

THE ST. REGIS ASPEN

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RESORT TAKE TWO

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ELEVATED DESIGN

Renovations evoke a Gilded Age feel with a modern twist at The St. Regis Aspen Resort.

BY ELIZA GANO

THE GILDED AGE—A TIME OF RECORD GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, a time of opulence and wealth—a time when Colonel John Jacob Astor built the flagship St. Regis hotel in New York City. The St. Regis Aspen Resort's recent renovations harken back to this time, elevating the standard of five-star luxury design.

"The revamped hotel represents the quintessential mountain manor that John Jacob Astor would have designed during the Gilded Age," says Lauren Rottet, a designer from Rottet Studio Architecture and Design. "The building, styled after the architecture of Frank Furness, will be transformed into an innovative, intriguing structure that is representative of the grand architecture of that time. The floor plan will be re-worked to improve the hotel's flow and function, and to emulate the grand rooms of a historic manor."

The resort's new ownership group, 315 East Dean Associates Inc. and the St. Regis design team are collaborating with the award-winning Rottet Studio and Rowland + Broughton Architecture and Urban Design, based in Colorado, to create the opulent environs.

The hotel closed in early April to begin the first phase of renovation. The renovated lobby, concierge desk, public corridors, upgraded meeting room level, new library, upgraded retail space and Shadow Mountain Lodge are slated to be open by mid June. Ninety guest rooms are expected to be open by August, while additional guest rooms, the fitness area and remaining public spaces will be unveiled later in the year. With a total cost of approximately \$30 million, the entire project is slated to be completed by December 2011.

"The renovation and upgrades will capture the drama and elegance of the St. Regis and the resort, laid-back feel Aspen is known for—it is an understated luxury," says Simona Furini, a designer at Rottet Studio Architecture and Design.

The resort's last major renovation was in 2004 when the spa and residences were built. The St. Regis Aspen added rooms to the building over Aspen Sports and renovated the public spaces and guest rooms. "With every new build and renovation of a St. Regis property, we strive to improve on the interiors and the guest experience," says Senih Geray, general manager of The St. Regis Aspen Resort. "St. Regis is always evolving and this is because our guest is always evolving."

Entré to Elegance

First impressions matter and arriving guests will be greeted with a new regal carriage drive featuring updated landscaping and oversized ornate planters framed with an archway.

The contrasting dark metal frame and glass doors will invite guests inside. The luggage and bell stand will be reworked so that the stand is not in front of the entry. The luggage carts will remain at the ready, but concealed behind doors. Small carriage windows will be added, allowing the bellmen and valets to see when guests arrive and to create more detail to the massive stone structure.

The existing millwork found throughout the hotel ground floor and lobby will be refurbished, retained and enhanced by further details with materials, texture, color art and tapestries. A new custom art piece from artist Helen Amy Murray, known for combing leather, suede and fabrics to create sculptural reliefs, will greet guests from behind the front desk. "To heighten the bespoke service, desk personnel will be able to step out from behind the desk and personally hand guests their key," Geray says.

Privileged Common Areas

The living room will be reconfigured to bring the outside in and make the most of the effects of sunlight and the sumptuous views. Furniture will be arranged to encourage moving close to the windows. "The different layout increases the areas for people to gather," Furini explains. "Furniture will be a combination of eclectic and contemporary pieces," he continues. "It will have the feeling of being collected over time but exude the style of a resort manor from the Victorian era."







ASIM DENCI PHOTOGRAPHY

The new furniture includes lighter colored sofas with ottomans fitted into the window bays. For those seeking more intimate conversation space, four high-back wing chairs will be positioned in between the windows so as not to block the view. To add even more light to the space, the carpeted floor will be replaced with hardwood with a carpet inset and lighter colored drapery will soften the windows. In addition, a custom designed long sofa will be placed along the wall that separates the bar from the living room to better utilize the dividing wall.

The lobby bar will offer a new design allowing a more direct flow from the bar to the courtyard. Banquette seats will be added along the two sides of the bar area. Complementary colors, darker and richer than the palette found in the living room, will be used in the bar area. High-back wing chairs with low cocktail-height tables in the center section will provide continuity from the living room and offer privacy to bar guests. The back as well as the face of the bar will be redesigned to emanate a rich glow enticing guests from the corridor.

In addition to the changes in the living room and bar, the wall separating the stairs from the corridor will be removed, and the stairs will be

opened up to create a grand staircase connecting the ballrooms.

"The handrail will be redesigned in the fashion of Frank Furness and other grand stairs of the time made of ornamental wrought iron," says Kristi Kavanaugh, director of sales and marketing for The St. Regis Aspen Resort. To emphasize the grandeur even more, "the staircase will become a more dramatic focal point of the living space," Furini says. "Dramatic chandeliers and new floor finishes and wall finishes will elevate the sense of luxury and elegance."

The lower level meeting rooms will be embellished to recreate the grand ballrooms of the Victorian era. The Pre-Function Hall will be enhanced with large mirrors and furnishings at either end. New furniture specifically designed to pair with the hall along with all new lighting will support the theme of a turn-of-the-century Gilded Age ballroom.

The shops will remain in their current locations, but will be redesigned to be more like high-end retail boutiques with glass encased cabinets, lighting and displays. The library will replace the unused phone booth rooms that cur-

rently flank the entry to the restrooms. "The new library will offer guests a quiet retreat," Furini explains. Bookshelves, sofas and game tables will be added, as well as a fireplace.

For guests that enjoy working out while they're away, the fitness center will be outfitted with all new Technogym equipment—the same equipment that flies with President Obama on Air Force One and is also used by football clubs such as Manchester United and the F1 teams of McLaren and Ferrari.

Privacy Refined

The biggest improvements will be in the guest rooms, Geray says.

Upgrades to the HVAC system will allow guests to enjoy custom heating or cooling options at any time. A recessed niche with a stone shelf and mini-bar below will be located at the entry to each room. When guests enter, a candle-like light on the shelf will provide soft lighting. The closet will be removed and rebuilt out of millwork to lend the appearance of a wardrobe that had been built in place. The wardrobe doors will be inset with mirrors.

"The furniture set is reminiscent of the traditional



JASON DENNY PHOTOGRAPHY

wardrobes, but has an era of modern in the metal detailing and simple details," Kavanaugh says.

The addition of double doors to the bathroom will open the space to the wardrobe area and offer a more functional dressing area.

When the guest room curtains are closed, white lacquered linen between the moldings will be revealed. The new freestanding bed, wrapped in leather, will heighten the room's luxury. Across from the bed, a TV cabinet will rest on a chest of drawers and turndown compartment. A desk will reside on either side of the cabinet to serve as a workspace and for display of hotel amenities and magazines.

The guest bath will be completely remodeled with new stone floor and wall tiles, while a glass shower enclosure will be added together with a new soaking tub, and all new fixtures and faucets. A pair of solid shutters allows the bathroom to open up to the guest room or be completely private. The double-sink vanity will be an elegant custom piece, with a countertop and a towel shelf in Bardiglio marble on a cast metal base. An oversized mirror with a built-in TV screen will be installed above the vanity, and the soaking tub will feature a towel warmer nearby.

New, Inviting Spaces

The current restaurant The St. Regis Aspen Resort will close to create an additional catering venue. The Aspen Back Institute will be converted into a restaurant that will open in December 2011 with an exciting "out-of-the-box concept," Geray says. The private courtyard will allow alfresco dining in the summer, and a Mill Street entrance will be added along with valet parking.

In the Aspen Sports adjacent space, a French-style patisserie case will be positioned close to the entry for a quick order of an espresso or pastry. Skiers and sports enthusiasts will be encouraged to come and go from this area where a sport and ski concierge will take their boots and other sports gear upon return. The area will also serve as the waiting lounge for the mountain shuttles in the winter. Outside seating will be available in the summer on the private sidewalk.

The lower main courtyard, used extensively for large functions, will not see any major renovations. "We want to leave unobstructed views of the majestic mountains," Furini says. Hanging planters will embellish the perimeter of the courtyard, and new outdoor furniture will complement the overall concept of the hotel.

"To transform the courtyard into an active summer lawn or splendid winter garden, lounge seating will be placed in a semicircular shape and cocktail tables will be set among the furniture," Kavanaugh explains.

The opposite side of the courtyard will also have a patio area surrounded by planters and shading structures. In addition, the stairs leading to the upper courtyard will be upgraded with new pavers, railings, planters and seating.

The pool will be one of the projects worked on during the summer, and the resort will provide swimming pool alternatives at the Aspen Recreation Center for guests and complimentary transportation upon request.

Already the best address in Aspen, the renovation will enhance The St. Regis Aspen Resort's reputation for delivering bespoke service in a singular setting.

"We aim to create a five-star environment to match with our five-star services," Geray says. "We want guests to remember where they are. Each property has the spirit of the brand infused into them, and we aim to uphold the feeling of luxury by creating special surroundings." ❁