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# Berta's Mountain House

Twenty years ago Berta had to promise Keith that if he bought the Mountain House they would stay for two years and then move on. Things have changed, but Berta stays on. Berta was the third youngest child of twelve, born above Burg, Schwyz. She had a fascination with the Tourism Industry and wanted to learn languages. This brought her to Canada and America just after she turned eighteen. After a wonderful twelve months she returned to Switzerland. Whilst she liked Switzerland it was too small for her and she wanted to have just one more trip around the world. New Zealand was half way point and a good place to stop. This was now thirty years ago! Here she met her future husband-to-be Keith Anderson at Dawson Falls, where they married and remained for the next ten years. Heidi and Hans-Peter were born and both grew up in the hearty mountain air. The Andersons sold Dawson Falls and bought the Mountain House in 1985 where they have lived ever since.

The Mountain House is an alpine restaurant with accommodation, nestled on the slopes of the beautiful Mt Egmont/Taranaki in the Egmont National Park. It was established in 1899, one year before the National Park was formed.

The Mountain House has ten rooms. There is an inviting sauna and spa pool



*The Mountain House with Mt Egmont/Taranaki behind*

to ease wary muscles after a long walk. The a la carte restaurant features many game food specialties as well as large T-Bones and Swiss dishes such as Fladli soup, Spatzli and Black Forest Gateaux. Berta is the main chef, well assisted by a team of twelve staff. The Mountain House is open seven days a week from 7.00am until late, 365 days of the year. In the summer time many visitors from overseas will enjoy the beautiful walks spread around the National Park. A trip to the summit of 2518 metres is an eight hour experience on a fine day, with magical views over the ring plane of Taranaki to the South Island. On a bad day it can turn into an ordeal of life and death as the records of 61 deaths on the mountain have shown. Winter time the surrounds



*Berta Anderson, who greets you with friendly hospitality, at either the Mountain House or Anderson's alpine lodge*

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change into a snowy wonderland, the skifield just up the road attracting hundreds of snow seekers.

Berta also operates a bed and breakfast at the Anderson's Alpine Lodge. The beautiful Swiss Log Chalet is just at the edge of the National Park. Here the view is stunning and the setting tranquil with many graceful rimus and kahikatea adjoining a big piece of native bush. But on February 1, 2003, their mountain idyll was shattered when a Swiss tourist strayed on the wrong side of Pembroke Road. His van smashed head-on into Keith Anderson's trademark light blue Mini. Keith was cut from the wreckage but died on the way to hospital. Keith will be remembered for many things. As a landscape oil painter he leaves behind a grand legacy in his paintings. Soon after Keith's death it became evident to his family that his life story and especially his art work should be preserved. A book is now at the printers and it is Berta's hope that the book will touch the readers and make them smile. She would like to share the paintings with all who knew Keith - and with anyone else who has ever loved a mountain.

Despite the toughest of years, Berta has no plans to leave the Mountain House. She regards living in a National Park as a privilege, not to be given up lightly. At the same time she knows more than most not to try to guess what the future holds.

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predict your future is  
to create it.

Alan Kay.

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