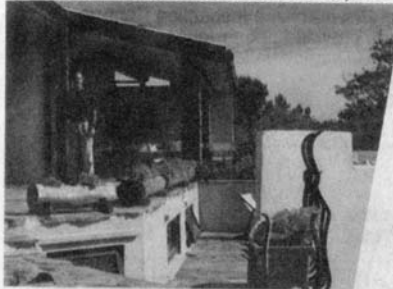
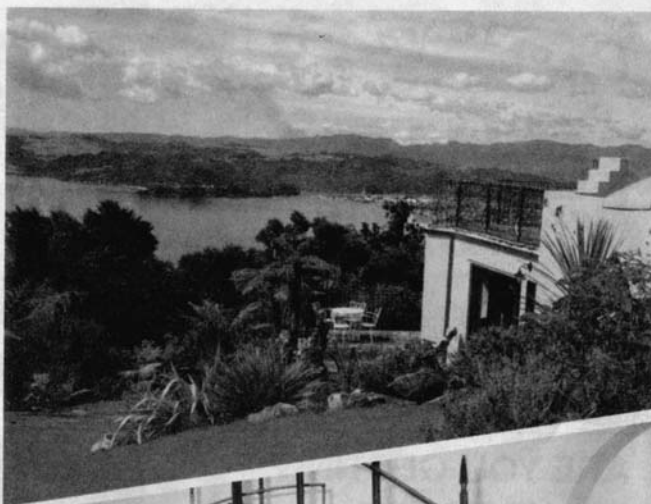


18 – Hauraki Herald House and Garden, Autumn 2001



- The 1.5 hectare property nestles in native bush, enhanced by Giorgio and Margherita's re-planting of pungas and flaxes.
- The wine cellar, behind wrought iron gates, stocks around 20 special Italian imports, including Italian champagne and grappa.
- In the lounge, the feature fireplace takes up a whole wall.
- Owner Giorgio Allemano's prized Italian pizza oven. Pizza, panini bread and traditional 'peasant food' are cooked in the oven which was imported from Italy.
- The copious lounge space flows on through oversize doors to the paved terrace.
- The terraces provide wonderful indoor/outdoor flow and offer panoramic views over Mercury Bay.



TOUCH of tuscan

By Dorothy Preece

Perched on a high bush-clad ridge above Whitianga, Villa Toscana Lodge is, like its owners, recently arrived from Italy.

Giorgio and Margherita Allemano found Whitianga quite by accident while travelling around New Zealand in a camper van.

Very shortly after, their belongings in Italy were packed into containers and sent lock, stock and wine barrel to their new country.

Along with wanting their own personal belongings, the couple wanted to recreate a typical Tuscan villa, featuring wide marble floors and Italian-style fittings that were not available in New Zealand.

So they went on a shopping spree and 13 tonnes of terracotta tiles, screeds of granite and Carrara marble slabs, and even a genuine pizza oven, were packed into containers and shipped out.

The house took a whole year to build.

Before that, the site had to be cleared of 20 tonnes of manuka.

As they worked, Giorgio and Margherita saved as many natives as they could and replanted them around the

house site.

They also gained many years' worth of manuka wood for the pizza oven and the large feature fireplace.

Painted sunny gold, its plastered walls and wrought iron balconies are evocative of the warm Mediterranean roots that inspired this house.

Rosy marble floors and cool, high plastered walls

Guests can eat in their rooms or join the family for dinner.

Giorgio and Margherita are enthusiastic cooks, and their kitchen is a dream.

The bench is created from one deep slab of Carrara marble, the cook top is gas, the oven electric and open shelving keeps everything conveniently to hand, Italian-style.

The combined kitchen and dining space is centred around a generous marble-topped dining table.

Meals often feature home-made pizza and panini bread from the oven on the terrace.

Except for the wine cellar, the whole house has under-floor heating, a feature that helps with the villa's double life as family home and function

venue.

The kitchen, lounge and terraces accommodate up to 30 people for parties and dining on any special occasion, but particularly romantic weddings.

"We enjoy entertaining people here, so we might as well make a business of it," Giorgio says.

"What is the point of living in paradise if you can't share it?"

'We enjoy entertaining people here, so we might as well make a business of it...What is the point of living in paradise if you can't share it?'

- Giorgio Allemano

accentuate the spaces that flow into each other from kitchen to lounge and out on to the terrace with its panoramic views over Mercury Bay.

The Allemanos occupy the main floor while their two children have their own space upstairs.

Beneath the lounge is a luxury guest apartment for four, with its own private balcony.