

Royal Alex "On Stilts" for Lobby Bar

TORONTO - Possibly one of the most exciting productions to take place at the **Royal Alexandra Theatre** this year went on without public viewing.

As record crowds filled the historic King Street playhouse to enjoy *Les Misérables* (16 continuous months) and *Buddy*, among others, theatre-goers neglected to notice a

full-scale production was taking place under their seats.

Construction of the new 4,000-sq. ft. Royal Lounge took a year-and-a-half before theatre manager Graham Hall felt the project was completed just the way he wanted.

Toronto-based Blackthorn Contracting put the Royal Alex "on stilts" while tonnes of

soil were removed. Much of it was done by hand during theatre performances, says Blackthorn president Mike Da Silva.

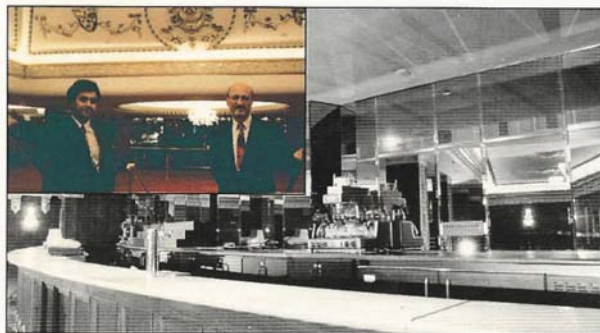
Under the directorship of Hall, what was once a three-foot crawl space has been converted into an architectural gem. The lobby bar features replicated flocked wall paper, which Hall painstakingly sourced back to England. As well, 11 of the ornate plaster cornices and mouldings have been recreated via a method called 'Iconoplast'. Crystal chandeliers, duplicates of those hanging throughout the theatre, accessorize brand new furnishings that blend perfectly into the 84-year-old French Renaissance building.

The bar itself provides patrons with cappuccino, espresso and regular coffee service. As an added feature, patrons can place refreshment orders before the show and find their drinks awaiting them at the interval, says Hall.

The renovations also doubled the theatre's lobby, washroom, and cloak room space. The reception area now holds up to 500 of the 1,500 theatre guests each performance.

Through Hall's insistence, all duct-work and sprinkler heads were hidden within the service walls of the Royal Lounge.

"This had to be done otherwise it would take away from the beauty of this room," Hall notes.



Blackthorn Contracting president Mike Da Silva poses at the entrance of the Royal Lounge with theatre manager Graham Hall (top). Mirror-backed, 60-foot bar highlights the construction project that took more than a year to complete (bottom).

NEWS BRIEFS

TORONTO - Pizza ahoy!

No, this is not the name of a new pizza restaurant, although the **2-4-1 Pizza** chain has set its sails on a new marketing venture by delivering its product to boaters on Lake Ontario and the Toronto Islands.

The pizza company has become the first such business to become licensed to deliver pizza in and around the Toronto harbour.

Two hard-bottom, high-speed, inflatable boats began providing boat-to-boat service seven days a week as of July 1.

With an added service charge of \$4, customers are able to place their order through the chain's central phone number or by calling channel 69 on Marine band frequency.

TORONTO - **Scott's Hospitality Inc.** has begun plans to expand into the United States through its Manchu Wok fast food chain.

The Chinese food restaurant concept, operated by S.C. Food Services (Canada) Inc., is expected to appear at two former Chin Chin locations currently under development. In addition, an-