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Captivate Adventure - Otaki

Our short time on this planet is about getting out of our comfort zone and grabbing life by the oars. At least that's something adventurers Pete Dawson and Simone Hartill would say. They run Captivate Adventures and can thrill you in a raft (even at night – eek!), on a rock face, in a river tube, suspended from a rope, or zooming across a flying fox.

Captivate Adventures can accommodate potential adventurers at an hour's notice, or pre-plan an involved adventure. They do team-building courses for schools and corporates, and if someone wants to get married while dangling from a very high place, they'd love to hear from you.

Pete and Simone met on the edge of a rock face. He was the instructor and she was the client, although he says she was better at it than him. They've both got a background in outdoor adventure and you can tell they've really carved out a happy niche for themselves and their two daughters, Amara and Helia.

Pete trained as an electronic engineer, then went seeking adventure during a 'gap year' and never came down. He's originally a Raumati boy and says by the time he was 18, he'd been to most of the huts in the Tararua Ranges. "It's funny how you end up coming back," he says.

Simone has a degree in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management and is a qualified fitness instructor. She always knew she'd be working outdoors. "I grew up roughing it around Cape Palliser, and we lived next to the regional park in the Hutt Valley. When I look at what kids are like today, I think we had it so cool in those days. I want our girls to have as many experiences as possible."

A personality test taken as a teen revealed Pete to be suited to a career in something like engineering, while having time to 'play' at the weekends. He took the 'play' part to the extreme, and has no regrets. "I have friends who only get to do outdoor stuff in the weekends."

The Otaki River has enough adventure to keep them motivated and happy, but Simone says it's also the environment that is amazing. "It's so beautiful, especially from a raft. People say they've been rafting in other places, but that each little part of New Zealand is unique."

There are dreams to go hang-gliding off Rio, see the glaciers in Chile, and climb to the top of Cotopaxi, but for now, this family of adventurers have enough to experience in their own back yard.

TESTIMONY FROM AN ADVENTURE

Lisa Fraser went on a recent work team-building experience with Captivate Adventures. They had her hanging from ropes and jumping off cliffs into the river, making Lisa wonder what she'd gotten herself in for. "One woman came really close to panicking during the rafting. We'd just gotten started and were going down a rapid and she fell out. But she remembered the instructions and everyone else paddled over and rallied around her. We didn't focus on the fact she'd fallen out, but that she did the right thing. It helped us connect more as a group. We were all a bit more sympathetic."

The weekend was a life changer. "I used to feel I was becoming a bit of a wimp in life. But now I want to push myself, to see what I'm capable of, and to feel really proud of myself."

Captivate Adventures

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