

HOTEL GOODWIN OPENS ITS DOORS

September 19, 2018 at 10:08 am | By AUSTIN MONTGOMERY Staff writer



Austin Montgomery/Beloit Daily News The Hotel Goodwin at 500 Public Avenue in Beloit is the downtown's second boutique hotel, occupying space in the historic downtown property that was built in 1923. The 34-room hotel opened last Monday and the Velvet Buffalo Cafe will open on Sept. 25.

BELOIT - Beloit's newest downtown hotel is ready and open for business, bringing to life the city's rich downtown history with a splash of modern flair.

While some construction continues, Hotel Goodwin has opened its doors and adds a boutique, 34-room hotel at 500 Public Ave. The hotel is managed by Geronimo Hospitality Group, a company affiliated with Hendricks Commercial Properties.

Opening on Sept. 25 at the hotel is the Velvet Buffalo Cafe, an artisan, small plates and stone-fired pizza restaurant equipped with a 120-wine bar array. The eatery is expected to hold around 100 diners.

Head up to the top of the hotel and you'll find yourself in a private rooftop terrace space that will be open to private events and conferences, boasting panoramic views of Beloit that spans Beloit College, the Rock River, Ironworks campus and the downtown business core.

"I just love the style of the hotel, and it's exciting to offer another option for Beloit," said Hotel Goodwin General Manager Karen Niffenegger. "I can't express how awesome this property is and for everyone to see it for themselves, because I don't think that just seeing it online does it justice."

The terrace will be served by Velvet Buffalo.

The cafe's name is a play on the classic pairing "wine and cheese," with a glass of fine wine sometimes referred to as "Velvet" while "Buffalo" comes from the mozzarella made from the milk of the Italian Mediterranean water buffalo, according to Jonathan Webster, Geronimo Hospitality Vice President of Lodging.

The modernized hotel includes a fitness center and conference space, while the rooms are designed to be spacious and each come with a TV, Keurig and bluetooth-enabled turntables with an accompanying record collections different in every room, just like each piece of art found in the rooms.

The hotel stands as a major adaptive reuse of a historic downtown property that was built in 1923.

The original Goodwin Hotel and Opera House were located on the property of what is now First National Bank & Trust Plaza. The historic hotel was built in 1868 after Samuel J. Goodwin relocated to Beloit from New York, according to The History of Rock County, Wisconsin: Early Settlement, Growth and Development.

Goodwin was elected mayor of Beloit in 1870, according to the historical record. The hotel and opera house were destroyed in a fire in 1904.

The adaptive reuse style is central to Hendricks Commercial Properties' vision, with the Beloit Ironworks campus now home to over 45 businesses and startups after lying dormant following the demise of the once-mighty Beloit Corporation.

Webster said the hotel would serve as a reminder of how far Beloit has come.

"I think that flows through everything we do," Webster said. "We made this a part of the revitalization of downtown to where Ironworks is a true tribute to the history of Beloit and Goodwin is a tribute to the evolution of Beloit and how it's evolving."

Construction complications on the hotel project caused the opening to be pushed back from May to earlier this month. The setback prompted the Vision Beloit partners to look for another downtown property after the original plan to move the Beloit groups back into the renovated space changed.

Ground water issues in the basement forced design alterations, officials said, moving all laundry, fitness and prep space elsewhere across the hotel.

Prices for rooms range from around \$160 to \$309, and can fluctuate depending on daily rates for a Classic King, Classic Two Queen, Silhouette King, Signature King and Goodwin Suite, according to the hotel's website.

Hotel construction was managed by CCI, also a Hendricks company.

Hendricks Commercial Properties also is in the process of renovating the former Kerry Ingredients plant, 200 W. Grand Ave., into a 70-unit apartment building. And across the street from the hotel the Hendricks group is developing a coffee shot and taco-and-tequila restaurant.