

Blue Duck Station: The land, the rivers and the people

By Nicola McCloy

Outstanding, amazing, fantastic, incredible and every other adjective that describes the WOW factor. The management team and guides at Blue Duck Station are a passionate team who willingly share their knowledge, experience, advice and humour while helping guests explore the great outdoors. - Chris

Highlight of my trip to NZ. Did the horse-riding trek and it was amazing. Lovely scenery and walks available . . . good there's no internet as it gives you the chance to really appreciate the place and mix with others. Will be coming back. - Carl

Journey into the heart of New Zealand with *Blue Duck Station*, a captivating portrait of one of the country's most environmentally significant stations. Nestled alongside Whanganui National Park, where the Whanganui and Retaruke rivers converge, this remarkable station combines traditional farming practices with tourism, conservation and new ways of doing things.

The land's rich past and the resilient and determined people who shaped it have paved the way for current owner Dan Steele, his wife Sandy, their four children, and Dan's parents, Richard and Rachel Steele, to make their mark. Dan, a passionate advocate for native wildlife, now welcomes people from around the world to experience a place where adventure and environmental initiatives go hand in hand. Through the pages of this book, you'll be introduced to the people, the places and the history that make Blue Duck Station such an extraordinary part of New Zealand.

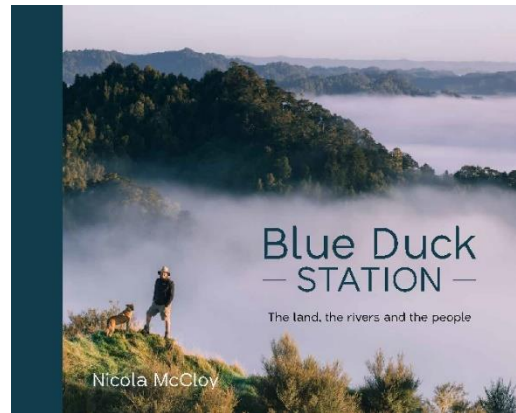
This visually stunning book includes tales of the rivers, the land and the tangata whenua, the arrival of European settlers, the balloting of land by returned soldiers, the riverboats, the building of the nearby Bridget to Nowhere, and the gradual consolidation of smallholdings into larger farms. It also shares the story of the Steele family, the beginnings of Blue Duck Station, and how the property has become a tourism destination and a conservation success story.

While most farm books focus on properties that have been handed down through generations, Blue Duck Station has been created recently out of several smaller properties by Dan Steele. While this is very much Dan and his family's story, it is also the story of the many people – including some real characters – who made their lives in the valley.

Dan is deeply committed to protecting endangered wildlife, and native bush and preserving the historic buildings on the property. He also loves sharing his knowledge of the local wildlife, especially the whio or blue duck from which the property takes its name.

Dan says, 'This is such a rich, historical, scenic and mystical area that is close to the hearts of so many and gets under your skin when you see it. As the backcountry is struggling, as pines are taking over, conservation is at our forefront.'

Nicola McCloy is an Auckland-based editor, writer, and researcher who grew up in Southland. She's passionate about New Zealand social history, and to date has written 29 books, including *Let's Get Lost*, *Who Lived there?* and *The Mount Pisa Story* as well as a number of ghost-written memoirs. Her love of New Zealand history was born out of many childhood holidays spent in the gold rush parts of Central Otago's gold country, and she's made it her goal to make New Zealand stories accessible, readable and, where appropriate, entertaining.



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