

# Old Tahoe being turned into boutique hotel

By Kathryn Reed

From a 1-star to a 4½-star property. That is what Jim Demetriades is trying to do with a prime piece of real estate in South Lake Tahoe.

He is turning the old Royal Valhalla motel into the Landing Resort & Spa.

“What South Lake Tahoe was lacking was a 4-, 5-star establishment ... a super high-end boutique hotel,” Demetriades told *Lake Tahoe News*.



What the Landing Resort & Spa in South Lake Tahoe will look like. Rendering/Midkiff & Associates

He bought the sprawling property 1½ years ago and began construction last fall. It is at the end of Stateline Avenue between Lakeshore Boulevard and Azure Street. Part of it is next to single-family residences along the streets of Hill Road and Sunrise Lane. Then it abuts the open space that is directly across from Lakeside Beach.

Demetriades would not disclose how much money he is putting

into the renovation, but said, “It’s millions and millions of dollars.”

He said there is no way to build something like this from scratch because it would be cost-prohibitive and the regulatory hurdles insurmountable.

“We focus on properties in secondary markets that are reasonably priced, with a tremendous amount of charm and character,” Demetriades said. “We think South Lake Tahoe is a beautiful environment. But like many secondary markets it has gone through its ups and downs. It’s been in a prolonged tailspin with a lot of rundown properties. We think there is a crowd of guests who are interested in a nicer property in the area that is reasonably priced.”

He says room nights will range from \$150 to \$250.



This sign will soon disappear.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

“It will be Ritz-Carlton quality, but half the price,” Demetriades said.

But at a Ritz, people are used to getting service that is off

the charts. Demetriades wants to deliver that as well.

He said the general manager he expects to have on board has experience at high-end properties.

Demetriades has properties in Southern California, as well as a hotel and three restaurants in Mammoth.

Jimmy's Taverna is one of the eateries. And it's what will be cloned and opened in Tahoe. Billed as Greek seafood, it will serve three meals a day. The restaurant will be for hotel guests and anyone else. The restaurant will seat 120, while the bar will fit about 50. In the summer outdoor seating will be available.

The restaurant will be the fifth and last building to be constructed.

Of the five buildings, one is almost done, two are well under way, and No. 4 had concrete poured two weeks ago.

The sound of hammers and saws could be heard last week as workers transform the three-story property.

The Royal Valhalla had 91 rooms; the Landing Resort & Spa will have 88. Part of the hotel could open in July.

"We are not taking reservations just yet. We are working with construction teams to validate the opening date. A lot has to do with the furniture," Demetriades said.



Part of the new hotel is expected to open in July.  
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Each room has a balcony, some with views of Lake Tahoe. All are within earshot of the Harveys outdoor summer concerts.

The furniture is being custom made. Waterfall showers, heated floors, heated toilet seat, and heated towel racks are standard features.

A 150-seat conference facility is being built. Weddings are expected to be a large part of the revenue stream, with the facility able to be cordoned off into three rooms or one big room for 300 guests.

A spa will also be on-site.

Partnerships with nearby Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course are being worked out. Guests will have access to Lakeside Beach. Bikes and boats will be available, as will a shuttle service.

The goal is someone flies into Reno, arrives at the Landing Resort & Spa and never has to drive.