

# High costs put squeeze on Garlic Press eatery

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After four years in business, New Plymouth fine dining restaurant The Garlic Press has permanently closed its doors.

The eatery joined a string of retailers that had announced their closure on the city's main street in recent months.

The Garlic Press owner Michael Williamson said the Devon St West establishment shut just before Christmas, but at the time he had hoped to get enough money together to be able to reopen in February.

But on the restaurant's Facebook page on Wednesday it

was announced the eatery would stay closed.

"We had a few hiccups along the way that put us out a bit," said Mr Williamson, who established the restaurant 4½ years ago.

He blamed increasing costs including wages, GST, and Kiwisaver contributions, as well as not being able to entice enough customers through the door, for the restaurant's closure.

"We missed a few opportunities along the way that we should have taken."

Mr Williamson, who was also a chef, said he thought they must have done something right to have lasted the time they did.

The closure of the restaurant

meant the loss of jobs for about 12 staff. Mr Williamson said he had given them notice before Christmas of the imminent closure, even though he had hoped to be able to reopen.

The Garlic Press had won a number of awards, including Outstanding Restaurant at the Halamoana Hospitality Awards in 2011 and a 2010 New Zealand Beef and Lamb Excellence award.

An auction for the restaurant's chattels will be held on February 15.

**Stop press:** New Plymouth fine dining restaurant The Garlic Press has closed permanently.

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