

CLASSIC DRIVER

[New Zealand's 6 must-drive roads according to Mr. Curves](#)

Lead

Following on from his road trip around New Zealand, we spoke to photographer and editor Stefan Bogner about the best roads the South Island has to offer.

"New Zealand is not only six roads. It's a journey into your soul because you're not just crossing a border, it's the opposite side of the world, and that does something to you." Stefan Bogner tells us following his trip around [New Zealand's South Island in a 992-generation Porsche 911 T](#). "From a European perspective, New Zealand is pretty similar to what we know in terms of landscape and nature, but in a way, it's very different. The forests are very dense, and you can't just walk through them. The sounds of the birds and the plants are tropical, so it feels like a science fiction movie where you've entered a parallel dimension."

"It's a silent country, and we traveled off-season, so even at the tourist destinations there weren't many people. It calms you down, and it helps you detune from the electric devices in our lives and focus more on yourself. However, the people you do meet are so friendly, it's like a planet of kindness. Coming from a stressed European lifestyle, everything has to be on time, you have to function like a Swiss watch and your life is like an Excel spreadsheet. Then you're there, the border control is like a warm welcome, no grumpy people, they're just like "Enjoy it!" The first five minutes are so different. It slows you down and you have to recalibrate, then the journey starts."



Christchurch to Akaroa

"A good appetiser for New Zealand's South Island is the road from Christchurch to Akaroa. Take the B roads, don't take the A roads; there's a very nice scenic drive called Summit Road. The whole trip to Akaroa is a very nice daily drive, we did it twice: once when we arrived and once when we left. It's also so close to Christchurch, where I recommend spending at least a couple of days to chill and explore. At the beginning, it's a normal country road that turns into a hilly, scenic road. It's not too wide, but the views of where the hills meet the sea are amazing!"



Arthur’s Pass

“This is almost like an Alpine road built for transportation, it’s not meant to be a scenic road. There’s this famous viaduct there that is pretty boring to be honest, but the nicest places are before the summit, and everything after that is also amazing. Landscape-wise, it’s very variable, we even had a bit of snowfall which was beautiful. You’ve got the rivers at the beginning, then the road climbs up and you have this stunning view of enormous mountains surrounding you. For me, this is a place where I could drive for two days on and off. The pass itself would take around 2 hours, but take your time, and if you like driving, do it twice! There’s a lot to see, so I urge you to get out the car and go on some walks. The area is also great for hiking and be sure to check out Castle Hill, which is this amazing rock formation that looks straight out of Game of Thrones.”



Highway 6

"The drive from Fox River to Pancake Rocks follows an amazing piece of coastal road. In fact, it has to be one of the nicest coastal roads I've ever driven. The drive is not that long, maybe 30km — and the whole road running the west coast is a joy to drive — but especially this piece with Punakaiki beach. It's where a channel meets the mountains, and there's a lot of humidity, so it can be very foggy depending on the month. Because of the mountains, the weather stops there, and you can tell by the landscape that it's very wet as it's so full of greenery. It's a rainforest, but not what we know from Asia - closer to European forests, but much more dense. It's just a stunning piece of coastal road. I stayed there for three days taking photos because I liked it so much."



Highway 94 to Milford Sound

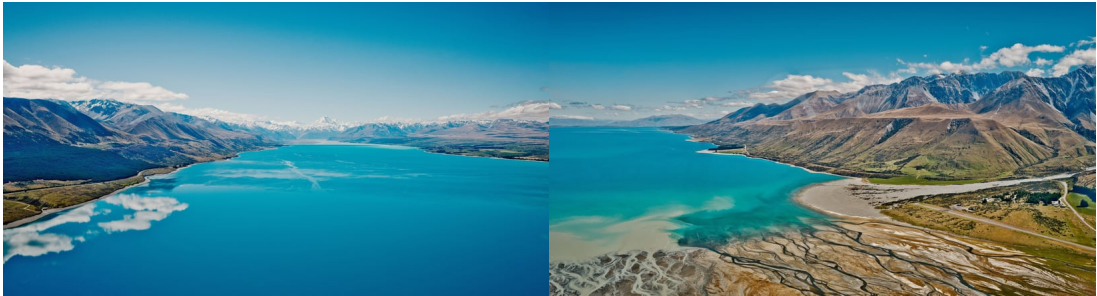
"This is in Fiordland, so it looks like Norway. You almost travel into a different country; you're driving this beautiful country road along what looks like a Scottish lake and suddenly you enter Norway somehow. In New Zealand, the landscapes change a lot, one second you're in the States, then you're in the Alps, then you're in Norway. This route is a must-drive, and it's very important to go very early in the morning. It's at its best when it rains, and I was so happy that it rained one day just to experience the full drama of the place. Then take the boat, it's very touristy, but you have to. It's a great way to see Fiordland in all its glory."





Lindis Pass

“It’s not that high, it’s a very low pass, they aren’t even mountains really, but this is an amazing road that flows over green hills that fade to brown due to the covering of tussock. It’s hard to describe because it’s so unique, it almost looks like the landscape in Teletubbies. It’s not aggressive, it’s just kindness in its beauty and simplicity. The road just winds through it, going up and down, past a river, but again this is a totally different landscape to the rest of the South Island.”



Lake Pukaki to Mount Cook

“This is one of the most beautiful dead-end roads I’ve ever driven. It glides along a beautiful turquoise lake, which changes dramatically as you approach Mount Cook: one of the tallest Mountains in the country. What’s really nice is the difference in colour palette; the greens are richer, the blues are more turquoise, and the light is just different. When you enter New Zealand, it’s like putting a nice colour grade on reality, and that does something to your soul. Along with the food and the kindness, everything is different in a beautiful way.”

“These are just six highlights, but the whole of New Zealand itself is a highlight. If you travel to Switzerland, you go from one pass to another, and the roads in between aren’t attractive. In New Zealand, everywhere is a nice road; there aren’t any ugly roads in the country. The tarmac is a little rougher than in Europe, and there’s some gravel, so take a little extra care in a sports car, but overall it’s a very easy, accessible country. Lastly, I highly recommend taking a flight in a Cessna. I have never seen an island with so many airplanes and helicopters, and it’s a surprisingly inexpensive way to get a whole new perspective on the Island.”

You can discover and purchase the latest editions of Curves, as well as most other books published by Stefan Bogner, in the Curvistan section of our CD shop.

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