



On cue: Damon Kemp and Brett Cursons poised for action in their new pool parlour above the Mayfair in New Plymouth which opens on Saturday.

Photo: ANDY JACKSON/FAIRFAX NZ

Mates pot their dream with the eight ball

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The mates' scheme began as plans drawn on the back of a cigarette package over a beer.

But when Eight Ball Pool & Dart – with its Pot Black pool tables, dart boards and bar – opens to the public on Saturday that dream will have become reality.

“We all got our heads together and said you only live once,” co-owner Damon Kemp said.

The parlour takes over the refurbished and earthquake-strengthened rooms up the stairs above The Mayfair on Devon St

West, most recently home to the Arthouse Cinema.

Hundreds of hours have been spent removing layers of paint to reveal the spectacular heart rimu panelling in the historic building.

Building co-owner Willie Still says the latest venture will take the rooms back to their original use as a billiards hall at the beginning of last century, a time when pool halls were dotted all around the city.

These days, most pool and snooker tables are found in pubs.

Co-owner of the Eight Ball business, Mr Kemp said the idea was hatched when he and four other friends in their 30s and 40s –

all acknowledging a misspent youth playing pool and snooker – sat down over a beer while The Mayfair bar was being renovated.

They talked about how they would love to have their own parlour where they and their friends could indulge their passion. The first plans, drawn up on the back of a cigarette packet, soon grew into a larger venture.

The pool tables are competition level and the best available in New Zealand, he said.

Competitions and tournaments will include both bar and international rules.

And they will be trialling halogen lights over the six very

heavy tables.

“It took six of us to move each one up the stairs. We hope to attract really good pool players because these are really good tables.”

With the knowledge that the national championships will be played at the New Plymouth Club in October they are hopeful of enticing a few of the top players to their venue for a game or two.

The parlour will be restricted to people 18 and over and be available for functions such as stag parties and hens' nights.

The owners say their wives and girlfriends are fully supportive of their venture and a challenge has

been made that whoever wins on the table cooks for the week.

The others in the venture with Mr Kemp are Brett Cursons, Dave Haskell, , Dave Robinson and Mark Allcock.

Future ideas include developing an outside rooftop area and poker rooms.

To acknowledge the one-time Galaxy Space World frequented in their youth, they intend installing one of the old pre-X-Box gaming machines called Street Fighter II. Sky Sport television around the walls will complete the mix.

■ The pool parlour has its own website on eightball.co.nz.