

This week's restaurant . . .

**Name:** Rafter's Restaurant  
**Address:** 282a Devon St East, New Plymouth  
**Telephone:** 88731

**Style:** A la Carte  
**Seating capacity:** 40  
**Hours:** Monday - Saturday 6.30pm - 1am  
**Licence:** Full

# Intimate setting draws diners

**Rafter's Restaurant boasts a high standard of select, relaxed and intimate dining.**

In fact intimacy is the New Plymouth restaurant's best selling point, according to part-owner and hostess Penny Coleman.

A cosy bar, quiet nooks, soothing light classical and classical guitar music and, as the name would imply, ornate ceilings and rafters make up the atmosphere which ensures customers return again and again.

Many are attracted to the intimate bar, where we found a comprehensive list of cocktails all priced between \$4.50 and \$6, from which we chose two brandy crustas.

We were delighted to find them expertly mixed and attractively presented.

After many less than satisfactory experiences throughout Taranaki and North Island restaurants it was great to find competent cocktail mixing.

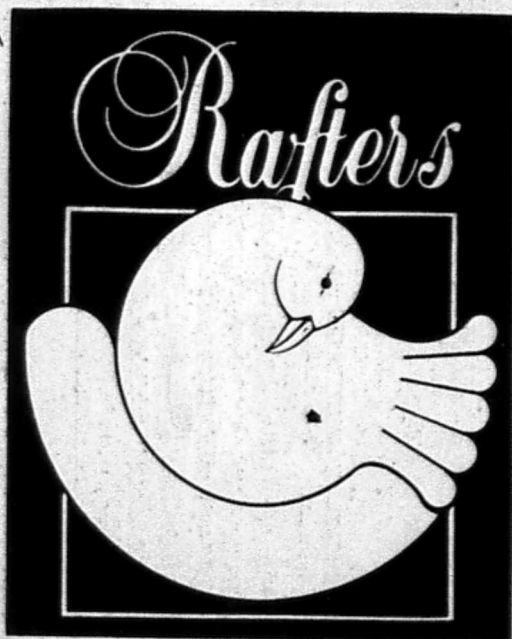
At \$5.50 each the drinks were expensive, as expected, but worthwhile.

## Clientele

The restaurant's position in Devon St East means it is close to several motels which provide a regular source clientele.

Lunches are planned for the future, when a licence comes through because Mrs Coleman believes the growing Northgate business area will provide a need.

And a part of the present is Rafter's Supper Club



which allows diners to arrive late, after the theatre or cinema, and still be served both drinks and light meals.

On first inspection the menu prices looked about middle-of-the-range. But the decor and service standard was well above average.

All dishes were well prepared, and presented in portions that did not invite gluttony nor leave us unsatisfied.

We skipped the fresh fruit juices (\$1.20 each) and soup (\$2.95).

Entrées ranged from pate at (\$3.50) to garlic prawns served in warm

pernod (\$5.95). I chose the latter, which were delicious, while my wife had mussels grilled in garlic butter (\$4.25).

Probably it was just instinct that we both went for garlic based dishes. That, and long experience.

Rafter's served the usual warm bun while taking the order and were good enough to serve another when I ate the first to quickly.

## Wine

We ordered a Villa Maria wine, of which Rafter's has a good range, the Chenin Blanc (medium dry) at \$11.20.

As expected it was up to Villa Maria's customary high standard and we paused to reflect on the winemakers present ill fortune.

Rafter's has many good imported wines including Chateau Lafite Rothschild 1977 for \$175 and a slightly cheaper Mouton Rothschild (1977) for \$150.

They were inherited from previous owners, designed for the jet-setting energy developments crowd who have now mostly deserted New Plymouth.

Our main courses arrived in good time, not rushed at us as if we were catching a train.

I chose medallions of lamb with minted kiwifruit sauce (\$10.95) which was at the lower end of the menu price scale. Nevertheless it was a delightful dish, silver served with broccoli and carrots.

## Seafood

My wife's orange roughly, prawns and scallops in cream and dry vermouth (\$16.95) was as mouth-watering as it sounds and was served with salad.

The small but tempting dessert trolley got the better of us and we both chose pavlova, strawberries and ice cream for \$3 each.

Coffee rounded off a pleasant evening and the bill totalled \$71, putting Rafter's in the worth visiting again bracket. G.D.