

Business Monday

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W Aspen eyes debut in July

Public will be able to use pool, rooftop bar, hot tubs

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The Aspen Times

The opening of one of Aspen's most anticipated hotels in years won't make it in time for the Food & Wine Classic held June 14 to 16, with the launch now anticipated to be sometime in July.

"Construction is progressing very, very well," said Greg Durrer, general manager of W Aspen and the Sky Residences at W Aspen, both of which are being built at the base of Aspen Mountain in the space most recently inhabited by Sky Hotel. The physical address is 709 E. Durant Ave.

"We'll be opening in the early July time frame, but it's hard to say exactly what day."

The opening will come after ground was broken May 26, 2017. Washington, D.C.-based Northridge Capital LLC is partnering with Sarpa Development, run by Aspen developer John Sarpa, on the project. Bethesda, Maryland-based Marriott International owns the W Hotels brand, which debuted in 1998 in New York City. The luxury chain now has worldwide presence with 80 properties, and the Aspen location will mark its first slopeside property in North America.

Durrer said he expects the certificate of occupancy for W Aspen to be issued around the end of May.

W Aspen is considered a boutique hotel. It will have 88 guest rooms along with 11 residences spread over the building's top floors — the fourth story on the west side, the third story on the east side.

The residences, comprised of six three-bedroom units and five two-bedroom units, come in one-tenth fractionals, ranging in price from approximately \$550,000 to the mid \$700,000s, according to R.J. Gallagher of Forte Aspen, which is handling marketing and sales for the Sky Residences.

"We have hard contracts on about 35 to 40% of our total inventory," Gallagher said. "That's very high."



W HOTELS/COURTESY IMAGE

This rendering shows the W Aspen and the Sky Residences at W Aspen, located at 709 E. Durant Ave. at the base of Aspen Mountain. The much-anticipated opening currently is set for early July.

The new property will create roughly 140 to 160 full-time jobs, according to Durrer, a Marriott International employee since 1997. Durrer and his family moved to Aspen in August.

"I think that the overall design and architecture is a fantastic fit for the Aspen market," he said of the hotel's chalet-style design. The lodge's interior elements will make a nod to Aspen's past with inspiration drawn from Bauhaus artist Herbert Bayer as well as the Ute Indians, who had been settled in the Roaring Fork Valley for some 800 years before the mining prospectors arrived in 1879.

"There's a wonderful historical context that's woven into the design and

architecture," Sarpa said. "Upon walking in the front you'll notice a iconic silver nugget suspended over the lobby."

The hotel replaces the former 90-room Sky Hotel, a popular haunt for the local crowd in large part because of its slope-side, public pool.

The public also will be able to enjoy W Aspen's rooftop patio bar with a pool and hot tub, fire pits, a dance floor, a cabana and panoramic views of Aspen Mountain, among other features.

"It's really important to know that these are public spaces, just like it was at the Sky," Sarpa said. "It's open to everybody. ... We know that it's extremely important that our

local community feels welcome and comfortable, and the people that come from all over the globe will love the fact they're with the locals."

New York City-based Fortress Investment Group LLC is providing construction financing, while the general contractor is Haselden Construction of Denver. Rowland+Broughton Architecture and Urban Design of Aspen is the architect, while Nemaworkshop of New York City is handling interior design. Bluegreen of Aspen is handling the landscape architecture. Vann Associates of Aspen is the project planner.

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