallery and design store **Somebody's Darling** (61 Buckingham St.; 64-3/409-8187; somebodysdarlinggallery.co.nz) showcasing independent Kiwi designers' creations. The homewares include upholstered wall tiles of retro images ranging from rotary phones to pavlova dessert. The Grimm's »



RUSTIC RETREAT From top: The Stone House Cottage; Arrowtown House Private Garden; the Lakes District Museum.



fairytale-inspired jewelry sold there is just as unique as the store's location—a wooden church built in the 1870's.

STAY The **Stone House Cottage** (3 Berkshire St.; 64-50/878-6634; stonehousecottage.co.nz; doubles from NZ\$399 per night) is one of the town's oldest buildings, constructed in 1863 as a storehouse. These days it's a two-bedroom inn with an original schist exterior, wooden slat roof, polished kauri bench tops, antique phones and an open fireplace. For added luxury there's a Victorian slipper bath, underfloor heating and flat-screen TV.

Arrowtown House, a boutique five-room B&B (10 Caernarvon St; 64-9/441-6008; arrowtownhouse.com; from NZ\$489 per night), has a homier vibe thanks to friendly hosts Steve and Jeanette. The couple serves divine breakfasts made from local, seasonal produce.

DO The **Lakes District Museum and Gallery** (49 Buckingham St.; 64-3/442-1824; museumqueenstown.com) brings the town's former gold heyday to life with mannequins and fake storefronts depicting how the town looked when it was first established. A series of images and displays illuminate the area's Maori heritage, along with the lives of migrant Chinese and European gold miners.

Visit the **Chinese Settlement** near the western end of Buckingham Street to learn more about the town's early days. The 40-minute walking path makes its way through ruins and restorations of huts and stores. Panels along the path explain the area's history and introduce a few of the 1,200 Chinese men that once lived there. +