

New lease of life for old Royal Hotel

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By LYN HUMPHREYS

A UNIQUE sports bar featuring a 100-seat grandstand and huge clear screens is to open in January, says owner David Stones.

The new bar, in the old Royal Hotel on the corner of Brougham and Ariki streets, would be aimed at both sexes and all sporting codes — not just the biggies, he said yesterday.

“It will be different from any other bar in the city. We are catering for all sports codes.

“There will be five big screens and everywhere you will be able to see a sport going on somewhere in the world.

“It is quite exciting. So whatever code you play it will be there. It's very different. There is nothing like it in New Plymouth.”

The bar, yet to be named, had been granted a TAB licence. The screens had been ordered from the United States and would arrive in about six weeks.

“They will be very clear screens and have a full surround sound system. It

will be just like being there,” he said.

Negotiations were under way to put in a satellite dish to target US sports channels. Included will be a self-contained, air-conditioned gaming room and at least four quality pool tables, Mr Stones said.

The bar would be women-friendly and include cappuccinos and food along with the beer, he said.

The designer, who developed a similar establishment in Dunedin, would be brought in as project overseer.

Mr Stones, lessee of The Mill for the past 22 months, said he and his partners — his wife Sheryl and silent partner Ian McQueen — believed there was a niche for the concept in New Plymouth despite there already being 30 or more licensed establishments in the central city.

“There is certainly a gap in the market. You have to differentiate your market.”

The bar was perfectly situated. It should attract people from Centre City wanting lunches and the area was about to take off with the planned new library, foreshore development and its wind wand, he said.

The Royal Hotel, built in 1958, had been closed for about a year.

The upstairs business, Richmond Backpackers, would continue.

A separate business, a self-contained cafe, would be developed in the vacant shop on the corner.

Mr Stones said a name for the sports bar would be published at the weekend. All sports codes were being approached to submit names of Taranaki icons. “We want to feature as many as we can within the sports bar.”

SPORT ICONS: David Stones outside the former Royal Hotel, soon to be a new sports bar featuring Taranaki sporting legends.

Photo: REBECCA SCOTT

