

The Thirsty Bull is open in NP

A Daily News Advertising Feature



AT THE BAR: The Thirsty Bull's New Plymouth team. At back from left are owner David Shearer, Steve Robyn, Thomas Melanie, Rachel, Ross and Steve. In front of the bar are Andy, Vicki and Mike.

History to name, building

Stories by JANE WYNYARD
Photos by GLEN FERGUSSON

A DROP of Taranaki's brewing history has been revived in the form of a unique boutique brewery bar and restaurant in the heart of New Plymouth.

The owner of the stylish new business, former New Plymouth rig worker David Shearer, has rescued the 130-year-old Egmont name from the cobwebs of the past and restored it to life. The James Paul Egmont Brewery was established in 1864 and then changed its name to Taranaki Breweries in 1920. Years later, it was taken over by Dominion Breweries which subsequently closed the brewery and moved out of town.

"We've resurrected the name from the old days and given it new life," said Mr Shearer. He has called his company The Egmont Brewing Company.

And following a Taranaki-wide competition, he has named the company's Devon St West bar and restaurant The Thirsty Bull. "A boutique brewery bar has been a dream of mine for three-and-a-half years and it's great to be able to incorporate a part of Taranaki history into a modern business."

David Shearer first thought of the idea three years ago while in Christchurch. "I was staying with a friend in Christchurch and we went to several bars which brewed natural beers on site and served different wines. When I came back to Taranaki, I got a business devel-

opment grant to see if I could set up one here. I have sunk everything I own into it."

Mr Shearer said he spent ages searching for the right premises for the Egmont Brewing Company in New Plymouth before he stumbled across the 1930s-built former Lucas Building in Devon St East.

With its concrete columns, high ceilings, native timber features and an impressive art deco facade, the building gave Mr Shearer and architect David Hermann plenty of scope to work with. The resulting upmarket facility combines historical features and brewing methods with a very smart interior. It features a curved bar, polished wooden floors, copper-wrapped vats and tanks.

Continued p8

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The Thirsty Bull is open

A Daily News Advertising Feature



A LA SIDEWALK: The frontage of The Thirsty Bull is set back for outdoor relaxation.

Modern appeal complements historic flavour

□ From p1
and a warehouse-style atmosphere.
New Plymouth architect David Hermann said he was limited to using timber to retain the historical touch, but didn't want to lose modern appeal either.
"We didn't want a rustic bar, but we still wanted to acknowledge the history of the place," he said. "So, we created an old brew house which is like the ones in the old days of the Egmont company. We've incorporated historically sympathetic materials with a modern sense such as the curved bar and the low voltage lighting.
"There is a lot of flexibility with the

design and enough room upstairs to one day turn it into a bigger restaurant."

Construction work began in May this year. The interior of the building was gutted and the native matai, rimu and oregon wood recycled.

The bathroom doors were made from the floorboards, chairs and tables carved from native timber by Felled and Found Furniture in New Plymouth. The glass windows from the old shop front were re-used.

"When we first began work on the place, we discovered that most of the wooden floors were rotten so they had to be replaced," said David Shearer.

"The building also had to reach earthquake-proof standards so we had to incorporate huge steel beams right through the building. It's had a real facelift."

The building, which had to be big enough to house the huge brewing vats and tanks and a chiller, also yielded its share of surprises — such as an original brick wall behind the plaster.
Builders were also able to retain a

covered outdoor area at the front of the premises for summer sessions.

Mr Shearer says his bar is in New Plymouth to stay. "I've sunk everything into it and it's part of Taranaki's history. This is something unique to New Plymouth and I have faith in this town and I am sure we'll be successful."

● DAVID Shearer studied the history of New Zealand breweries before he opened his own establishment, and discovered some surprising facts and figures that he plans to re-introduce to Taranaki.

He learned that when the Egmont Brewing Company used to brew at its old Queen St, New Plymouth site in the late 1800s, it used to fly a kite out the window. The sight let the townsfolk know that a new batch of beer was going into the vats.

"We've been thinking about resurrecting that idea as well," said Mr Shearer. "That way people will know when we're brewing and they'll be able to come and watch what I'm doing."

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TOPPING: David Shearer checks the brewing vats which are in full view at The Thirsty Bull.



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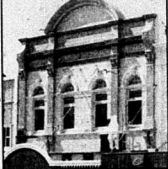


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Thirsty Bull

A Daily News Advertising Feature

Forget those hangovers

HEALTH-conscious beer drinkers and hangover sufferers should be jumping for joy at the opening of Taranaki's first boutique brewery bar and restaurant in New Plymouth.

The Egmont Brewing Company's Thirsty Bull bar and restaurant will be offering a wide variety of naturally brewed, low-fat beers.

And, brewer David Shearer says are also guaranteed not to leave you with a headache or hanging over the toilet bowl the next morning.

"We want to push the health trend where you don't have hangovers and the beers are low calorie," he said.

"Ours is the purest form of beer — based on the German purity laws that all beers must be made with the natural ingredients of water, hops, yeast and grain and no added sugar.

It's the sugar that gives you hangovers and makes you fat."

David has enlisted the help of one of New Zealand's brewery experts — German brewer Manfred Graff, who has more than 40 years experience in brewing beer world-wide, to help him make his first batch.

David trained under Graff at his brewery in Wellington.

"Our beer won't be ready for six weeks from the time we get the first batch in, so we'll be bringing in some different beers from other boutique breweries around the country for people to try," Mr Shearer said.

"We'll have everything from lager, draught and bitter and we want to keep everything as local as possible so we'll try to get some local cider in as well."

Beer will also play a major part in the restaurant menu.

Three chefs have been hired to create a variety of dishes for the restaurant menu.



SOMETHING'S COOKING: Mike (at rear) and Steve in the kitchen yesterday readying equipment for use today.

These will include the traditional ploughman's lunches and specialised platters for relaxed group eating as well as a variety of other dishes.

"We want to offer a range of food including vegetarian dishes," said Mr Shearer.

"We'll try to use as much beer as possible in the cooking as well.

"We'll use beer as an ingredient and also match beer flavours with certain dishes."

A special brewing area with a glass front and mezzanine floor has also been built so audiences can watch the brewery process. Brewery tours will also be held.

The Egmont Brewing Company has a 10pm-3am late licence, seven days a week and will be also offering 'brewers' brunches on Sundays with platters and beer-tasting sessions.

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To David and Cheris  we wish you every success from TSB Realty

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