

# Huge rebuild ahead

TRACEY ROXBURGH

“WHERE do you start?” That was the question Queenstown’s Speight’s Ale House owner Clark Frew posed inside what remains of his CBD restaurant and bar following a devastating fire on Sunday morning.

Fire crews were first alerted to a private fire alarm about 7am — on arrival, they discovered a fire had started in the kitchen, travelled up the ducts and into the roof space.

At its peak, 45 volunteer fireys were working to bring the blaze under control to save the Heritage NZ category 2-listed building, which dates back to 1881, and buildings around it.

Fire and Emergency NZ investigators have determined the fire was caused by an electrical fault in the kitchen — which has been completely destroyed.

There’s water and smoke damage throughout the entirety of the building, on the corner of Ballarat and Stanley Streets, with debris strewn across the floor, water-filled light fixtures,



Overwhelmed: Speight’s Ale House owner Clark Frew in his bar; inset, what’s left of the kitchen

holes in the ceiling, water still dripping from the roof, and plaster from the walls and ceilings everywhere.

Clark, keeping his trademark sense of humour, comments while the fire’s produced “some great smoked ale”, it “might need more than a Chux cloth” to clean the building up.

“Reality’s biting,” he says. “It’s not the easiest thing we’ve gone through, to be fair [but] there was no one [in] here, and that makes it a

lot easier.” His wife, Rhonda, says the extent of the situation they find themselves in is sinking in.

“It’s just the next step — you’re looking around going, ‘bloody hell.’”

But they’re also trying to keep their situation in perspective.

“Other people are dying, so .. you’ve got to keep that in the back of your mind as well.”

She says they’ve been completely overwhelmed by the support they’ve received from the Whakatipu community, and others all over the country.

“The phones just don’t stop going, really; it’s been amazing.”

Clark says it’ll be a “significant rebuild”, one likely to take months.

“It’d be nice to open for Christmas, whether or not that’s possible, [I’m not sure].”

He’s also full of praise for his landlord, former mayor Warren Cooper — who celebrated his 90th birthday with his family at Speight’s last month — who was watching on Sunday.

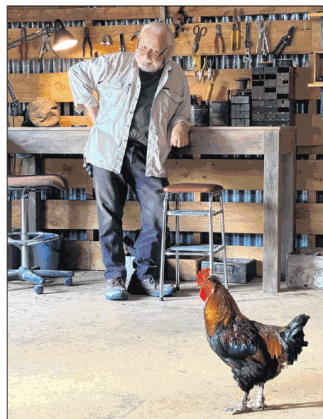
“Warren’s an absolute gentleman, a heart of gold, he’s a champion,” Clark says.

“His first concerns were for us, not his building.”

Clark says there’ll be a “band of merry men helping” with the clean-up, and while he doesn’t need anything from the wider community right now, “their support moving forward would be great.”

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## Two good old roosters



▲ STUMPS have been pulled on the shooting of Queenstown short film, *Pulling Up Stumps*, starring veteran Kiwi actors Ian Mune (above) and Mark Mitchison, and, also pictured, local rooster, Giovanni.

Giovanni, owned by local film legend Brett Mills’ daughter, Ella, has already starred in another local short film, *Maunga Cassino*.

*Pulling Up Stumps* is the brainchild of Arrowtown writer and director, Elinor Teele.

— PHILIP CHANDLER

# Sir Michael Hill & the Carlin Hotel invite you to a special dinner show in the ORO Restaurant!

Join us for an evening of live music performed by two talented ladies at the piano and on the violin.

Plus, an outstanding dinner prepared by our Chefs in the highly acclaimed ORO Restaurant.

Experience live music performed by Kinga Krupa and Rose Light while dining on a 4-course menu, creatively designed by our chef with Michelin Star experience.

Sir Michael Hill will be our Master of Ceremonies. 50% of the ticket price is a charitable contribution to the youth programmes of the Michael Hill International Violin Competition.

**Location: ORO Restaurant in the Carlin Hotel**  
**43 Hallenstein Street.**  
**Date: 21 April 2023**

**ORO**  
 RESTAURANT

- Doors open at 8:00pm
- Ticket price \$200 per person
- Tables of 4 – 10 preferred
- Children are welcome

For booking go to: [www.ORORestaurant.co.nz](http://www.ORORestaurant.co.nz)  
 click on reservations for 21 April dinner show  
 at 8:00pm OR call (03) 222 7546



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 international  
 violin competition

