

Wright Investment Completes \$16 million Renovation of the Historic Aladdin Hotel in Downtown, Kansas City; Reopens as a Holiday Inn

By Tom Uhlenbrock, St. Louis Post-DispatchMcClatchy-Tribune Regional News

Nov. 18, 2007 - KANSAS CITY -- If location is everything, then the renovated Aladdin Hotel is sitting pretty.

The boutique hotel is just blocks away from the Kansas City Power & Light entertainment district, the Sprint Center and other new attractions that have opened in the renaissance of Kansas City's downtown core.

The 16-floor Aladdin, which had been a downtown fixture since 1926, just underwent a \$16 million renovation. All 193 rooms have been redecorated with a sleek look of vibrant colors and dark woods.

Because the hotel was on the National Register of Historic Places, the goal was to return it to its original art deco splendor, with a "vintage hip approach," said Lenny Corso, marketing director.

The hotel is joined to the Kansas City Convention Center by a covered walkway.

THE BASICS: The hotel is owned and operated by Wright Investment of Memphis, Tenn., and has opened as a Holiday Inn. The Roof Garden Ballroom and Garden Terrace can accommodate up to 225 people and offers a dramatic view of the downtown. The hotel has a business center and fitness center.

THE UNIQUE: The renovation included the Zebra Room, the hotel's vintage dining room, and the Martini Loft, which overlooks the lobby from the mezzanine. The loft's signature drink is a Mojito Martini, which has Bacardi rum, mint syrup and a splash of soda for \$10. The guest room bath amenities are from Bath and Body Works. The "warm vanilla" soap looks good enough to eat. But don't.

THE ROOMS: The amenities include complimentary high-speed Internet, a 32-inch flat-screen HD TV, a DVD player with free movies and a coffee maker. The bathroom has a flower arrangement and dual showerheads. A newspaper is outside the door each morning.

THE FOOD: The Zebra Lounge menu included a 12-ounce Kansas City strip steak for \$33, grilled ostrich for \$27 and caramelized salmon for \$29. Desserts include espresso almond

dessert martini for \$7 and a trio of S'more shooters, which have toasted marshmallow and Swiss milk chocolate sauce in a shot glass with Amaretto and graham cracker rims and vanilla cookies. If you've left room, the restaurant also has homemade ice cream.

THE GUESTS: Primarily businesspeople and folks attending conventions or shows at the neighboring facilities. The hotel will be booked solid with sports fans during the Big 12 basketball championships in mid-March.

THE HIGH POINTS: You can walk out the front door and be in the middle of the rebirth of downtown Kansas City.

THE LOW POINTS: Because it is a historic hotel, the rooms and bathrooms are small by today's standards. However, Corso pointed out that in its original 1926 configuration, the hotel had 400 rooms. "The rooms were even smaller," he said.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Nightly room rates start at \$122 on weekdays, and \$136 on weekends. Aladdin Hotel, 1215 Wyandotte Street, Kansas City, Mo. 64105. Call 1-816-421-8888 or visit www.hialaddin.com.