

Trumbull Marriott celebrates re-opening



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Despite an economic downturn that hit the hospitality industry almost as hard as it hit the financial industry, at least one local hotel remained essentially unscathed.

The Trumbull Marriott at 180 Hawley Lane celebrated its re-opening Oct. 29 with a gala celebration that put the completely renovated hotel on display.

"We stripped everything down to the studs and rebuilt the entire hotel," said Marriott Vice President Holly Anderson. "Everything is brand new, from the carpets to the art work to the wallpaper."

The new hotel sparkled on its re-opening day as Marriott Vice Chairman of the Board John Marriott joined Trumbull First Selectman Ray Baldwin, Marriott executives and members of the Marriott Rewards Club in getting a first look at the improvements.

Marriott, the third generation of the hotel-owning family, purchased the hotel last year through Thomas Point Ventures LLC.

Anderson said Marriott spent \$10 million on the renovations. Work began in March on the 343-unit hotel. Construction crews completed their work in September. Anderson said the fact the hotel's corporate owners decided to invest in the Trumbull Marriott was proof of how well the hotel "weathered the storm."

"We have a great site here, and we're the only full-service hotel around," she said. "When Shelton or Trumbull-based corporate headquarters need hotel space, they don't have many choices that are close by when it comes to full-service. That's the niche we fill."

The Trumbull Marriott offers room service, a health club and indoor pool and 1,500 square feet of completely modernized conference space. Each guest room boasts a 37-inch flat screen TV, iPod docking stations, LCD lights on bed headboards and high-speed Internet connections.

The conference rooms feature Bose sound systems, individual room environmental control, high-speed Internet and numerous possible configurations for everything from wedding receptions to corporate presentations.

"We've redone everything from top to bottom," Anderson said. "It's a state-of-the-art hotel."

The improvements impressed everyone in attendance at the re-opening.

"It's just a phenomenal atmosphere," said Jenny Lindal. "I'm having guests for my wedding, and they're staying here, and I am really looking forward to having the after party here."

Lindal said it was her first time at the hotel.

Bob Matthews, a member of the Trumbull Economic Development Commission, said the newly renovated Marriott was a "great resource to have in the county, both for Trumbull and the other towns."

"They've done a wonderful job," Matthews said. "This is a tremendous resource for everyone." Trumbull's first selectman was equally as effusive in his praise.

"It's really a great source of pride to me, as the chief elected officer of Trumbull, to have a company like Marriott re-investing in our community," Baldwin said. "It speaks well for the town of Trumbull and the people around the region that Marriott is here."

In addition to the hotel as a whole, Marriott revamped its restaurant service. The corporation brought in Chef Renato Gerena and his staff to run J. Porters, an American-style bistro. Gerena completely revamped the menu, introducing items such as crab cake sliders (mini lump crab cakes served on a small bun), braised short ribs and grilled rib eye.

"We're all very proud of the effort to transform the Trumbull Marriott," John Marmot said. "I want to thank everyone for putting up with the mess while we renovated. When we purchased this hotel we saw its potential, and I believe this is and will be a great hotel."