

Case Study – All Seasons Holiday Park, Rotorua:

Year around swimming a big bonus for All Seasons Holiday Park, Rotorua

FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE ON HOLIDAY, THE OPPORTUNITY TO SWIM IN AND RELAX BY A WELL-MAINTAINED SWIMMING POOL IS A MAJOR PART OF THE ATTRACTION OF WHERE THEY ARE STAYING.

The problem in the New Zealand climate is that even when the pool is heated, cold winds and rain make the swimming less attractive and the relaxation part, impossible. What a difference it would make if that pool could be enclosed in a weather-proof bubble.

Five years ago, this was the situation faced by the managers of All Seasons Holiday Park in Rotorua. The park is owned by Sue and Barrie Price, from Thames, who have owned it since the early 1990s. They leased it out until around 2004/5 when they decided to cease the leasing business approach after the park was poorly maintained and deteriorated to a very poor state with both facilities and reputation.

The rejuvenation of both began after managers were appointed to carry out the day-to-day running. Slowly but surely the park began to show signs of turning around. Kevin and Tracie Thornborough took on the full-time managers’ role in June 2008 after doing relief managing for approximately eight months – Kevin from a trade background, and Tracie from retail.

Several advantages

The park already had a great deal going for it as a place for a holiday. Only eight minutes from town, close to Lake Rotorua but without the sulphur smells, All Seasons Holiday Park was an ideal accommodation base for visits to Rotorua’s many cultural, thermal and adventure attractions. It is the closest accommodation provider to the Rotorua International Airport and is often used for first and last night stays for visitors arriving and departing from the airport.

The Qualmark 4-star Rotorua holiday park offers a choice of quality self-catering accommodation to suit all budgets and needs, including paraplegic facilities. Located in three hectares of peaceful land, it has 12 self-contained units, four cabins (which use communal facilities) three caravans, a 50-bed lodge, 82 powered sites and 22 unpowered sites. There are plans to add three more family units in time for Christmas. The park’s affordable accommodation options and camping sites make it ideal for couples, families, backpackers, groups and campervans.

For children, a major drawcard is that All Seasons Holiday Park even has its own dinosaurs. Rotorua, with its geysers and steam pools, is somewhat reminiscent of a time long ago when dinosaurs roamed the earth, and the park has 18 life sized examples scattered around the grounds. Made from steel box section, rebar, mesh and mortar, they were originally made for a



thermal area in Taupo in the early 1990s but after passing through other hands, became available for purchase.

“We put our hand up for them knowing they would be a point of difference and provide a theme for us to run with,” Mr Thornborough said.

Multiple pool problems

But a few years ago, the park owners had a problem. Turnover had ‘plateaued’ and the pool needed considerable repair work to bring it back to an acceptable standard. One problem was that it had been constructed more than 30 years previously and the wooden deck around it was falling apart.

“The pool was heated seasonally by a not very efficient diesel boiler which struggled to get the pool temp to 30°C on a fine day,” said Mr Thornborough. “We estimated that the average cost for running this was \$80-100 per day, so we had to be very careful when picking our running times. We always closed it from after Easter until Labour Weekend as it was just too expensive to operate in the winter months. “Rotorua is full of motels, hotels, B&B’s, backpackers, eight holiday parks, as well as other types of accommodation options, so we needed something to help us stand out from the rest.”

The owners decided to take the opportunity to create something unique which would help attract guests to the struggling park.

“We were at a home show in Auckland, looking for heating options for the pool, when we came across the telescopic pool exhibit of South Pacific Pool Enclosures, which imports these from a Czech Republic company,” said Mrs Price. “We were intrigued by what we saw and thought about the potential such a moveable pool enclosure could bring to All Seasons Holiday Park.”

“The company has a number of different sizes and designs to choose from to fit individual requirements. The cost was substantial so we gave it a great deal of consideration before ordering one,” she said.

Innovative movability

“The main reason for choosing this type of enclosure over structures made by other companies was because it was innovative – it could remain closed in poor weather but easily opened when suitable,” said Mr Thornborough.

“The owners decided to go ahead with the project and chose the product they considered would best suit our park. We completely stripped the whole area, leaving just the concrete block pool, and started again,” he said. “The structures are designed and made in the Czech Republic to suit the customers’ requirements, dismantled, put in a container and delivered to the



site. In New Zealand, the agents here – South Pacific Pool Enclosures – then re-assemble it. We found they were fantastic people to work with. At the time ours was the 18th installation and the second biggest one they had done in New Zealand.

“The whole new deck was built by John Stevens Builders of Rotorua. We installed a self-dosing chemical system designed, installed and serviced by Select Chemicals in Hamilton, which works fantastically well.

“With our indoor heated pool and spa complex, we can now provide our guests with all year around swimming. The pool is heated to around 33°C and is the perfect place to relax and unwind, whether you are swimming or just wanting to enjoy the warmth to read a book,” Mr Thornborough said. “We keep the spa at a cosy 39°C.

“We are the only holiday park in New Zealand that can offer all this. Some park pools are permanently covered, but as ours is basically a huge greenhouse that gets unbelievably hot inside, so we have to open it up.

“It’s constructed of seven segments which tuck into each other. We can open as many or as few as we wish. The canopy stays closed in winter, we open one segment in the shoulder months, and up to three in the heat of the summer. Leaving some segments in place offers valuable UV protection to our swimmers.

“The new heat pump we now have heating the pool is considerably cheaper to run at an average of just under \$30.00 per day helped immensely by the fact that the pool is enclosed. “Since installing the enclosure in 2012, our turnover has increased every year – and continues to do so. We have considerably more return customers and regulars who just love the pool now that they can swim all year around. It has made a noticeable impact also in the winter months where turnover was traditionally poor. Our occupancy has certainly risen during those tougher months,” he said.

“Last year after discovering the blockwork of the pool was leaking water, we contracted Elliott Pool Construction, based in Tauranga to completely re-surface the pool interior with fibreglass. All leaks are now gone, the pool’s easier to heat and clean and really looks great.”

And in the international holiday park market, Kevin Thornborough says the news is getting around.

“Just about all feedback posted on our own Facebook page, Trip Advisor, or Rankers for example, mentions the great swimming experience to be had, no matter what the weather is doing, as the wind-chill factor and cold outside temperatures have absolutely no bearing on the good times to be had.” ▲

By Brent Leslie, Industry Reporter

Amazing pool outcome

Roland and Wendy Paulik of South Pacific Pool Enclosures were proud to be part of the successful pool complex refurbishment at All Seasons Holiday Park.



“We knew our enclosure would make all the difference to the pool and provide year-round swimming for their guests, as well as offering a relaxing space to shelter in on windy, rainy days. And when the sun comes out within minutes, All Seasons can offer guests an outdoor pool – what could be better?”

South Pacific Pool Enclosures is a New Zealand leader of importing telescopic swimming pool enclosures, spa domes and patio enclosures. “All of these products are made to the client’s individual requirements. We work with Alukov, which is one of Europe’s leading manufacturers of pool and patio enclosures and spa domes.”

From the first enquiry, through the design process, consents and installation, Roland and Wendy work to ensure their clients are getting the best possible result for their investment.

“Thank you All Seasons Holiday Park for installing the Laguna Grande Enclosure. It was great to work with you during this project. The transition from our first visit to the end of the project was absolutely amazing!” ●

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