

# Top Cobb & Co Restaurant

*Sunday Express*

4-12-83



New Plymouth has the top Cobb & Co Restaurant in the country — indeed on both sides of the Tasman, taking into consideration the restaurant recently opened in Sydney.

The New Plymouth restaurant has won the 1983 Cobb & Co of the Year Award. Winning that award over nearly 30 other restaurants in the Cobb & Co chain is achievement enough; what makes it an outstanding coup for the local management and staff is the fact that

this is the second time the award has come to New Plymouth since the award was founded in 1979.

The award comprises a beautiful gold plaque to be displayed in the restaurant. For the manager — in this case Peter Morrison and his wife Jennie — the prize is a return air trip for two to London with \$5000 spending money. For the staff there is a contribution from Lion Breweries to their social club fund of \$1000.

It takes quite a restaurant to become Cobb and Co Restaurant of the Year, as the judging is carried out on six major points: 1. A mystery patron's report; 2. Guest complaints; 3. The Operations Manager's inspection; 4. A microbiologist's hygiene inspection; 5. The report of the local health inspector; 6. The prime cost achievement to budget.

The runner-up to the State Establishment Cobb & Co this year was the Manukau Arms (Wiri); eight other restaurants were given Highly Commended awards.

## A welcome at journey's end

On the first day of the year 1882 Mr. A. B. Heywood, set out on a journey in a Cobb & Co coach from Dunedin to the goldfields settlement of Waitahuna.

He later wrote a book on his travels through New Zealand, and in it he included a description of this journey. At the conclusion of the passage Heywood wrote:

"In due time we reached the summit along which we proceeded until we came to a steep descent, where we had to get out. It was raining hard and at the peril of leaving a boot in the mud we ran down to get a little shelter in a canvas inn.

Rain and hail fell in torrents and about 6.30 we reached Waitahuna. The hospitable shelter of a temporary canvas inn was quite charming after the events of the last 18 hours."

Therein lies the inspiration behind the modern concept of the Cobb & Co Restaurant — a warm, friendly, inexpensive establishment offering a welcome to all.

The first Cobb & Co coach came into use in New Zealand at Dunedin in



1861: the service was extended to Canterbury the next year. In 1864, with the discovery of gold on the West Coast, work began on building a road across the Southern Alps, by way of Arthur's Pass.

Cobb and Co was ready and waiting when the road opened and sent its first

coach across the pass with a single passenger, W. Seton Moorhouse, on board. The 36-hour trip from Christchurch ended at Hokitika on March 15, 1866. The journey was made in 11 stages, each of about 15 miles.

The 36-hour journey was shortened when the

railway reached Springfield in 1880, but the adventure-laden mountain crossing by coach remained a feature of South Island travel until the opening of the Oira Tunnel in 1923.

In the North Island a daily service was opened

between Auckland and Hamilton in 1867.

The year 1869 saw the beginnings of the Napier-Taupo road, and by 1872, Cobb & Co. were running a line of coaches from Napier to Taupo's increasingly renowned tourist attractions.

The journey was not an easy one. The road was extremely rough and at one point, passengers had to leave the coach and ride horseback for part of the journey. That journey which today takes two hours, took two exhausting days.

A verse by Henry Lawson, first published in 1897 while he was in New Zealand, vividly recalls what it was like to travel by Cobb & Co.

"Three lamps above the ridges and gorges dark and deep.

A flash on sandstone cuttings where sheer the sidings sweep.

A flash on shrouded wagons, on water ghastly white;

Weird bush and scattered remnants of rushes in the night;

Across the swollen river a flash beyond the ford;

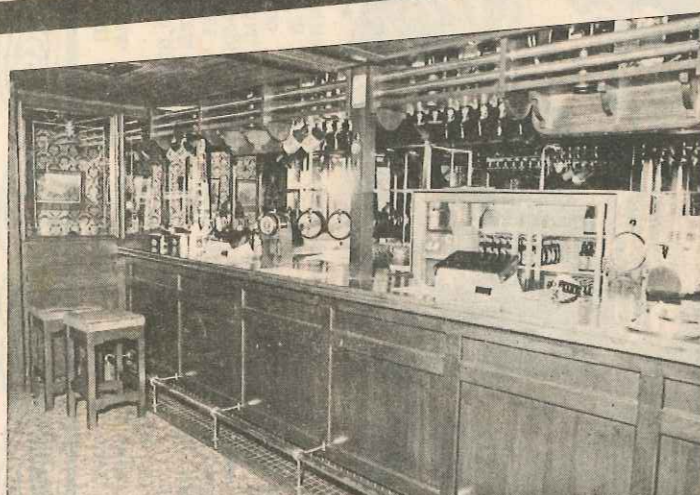
Ride hard to warn the driver! He's drunk or mad, good Lord!

But on the bank to westward a broad and cheerful glow —

New camps extend across the plain, new routes for Cobb & Co."

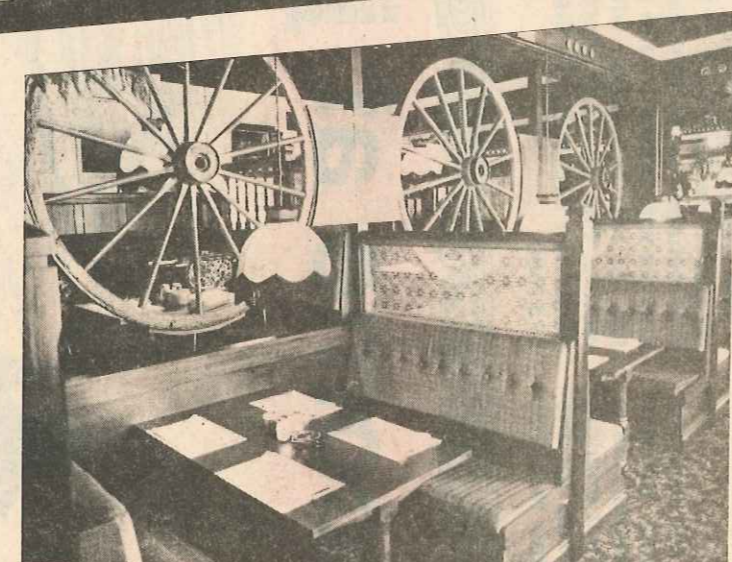
We were pleased to have been responsible for the rejuvenation of the State Establishment and the construction of the Cobb & Co in 1980. We are just as pleased to be able to congratulate Cobb & Co on winning their award as the top restaurant in their nationwide chain.

JONES & SANDFORD CONSTRUCTION DIVISION



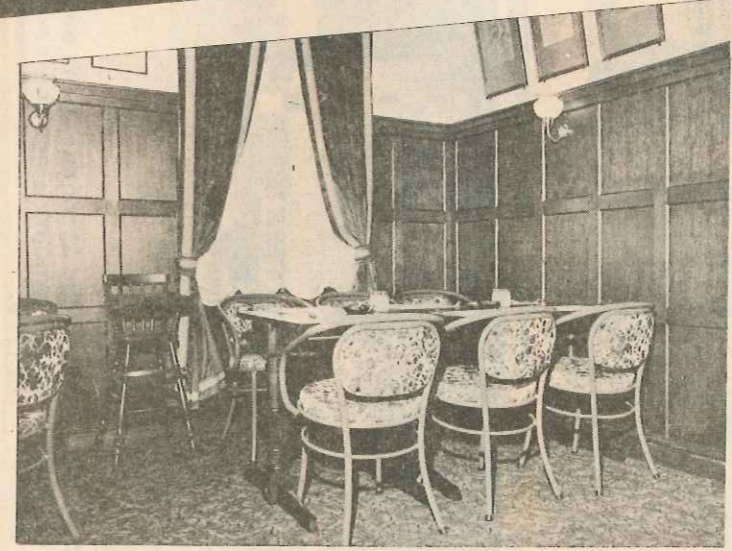
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**MR R. L. JONES**  
Managing Director of Jones & Sandford Ltd.

I am very proud that my company, Jones and Sandford Ltd, has been associated with the development of this family orientated restaurant which I consider to be another asset to Taranaki's fine selection of social amenities.

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**Jones & Sandford Ltd**

St. Aubyn Street, New Plymouth, P.O. Box 49, Phone 75-425.

