

Mountains

Inspired!

As vineyards have sprung up around Central Otago, their owners have been inspired by the landscape when naming their wines. Mt Difficulty, Rockburn, Carrick, and Black Ridge are just some that have been named after surrounding mountains.

What's what

The Remarkables are so named for their rare north-south orientation, an unusual feature in mountains.

Central Otago is a rugged, barren landscape, often parched by beating sun and howling gales. Formed on metamorphic schist forced up by rough mountain building more than five million years ago, and carved by periods of ice age glaciation, the mountains dominate the landscape.

Mountain building created long north-south and east-west ranges such as the Pisa Range and the Old Man Range. Later, ice age glaciers flowing down from the Southern Alps carved the steep sides of Lakes Wakatipu, Wanaka, and Hawea, as well as the Kawarau River Valley.

The area was completely isolated from humans until Māori first journeyed inland over the high mountain passes around the 13th century. The search for food resources such as moa drew them inland from settlements on the coast, and over centuries they developed the best routes of travel. It was Māori guides who first assisted European settlers undertaking the journey over the barren mountains inland from Dunedin. For a long time after this, the area was only accessible on foot or by horse, until the quest for gold gave good reason to establish roads.

The most inspiring thing about the Central Otago mountains is their sheer vastness, and the isolation experienced by those who immerse themselves in these majestic peaks and expansive ranges.



TSS Earnslaw with mountain view behind



Summit view of Mount Aspiring

