

Gibbs Farm is situated on the edge of the Kaipara – the largest harbour in the southern hemisphere. This area is the home of several Ngati Whatua sub tribes and is the scene of very early European exploration of New Zealand in the 18th and 19th Centuries. These days the Kaipara could more truthfully be characterized as a large rugged fertile estuary, the shallow waters and exposed mud flats reflect the dramatic western skies and sunsets, throughout the tidal extremes. A wonderful feature of the mud flats is the seasonal flocking of Godwits, at times numbering into the many thousands, as they feed to fatter condition for their long migratory flight to Siberia.

Here, nature is the ultimate artist and **Gibbs Farm** and its environs are an example of her finest work. Historically the land was blanketed with extensive kauri forest, rich variety of other native trees skirting the coast, and the adjacent wet lowlands providing a densely vegetated wildlife habitat. Subsequently the existing farm property and others like it in the area were cleared for agricultural use and renewable forestation.

Prior to the purchase of **Gibbs Farm** in 1991, it was planted with Australian eucalypts and radiata pine, commercially grown by the former owner, farm forester Neil Barr. A subsequent attempt to plant deciduous trees and tame the land into the style of an English country park was unsuccessful, the exotic trees suffering in the extreme climate of the 'wild west'. Current extensive re-vegetation of the land with trees native to New Zealand is proving successful and adding aesthetic benefit by reinforcing the undulating shape of the landforms.

The landscaping programme is complemented by the re-establishment of the native bird life and the introduction of exotic animals traditionally unfamiliar to our landscape.

The site-specific art work interacts strongly with the landscape. The majority of works on **Gibbs Farm** are inspired by the unique environment and the artist's response to it. The effects of the changing light across the rolling landforms and the sight of weather visibly blowing in from the Tasman Sea impacts strongly on all visitors.

28th October 2009



GIBBS FARM

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