

# Camping ground constantly busy

IT'S been a hectic four months since opening day at the end of last year for Martinborough Village Camping, and owners Frank and Lisa Cornelissen say they're very happy with the way it has all gone.

After spending four months upgrading the camping ground with new amenities, driveways and power sites it opened for business on Friday, November 11.

"This gave us a week to figure out how to run the site before 100 people turned up for Toast Martinborough weekend," Frank said.

"We must have done something right because we already have a waiting list for Toast 2006.

"Seeing the camping ground busy with so many people enjoying the site has been a real pleasure."

Frank said they were fully booked for both Martinborough Fair weekends and close to capacity over New Year and for Te Kairanga Day.

"Needless to say we've learnt a lot.

"People appreciate the little touches – when you're spending six weeks in a campervan or tent touring New Zealand, you really appreciate a great shower.

"It's all about getting the basics right and making sure people enjoy the whole Martinborough experience.

"We book restaurants and activities for guests and on Boxing Day we even joined four guests on a wine trail. People don't just recommend the camping ground they recommend Martinborough and we do everything we can to make sure they enjoy their stay."

And it seems to be working, with more than 1300 people who have stayed so far – repeat visits are increasing, so too are the number of visitors who have heard about the camping ground by personal recommendation.

Frank said guests range from



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**LISA and FRANK CORNELISSEN, new managers at Martinborough Village Camping, working hard to see that guests enjoy "the whole Martinborough experience".**

international tourists in campervans to young Wellington weekenders in tents.

People have come from all over Europe, North America, Australia and Israel but the British and the Germans account for over 60 per cent of international guest nights.

He said the big-event weekends are important but the vast majority of visitors come to Martinborough to taste the wine, eat in one of the township's restaurants, enjoy the scenery and just relax.

Frank and Lisa have taken just four days off since July and as the summer season comes to an end there is no sign of that changing.

"Obviously it will be quieter over winter but we still expect to see the campervans coming through and there a lot of improvements we still want to make."

Landscaping is a priority and the couple have planted nearly 30 trees so far – olives, cabbage trees, kowhai and gums – and are now turning their attention to borders, hedging

and grasses.

The office is nearly completed and the next step is to provide wireless Internet for guests.

"Camping has moved on since we were kids and it's amazing how many people have their laptops with them," Frank said.

"We will provide Internet access in the office but increasingly people expect to be able to use their own laptops in the comfort of their campervan so we need to make sure we're ready for them."