

MEDIA RELEASE – TRAVEL EDITORS

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Epic journey to the first NZ Bike Expo

Heard of backpacking? Now there's bikepacking. And it's a new mode of business travel for the seriously committed.

The owners of a young bespoke bikepacking bag making company and a new adventure touring company are taking a week to travel by train, ferry and bicycle to get to Christchurch to exhibit their wares in the first-ever NZ Bike Expo.

As young, small business owners their funds are limited and bikepacking seems to be the appropriate way to travel get to exhibit their wares at a consumer show that is about 'everything to do with the bicycle', the first-ever NZ Bike Expo.

The only thing is, the NZ Bike Expo is in Christchurch (on 28 and 29 October) and they live in Rotorua and Auckland.

This is taking commitment to their core business (and life) values seriously.

Dancing Moose is a young business founded and operated by Harm Zuidmeer from Rotorua. Harm is a keen cyclist who wants to share his love of cycling holidays with more people. Harm is also a firm believer in the biking holiday starting from his door and in using his cycle, trains and ferries to get himself around the country.

Dancing Moose creates custom-made bags for bikes. Harm creates them in his workshop in Rotorua. They are made to fit the customer's bike and the customer's needs. Harm calls his bags 'bicycle adventure supplies'. They're great for bike-packing and cycle touring and for generally just getting around.

Harm kicked his sewing machine into gear in 2015. He sells online and has had orders from around NZ and overseas including his native Holland. 'Last season I was completely swamped with orders and could not keep up with demand. So I found a really cool 'old school' sewing company in Auckland who is able to make small runs of my standard range so I can focus on the custom projects in my workshop in Rotorua,' says Harm.

'All my bags are designed by me right here in Rotovagas with more ideas on the drawing board.'

Harm led a group of kids on an overnight bike-packing adventure as part of the Rotorua Bike Festival in February 2017. He's involved in Rotorua Cycle Action, the local group that encourages people to use their bikes more often around Rotorua.

Rachel Howells, the owner and founder of another young company, the Adventurers Travel Company, set up online in 2016. UK-born Rachel organises customised adventure holidays for people in all the awesome places around New Zealand. She uses her experiences of biking, hiking and kayaking to plan personalised adventures for people based on their skills and requirements.

At the NZ Bike Expo Harm and Rachel will showcase the bikes they travel on loaded with the Dancing Moose bags, and tell the story of the awesome adventures New Zealanders can have in our own country (particularly easy when organised and booked by Rachel!).

Kiwirail has generously provided the pair with tickets to the Northern Explorer, The Interislander, and the TranzAlpine making the venture possible and Destination Rotorua is throwing in some support to help them fly the Rotorua flag (after all Rotorua is the mecca for mountainbiking!) in the South Island.

The bikepacking bit between Picton and Christchurch was nearly a disaster. Plan A was to do a 3-day trek largely off-road, including riding over the Molesworth Station Rd to Hanmer Springs, to avoid the heavily congested roads. Plan A was stymied as part of the route was closed following bad weather and a Clarence River bridge being washed out.

So Harm discussed their predicament with some touring friends who proposed riding the section of the Tour Aotearoa from Picton via Pelorus Bridge, Nelson, Murchison and Blackball to Greymouth and taking the TranzAlpine from Greymouth to Christchurch. This turns it into a 5 day mission (all going well)!

That's commitment. And possibly a few sore muscles.

Itinerary:

- Thursday 19th Oct - Northern Explorer from Auckland & Hamilton to Wellington
- Arrive Wellington: 18:25
- Depart Wellington on Ferry: 20:30 on 19 Oct. Arrive Picton: 24:00
- Depart Picton: Friday 20th Oct.
- Cycle leg Picton to Greymouth via Pelorus Bridge, Nelson, Murchison and Blackball
- Arrive Greymouth: Thursday 26th
- Depart Greymouth on TranzAlpine: Thursday 26th Oct @ 14:05
- Arrive Christchurch: Thursday 26th October @ 16:35

Harm and Rachel will post blogs, video and photos of their trip on Instagram and Facebook as they travel. **#biketothexpo** to follow Harm and Rachel along their journey.

Pack-in day for the NZ Bike Expo is Friday 27 October. The 2-day show is on 28 and 29 October.

Cycling Action Network (CAN), the organiser of the first-ever NZ Bike Expo, is very supportive of Harm's and Rachel's journey. CAN is a registered charity with a mission to get more people on bikes, more often. 'We want to inspire people to cycle more. Harm and Rachel's journey is inspiring and fits with our ethos,' says CAN spokesperson Patrick Morgan.

The NZ Bike Expo is a unique consumer show with a community heart, bringing together 'everything to do with the bicycle' in one large celebration. It is aiming to attract 6,000 people to see the 50 exhibitors, bike testing tracks, cycle races, games and prizes.

The NZ Bike Expo will have all kinds of sports bikes, electric bikes, kids bikes, and recreational and urban bikes as well as about 20 exhibitors featuring cycling tours, trails, parks and events.

The NZ Bike Expo is the anchor finale event to a month of bicycle events in Christchurch's inaugural Biketober festival.

#biketothexpo

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<http://www.dancingmoose.nz/>

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<https://www.nzbikeexpo.nz/>

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