

## **JUDGES FEEDBACK FOR THE HAWKES BAY TOURISM AWARDS**

### **Cottages on St Andrews and The Lodge on St George's: Di Ross**

Here is the ultimate in family-friendly, "Hawke's Bay proud" accommodation. Di's enthusiasm for what she's created is infectious and her drive and energy are clearly a huge contributor to this business going from \$xxk to \$xxxk turnover in just six years.

There's been a massive focus on innovation which will doubtless pay off. The development of an Asian school exchange market, the smart-phone app providing exclusive deals, the drone and the Lodge are all examples of Di's commitment to continuous improvement and brand building.

Di and her family team are totally committed to delivering a fun-filled accommodation experience for their guests. The kids play area, the farm animals, the fruit trees (from which guests can pick), the swimming pool are all integral to that experience. Di and the team are also utterly committed to promoting Hawke's Bay, and you can tell she's a one-woman regional ambassador!

The Lodge is a great development – allowing for large groups of up to 18 to share a unique space with plenty of outdoor living and the ability to self-cater.

We think there's an opportunity for Di to lift her price, although we really like the simplicity of her pricing model and we understand why it works so well for her. But there's a lot wrapped into The Cottages experience – it's probably worth more.

There's an understanding of the business and its performance that gives us great comfort Di is one slick operator, running a sound business with a clear value proposition. In terms of her target market, Di delivers entirely and she's a champion for and of Hawke's Bay. Oh for the region to have more tourism operators of this calibre!