

rooms, which cost guests between \$120 to \$220 per unit, include complimentary toiletries, video channels, a well stocked mini-bar and tea and coffee making facilities.

The 189 owners provided no capital outlay – just the land. The trustees who continue to have complete control over the project, re-employed the Hall Group to sell time-share. By the end of 1986 it's hoped the time-share would have been completely sold to bring in a gross of nearly four million dollars.

Time-Share is a holiday home ownership plan which allows you to buy a share in a resort condominium. It enables you to freeze future holiday accommodation costs at today's prices.

The Okawa Bay resort has one-week time-sharing encompassing 20 years. The current prices for buying into the scheme are \$6,300 for floating time-share and \$10,000 for fixed time-share. Ownership entitles you to exclusive use of a luxurious condominium (which comes complete with everything from a washing machine to an alarm clock) for a pre-determined segment of time, every year for 20 years. The share may be rented, sold or passed on in your estate. It can be exchanged on a yearly basis with other hotels or motels in New Zealand and overseas. The only annual cost is a service fee. The initial outlay is recoverable after 20 years.

Time-Share is the major scheme to get this hotel-resort out of serious financial difficulties.

The original cost estimates escalated by some two million dollars mainly through off-shore borrowing currency fluctuations and increased local costs for construction particularly when further upgrading was decided upon.

All this brought the hotel into a debt situation which the hotel couldn't service. As a result of this the Maori Trustee in Wellington injected over one million dollars last September which helped to reduce the debt to a more serviceable level.

The resort manager, 39 year old Bill McDonald said the hotel is performing to its expectations.

A vastly experienced hotel operator, McDonald said that all hotel investments are long term for profitability and he expects the owners of Okawa Bay will not start to receive dividends before 1989 or 1990.

McDonald said one of the major problems in the hotel industry in New Zealand is the lack of trained staff and the Okawa Bay Lake resort has been caught in the same situation.

McDonald employs 30 staff of which 50 percent are Maori which McDonald says is purely based on a suitability of the applicant.

"We've had no directives from our trustees about staffing," he says.

"We have not got a Maori on the man-



agement side but that is because we have no one with the necessary experience."

McDonald admitted there had been water weed problems in the bay area, largely he says because of nutrients oozing over from nearby Lake Rotorua. He says spraying by helicopters and the natural use of swans are having a marked success. Certainly, I didn't notice any weeds surfacing.

McDonald refused to allow me to interview any of his staff because he said he had a policy of himself being the only spokesperson when dealing with the media.

I would like to have asked the resort's charming Maori receptionist, Nikki Shortland if she would like to see this Maori-owned complex portray a more Maori image. Perhaps even a few words of Maori greeting would not go amiss.

McDonald who has managed hotels in several towns and cities thinks the Okawa Bay Lake Resort compares very favourably with those he has been associated with.

"It's a very unique resort. Physically it is very attractive. It offers to our guests a 'complete' resort – its location on a lake and its amenities. It's the only resort in New Zealand at present that mixes time-share and hotel."

McDonald makes no concessions for the high price of dinners in the restaurant. The main courses start at \$21.

"We employ the two best chefs we can find. We cater at the top end of the market. We're there for the overseas

traveller who is looking for five-star top rating hotels."

Whilst I have heard at first hand two criticisms of the restaurant meals, I couldn't really fault the room service meals Leigh and I had on both nights nor the two superb breakfasts we had in the restaurant.

The 50-person conference room is regarded as the hotel's best source of business. They had 44 three-day conferences at the hotel between December 1985 and October 1986 and there were another 12 conferences booked for the remainder of the year. Bookings for 1987 were coming in thick and fast.

P.S. Tu Tangata's Editor got a chance to try out the resort when he stayed on for a magazine publishers conference. Although there were no faults with the facilities, (even finding time to try the all-weather tennis courts), the resort lacked presence which was especially strange being in the heartland of Ngati Pikiao. The one concession to the tangata whenua were the two stained glass panels in the entranceway depicting tupuna who came on the Te Arawa waka, and two taniwha on a panel facing Lake Rotoiti. I talked with some of the staff and found local Maori are amongst them and very much enjoying their work. However one staffer who found it hard to accept the throwing out each morning of the empty complimentary toiletry containers each bearing the Okawa Bay Resort crest. The editor for his part took his home as a gift for his wife.

