

S. Tahoe hotel cutting it close to open on time



The Landing Resort in South Lake Tahoe is expected to open Dec. 12. Photos/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

The sound of construction equipment continues to hum from Landing Resort & Spa despite its anticipated opening in two weeks.

Billed as Lake Tahoe's first five-star resort, the property was once a throwback to "old Tahoe" and now has the makings of a modern, upscale hotel.

It's expected to open Dec. 12, with introductory room rates of \$149 per night for one of the 88 rooms. Rooms come with fireplaces and decks.

While the hotel claims to have private beach access, in reality anyone can pay to go to Lakeside Beach.

Bikes will be free to use. In the winter ski valet and boot warmers are available.

The 3,600-square-foot rooftop deck is designed for parties, weddings and other events.

A pool, hot tub and five outdoor fire pits are on the grounds.

Included on the property, which used to be the Royal Valhalla in South Lake Tahoe near Stateline, is a restaurant called Jimmy's. It's based on owner Jim Demetriades' Mammoth restaurant. Jimmy's will serve Greek-seafood. Based on the menu out front it will not be a place vegetarians will visit.

British chef Maria Elia will be running the kitchen. She is well versed in Greek cuisine. In September her third cookbook was published. It's a collection of recipes inspired by her Greek heritage. The restaurant includes private dining alcoves with fireplaces and outdoor fire pits with views of the lake from the patio. The wine list includes 250 labels from around the world.

A mix of about 70 full-time and part-time employees is expected to work at the resort during peak times.



Contractors are still working on the Landing Resort.

However, getting to this point has not been completely smooth.

There is a question as to whether trees were poisoned or more taken out than needed, they've angered neighbors, the hotel is already on its second marketing and sales director, and it has dropped a local spa operator in preference of running it in-house.

Controversy has arisen with a neighbor and the fence that now divides the two properties. Plus, the fence was initially put in without a permit.

“Once we were aware that the fence was being constructed, our staff contacted the project manager to notify them of the fence permit requirement. They then submitted an application and a permit was issued. This is not the ideal sequence when it comes to permitting construction work, but we often are notified of, or see work being done without proper permits and once we contact the property owner they follow up with the required permit application,” Hillary Roverud, chief planner with South Lake Tahoe, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Jim Promo, general manager of the resort, told *Lake Tahoe News* the fence issue has been resolved with neighbor Jake Parnell. It's short in front and at least 6-foot-high in Parnell's back yard. Parnell used to be able to see to the lake from his back yard. Now he can't. Parnell, who lives part time in South Tahoe and part time off the hill, had yet to see the fence as of last week so he didn't have a comment.

Some of the trees that were removed conveniently opened up better views of the lake, especially from where weddings will take place. Promo said weddings are going to be a large component of their business.

“We had an arboriculturist come out. They made recommendations. The trees we took were basically diseased,” Promo said.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency forester tagged four lodgepole and one Jeffrey to be felled.

According to TRPA spokesman Jeff Cowen, one of the trees that came down was because trenching work for a utility line was done on the wrong side of the tree and when it was done on the correct side the tree was then severely compromised.

He said one of the trees was in the city's right-of-way. It was taken out because it would eventually have to go when the city put in a curb.

More info about the Landing Resort & Spa may be found online.