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**BUILDING THE NORTH BAY**

**\$41 million Avia hotel to open this summer**

**NAPA'S DOWNTOWN GETS ANOTHER SHOWCASE PROJECT; \$200-\$500 A NIGHT**

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**BY D. ASHLEY FURNESS  
 BUSINESS JOURNAL STAFF REPORTER**

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NAPA – The \$41 million luxury Avia hotel will officially open its doors this summer after more than four years in the works.

The Wine Country site is the second of four planned for the boutique brand developed by Kansas-based Lodgeworks.

Intended as the company's flagship location, the Avia Napa has already begun accepting reservations beginning July 1, though officials said the opening could be as soon as mid-June. The Northern California location is the second in the boutique line to open after the first Savannah Avia opened in January. Others already in the works in Long Beach and The Woodlands, Texas, will open by the end of this year or in early 2010.

Developers first submitted applications to Napa planners in 2005 and broke ground on the project in the fall two years later. City officials approved the plan as part of longer-term goals to bring more hotel rooms to the area and rejuvenate the quiet downtown district.

The 141-room, five-story Avia is located on the 1400 block of First Street and will be the second-largest hotel to open downtown in recent months after the Westin Versa luxury resort was completed last fall.

The Avia, formerly the Inn at Town Center, will total about 650,000-square-feet with about 16 room varieties ranging from a classic king guestroom for about \$200 to the 900-square-foot presidential suite at about \$500. Many of the rooms have large soaking tubs, and about 40 will include remote-controlled, two-way fireplaces. All have flat-screen televisions and personally controlled heating and air conditioning, and in-room massage and spa services are available by request.

In addition to overnight accommodations, the building includes about 1,900 square feet of meeting and conference space. Groups of up to 200 can choose from several areas including a second-floor patio and terrace with fire pit.

The interior created by renowned San Francisco- and New York-based designer Colum McCartan is described as "relaxed luxury" with modern and classic European-inspired styling, which infuses contrasting materials of honed marble and blackened antique oak. The color scheme is pulled from the region's environment with furnishings and walls of deep,



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Bordeaux purples and mossy green and natural hues.

Kansas-based Krehbeil Architecture drew the floor plan for the hotel and ground floor restaurant and wine bar. The lounge will concentrate on hot breakfasts presented by an on-floor chef and small plates in the afternoons and evenings.

"We really believe that we were so blessed to find an area with such fantastic, world-renowned cuisine. Our goal was not to become the new destination restaurant but offer a local kitchen for our guests and others to begin or end their evening," said Lodgeworks Vice President of Marketing Cheryl Doll.

Also neighboring the lobby, the space will house about 12,000 square feet of retail space divided in two sections of 4,000 and 8,000 square feet accessible from the street. Napa Valley Development Corp. President Jeff Doran, which is leasing the space, said the company is still interviewing applicants, but it hopes to have them filled by the hotel opening.

"Because of the upscale nature of the project, we've had to be really picky, but our goal is to get them set up as quickly as possible," Mr. Doran said.

Ms. Doll said Lodgeworks executives are cautiously optimistic about the launch in light of the economic recession, but they expect at least as much response as the Savannah opening, which has consistently recorded 50 percent and higher average occupancy rates and multiple sell-out weekends.

"We are optimistic and hopeful. Napa clearly has a strong drive-in market with the proximity of San Francisco and the rest of the Bay Area, and it is a renowned international destination," she said.

"We have found that while people are more cautious about extravagant vacations, more are doing weekend getaways."

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427 Mendocino Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
Phone: 707-521-5270 - Fax: 707-521-5269