



A Maori apprentice in paradise

George S. Kanahale



Larry demonstrating the ease of using the wheel-in shower.

Extras added

Nu Winterburn and his partner Merv Larsen, local building contractors, built the house in Norfolk Crescent, Otaki. Helene's cousin Joe Tewiata, a joiner added the finishing touches to cupboards and drawers in the kitchen, as well as building extras such as a glass room divider.

Plumbing was also done by friends, Maihi Marino and Joe McChesney.

Moving-in day was a hectic affair says Helene, with a working bee the following week seeing the paths go down in record time.

Says Larry, "the boys arrived about nine and it was all over by just after eleven".

And the story hopefully just won't end there.

Larry and Helene want to be financially independent so they've put up a proposition for a garage/workshop on the site where Larry can make wooden furniture for sale. He's already had a hand in making and selling kitset and assembled furniture and now wants to try a full-time business venture.

With the determination Larry and Helene have shown over the years and the support of their hapu, they are one couple that certainly deserve to succeed.

For most of us, paradise never comes except in our dreams of immortality. But for a young Maori from Auckland, it is here at the Kuilima Hyatt Resort staying in a plush suite overlooking a sandy beach while apprenticing to Charles Heen, one of the most successful hotel interior designers in the Pacific.

This is Denis Hansen's first time abroad, on the beginning leg of what he plans to be a two-year working tour around the world. Kuilima Hyatt was not on his original itinerary — a camping ground was.

The 22-year old Aucklander recalls, "When Mr Heen escorted me into the suite and told me I was going to be staying here for the next few weeks, I thought I was in paradise. Gosh, I'd never even been near a resort in my life."

Mr Charles Heen and Denis Hansen discussing the overall colour schemes with Mr R.M. Freitas, personal 'kahuna pule' of the project. They have to make sure all the necessary Hawaiian mana is utilized.

Well, it isn't like he is playing "King-for-the-day" at the expense of Charles Heen & Associates, Ltd. He is earning his keep and getting a priceless education from a master teacher at the same time.

Key decisions

While Good Fortune has played an important part in bringing Denis to "paradise," some key decisions and people were mostly responsible for his being at Kuilima.

It started in June 1981 when Charles Heen first visited New Zealand as a member of the Hawaiian-Maori Business Council's mission. Heen had an opportunity during the trip to see a good deal of Maori art and design motifs and to meet a few Maori artists.

