



PORT REVIVAL UNDER WAY

Bulletin

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THE marina restaurant at the former Port Hinchinbrook resort will open by Christmas, signalling the start of a large-scale \$450 million renewal for the once troubled development. The restaurant at the Cardwell resort, which has been re-branded Hinchinbrook Harbour by new American owners The Passage Holdings, will open in early December, a spokesman told the Townsville Bulletin yesterday.

Work is set to start mid next year on 12 luxury waterfront villas at the marina (pictured) and more affordable accommodation will be developed while a hotel is also likely. The clogged marina which had been a thorn in the side of disgruntled residents and boaties, is scheduled to be dredged in January.

Place Projects agent and spokesman for the project Bruce Goddard said optimism was starting to spread about the resort's future. "We have had a lot of positive feedback and the only negatives we're hearing is some people saying 'we will believe it when we see it'," he said. "There will be two new developments starting mid next year, both centred around accommodation. The restaurant is almost ready to open and it will originally be BYO until we get our liquor licence which is expected ... in January."

The restaurant will be open seven days a week for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The new master plan for the redevelopment is expected to be unveiled in the first week of December when Passage Holdings CEO David Haubert flies into North Queensland.

Gold Coast architect firm DBI Design have been appointed lead consultants. The redevelopment will involve restoring the marina and village to their former glory and cleaning out waterways while repairs and maintenance will also be undertaken.

Mr Goddard said residents were anxiously awaiting dredging to start and a dredger had now been purchased. "I'm told reliably that every household has a bottle of champagne in the fridge ready to pop," he said. The dredging is expected to cost as much as \$7 million.

Jaded residents had cast doubt on whether dredging would ever happen and feared the resort would fall into disrepair. The resort had remained largely untouched after the global financial crisis hit the original owner's hip pocket hard.

The final blow came in 2011 when Cyclone Yasi came crashing through Cardwell's front door, battering the marina and sending the then owners, Williams Corporation, into liquidation.