

If you were asked to describe what it is that Tania Stoyanof, founder of Black Label, actually does for a living, you'd probably say she organises holidays in New Zealand for high-net-worth individuals. And yet, on reflection, that doesn't quite do it justice.

"I was contacted by a European VIP recently who wants to visit the country during the British Lions rugby tour in June," she explains. "One of the plans I've put forward includes fishing on a boat with all the on-board food prepared by a famous chef, using ingredients sourced from the wilderness – and with an ex-coach of the All Blacks coming along for the ride."

Black Label's philosophy then, is that luxury doesn't necessarily equate to infinity pools or marble bathtubs. Of course, she'll organise these things if a customer insists, but really it's about experiences that, as she puts it, "money can't buy, but contacts can deliver".

Her clients, therefore, range from the heads of multi-million-pound companies to royalty and even pop stars. Customers have been helicoptered to snowboarding sessions on untracked powder on the Southern Alps; sipped hand-crafted beers in off-the-beaten-track pubs; and, on one occasion, a client even enjoyed a private recreation of a New Zealand Fashion Week show, complete with models on the catwalk. And it goes without saying she'll arrange all the sailing, hiking, surfing, kayaking or mountain biking you could ever dream of. "Budgets are not a concern," she says. "I'm only limited by my imagination."

Tania launched Black Label in 2014 after coming up with the idea while on a private beach on the Mercury Islands in the Coromandel, a rainforest-covered peninsula famed for beaches where hot water bubbles up through the golden sands. She and a friend spent the morning relaxing on a lilo, and the afternoon eating scallops they'd caught themselves.

"My friend said people would kill to do this," she says. "But they would never realise this existed because only the locals know about it. You need a private boat to get here." Moments later it dawned on her that she was in a unique position – a stint as head of premium marketing for Tourism New Zealand and another job organising events for the prime minister meant she had the ultimate insider knowledge and contacts book. But, perhaps more importantly, her idea played to her country's strengths, too.

Spread across 33,000km<sup>2</sup>, New Zealand's 14 national parks boast everything from enormous still lakes to penguins, volcanoes, canyons, cliffs and glaciers. But because its four million residents are dotted across a country the size of the UK, its best spots are, as you would expect, closely guarded secrets. All of which means Tanya's idea has evolved into a business where she now heads of team of experts based worldwide.

Success aside, you can't help but feel that perhaps the reason she secretly loves her job is that she, too, gets to experience many of the breaks she sets up for her clients.

"No, no I'm too busy!" she says, laughing. "Well, I say that, but next week I'm off to an island no tourist has ever visited before that is meant to be spectacular."

“It could be one for my little black book.”

ENDS