

Kiwis speak the same language, but they are not quite like us. Their social and cultural norms include a few things we could learn from and a few I question. An illustrated guide follows.

ACC – the socialization of accident risk –the state pays for the consequences of all “accidents” – no one need be “at fault” – thus the whole injury litigation industry virtually disappears. GOOD idea. It frees people to just to the “normal” thing – and not fear what some lawyer might say about it. Examples follow. They DO have a growing “regulating” class that must be paid, housed, and obeyed – just like the entire modern West – this class of seldom productive drones is sapping the energy of their economy just like ours, but that is a different problem.

In a country of only 4 million people, money for infrastructure and public space improvements has got to be tight. But they do a remarkable job on their roads and trails – but some of the “standard” features we are used to just are not funded. They expect that commonsense will be used.



If it looks like a cliff, do not get too close – you do not need a guard rail or a fence. If you want to kill yourself, please feel free to jump, try not to hit anyone. This is a small little ladder to the beach. If you weight 400 pounds or our clumsy – don’t use it. And don’t trip over the little chain that marks the edge.

We have lots of streams and rivers, it is cheaper to build only one lane bridges – take your turn. If you are an idiot, please get off the road. They



have in the whole country no more than about 100 miles of 4 lane expressway. The “major highways” are all 2 lane and most bridges 1 lane.



You should have changed your baby at home. Or you can use the floor. But, just to be nice some one brought in this changing table from home. We expect you to keep an eye on the baby and not sit on the table. If you lean on it (why would you?) it may collapse. Pick up your baby and go about your business. If hurt, put it on ACC. If you need a seat-belt for your baby to change them, you should not be having babies. We don’t have \$800.00 for a fancy wall mount seldom used American baby station. You are lucky we give you a free toilet.

Look, we are a small community of a few homes a bar-hotel, and outlying farms. Some nice old guy made some of this stuff in his shop. Yes, the hanging ladder lifts off and can be swung by some big kid as a weapon. Yes, a finger could be caught under its flange. Yes, a kid could fall from on top and hit the hard dirt. May learn something. No, we have not taken the old teeter-totter mount out of its concrete, and yes if a kid fell onto that hard steel mount, they would get a nasty cut. If injured, put it on ACC. We also have a metal slide. It gets very hot in the sun. It is high enough to hurt if a kid falls off. Same for our swing set. And yes, that is a real merry-go-round that kids can fly off of it they let go. They will learn that some things are best held on to once committed. Would you prefer no play yard at all?



Their toilets are BILLIANT. The American regulation class made all toilets go to 1.1 gallon per flush, all the time. There are times in which you need more. Maybe 1 out of 4 or 5 flushes. So Americans now flush twice

(or more). But 3 little flushes is not the same as 1 good powerful one. So Americans now spend inordinate time staring at their own excrement while waiting for the tank to refill while wondering where the plunger or a stick is. Kiwis have done two things. Most toilet tanks are elevated from the bowl. This creates more force without more water. Simple physics. No stupid low profile look (there are a few one piece units, but not many), just get the job down. And all toilets have two buttons. One for small flush, one for big flushes. How sensible. Most homes also have heated towel racks, that I first thought useless (they do not really deliver a hot towel), until I realized that in high humidity they DRY out the towel for the next use. Still, of marginal utility unless you shower 3 x per day.



Not so sensible: They still do not have double-pane windows – but for this one shown. Very rare. And very, very few have screens. They like their bugs, spiders, and flies to share their meals and beds. Wenche did a flashlight bed check every night for

fear of encountering a spider – many of whom she captured and released outside, until she became calloused and began to simply execute them for trespass. No, only one in bed, rest elsewhere in house.

Electrical switches are pretty slick. They may have 3 or 4 small switches, often labeled, on one face plate – and this is 240 volt stuff. But, they also switch all their outlets at the wall. Seems a useless irritant to me. “Why is the toast not popping up?” Easy to not notice the wall outlet is off.

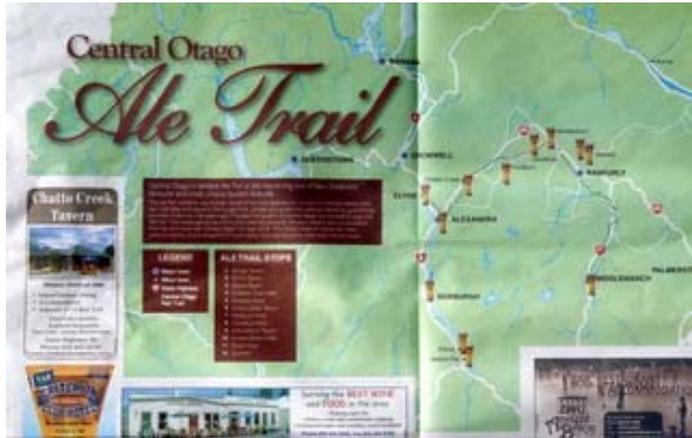


They can be stylish, clever, and schizophrenic (don't forget the US both subsidizes the growing and export of tobacco while labeling it a poison). I was afraid to use this “sink” until I had found its slight tilt to the back and there a collecting trough. Many of the bathroom vanities are one piece – top and sink being seamless.

Being a “bloke” (regular guy, usually with a beer in hand) is pretty important to NZ males. The clever marketing of yogurt sure worked on me. Also worked on Wenche. Absolute best. But, it is not (it is SAYS) made by “Brian” - some “real” bloke working alone is his little male yogurt shop. The whole thing is owned by Fonterra – the BIG dairy cooperative (like our Meadowgold or Sunkist for citrus).



They have highway signs up everywhere encouraging sober driving. One clever one is “Don't drink and **DrIvE**.” Yet they publish this beer trail map to encourage.....what?



Peanut Butter. Pretty basic stuff. We bought TWO different jars, trying to figure out why it was so without flavor, bland. Most NZ peanut butter is not of ROASTED nuts. Had to buy in a specialty shop at \$6 – 9.00 (U.S. equiv) per jar.



Look carefully at this bathtub scene. Besides the great lower legs – what is missing? It is very rare to find an overflow drain on any of the tubs or sinks. They just figure if you can reach the controls, you can manage not to overflow the tub.



This seagull says it all. Sort of laid back. Unpretentious. Fearless. In a parking lot at the Seal Colony in Westport, he (or she) was very comfortable. Just sat there, on the white line as Wenche drove over it (between the wheels) to turn into a parking stall. Still there for my photo – but did move as I got within stepping upon distance. It *could* move. They *could* put up screens, or more safety barriers, or roast their peanuts – but why bother?

Well, almost says it all. They also have a sense of humor and a bit of naughtiness. The “Wicked Vans” are a mainstay, especially on the South Island. They stand out with garish paint, and cheeky sayings. i.e.: “Men would value women’s brains if they bounced and jiggled when they walked.” “Don’t crowd me, I am angry, have a gun, and a Bible.” One, I have captured below.

