

1960's era South Tahoe hotel getting face lift



Debbie and Bill Hirsch with fixings for breakfast at the 7 Seas Inn. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

This is the last day the 7 Seas Inn will be open as an outdated throwback to the 1960s era lodging establishments that South Lake Tahoe is known for. When it reopens May 1 it will be refurbished, modernized, with the management philosophy more like a boutique bed and breakfast.

Debbie and Bill Hirsch bought the motel last year for \$1.2 million. This first phase of renovation will see an infusion of about \$300,000 into the property on Manzanita Avenue near Stateline.

By the time they are done the goal is to have gone from a two star to a three star motel.

The rooms, which are no more than 200-square-feet, are cluttered with old furniture. While the mattresses and bedding

were replaced at the get-go, now it's time for the rest of the interior to be modernized.

Christian Oberhauser of Oberhauser Interiors came up with the rustic-modern theme. Wood will be common through out, from vertical slabs for the headboard to the vanity in the bathroom.

Floors will be vinyl designed to look like wood. This will prevent guests from scratching them with ski boots or sand.

Instead of pedestal sinks with no place to set items, the square sinks will be raised. While the plumbing will be visible, a bar will be installed there as a towel rack. A wood slab will be installed where toiletries may be placed.

The tired shower tile will disappear.

Electrical work will be extensive. Wires from the televisions will no longer be visible. Ample outlets to plug-in an array of gadgets will be installed. Light fixtures will also be replaced.

Works from a local photographer will adorn the walls.

"It won't be like an old hotel anymore," Oberhauser told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We'll have more floor space so visually it expands the room so it creates a cleaner look."

There are 12 king rooms, three doubles and one queen.

They already redid the manager's quarters, which is where the Hirschs are living full time.

The reviews are already favorable since the couple took over, a testament to their desire to make the 7 Seas feel like a travelers lodge and not just an ordinary motel.

"People used to select a hotel based on location, price and brand. These days people are choosing based on location and

reviews, and they are more flexible on the rate if the review supports it," Bill Hirsch said.

Their breakfasts, which include pancakes and waffles in addition to fresh fruit and other items, has been well received. In the evening beer and wine are complimentary for guests, along with hors d'oeuvres.

The plan is to extend this area so it's larger and a bit more cozy. The goal is to keep it open 24 hours as a place for people to chill.

The exterior won't see much attention this month in terms of improvements, but plans are in the works to make inviting outdoor seating areas. What used to be a tiny grass area for dogs to do their business will now be for people. Pets are no longer allowed.

The motel has a hot tub, too.

Guests have access to Lakeside Beach. The casinos and Heavenly Village are also within walking distance.