

Denver Business Journal - January 11, 2008

<http://denver.bizjournals.com/denver/stories/2008/01/07/daily61.html>

DENVER BUSINESS JOURNAL

Friday, January 11, 2008

Ritz-Carlton Denver opens

Denver Business Journal - by [Noelle Leavitt](#) Denver Business Journal

Break out the Champagne and caviar: The Ritz-Carlton Denver is now open. The upscale-luxury hotel officially opened its doors at noon Friday.

"I think we've raised the level of luxury to a new level," said Charlie Biederman, the hotel's developer. "It really makes a very broad statement that Denver has arrived when it can attract a Ritz Carlton hotel."

Biederman stood with Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper, John Elway, Judy Montero and Michael Hancock of the Denver City Council, Kim McNulty of the Colorado Tourism Office and Tamara Door of Downtown Denver Partnership Inc. and cut a large green ribbon.

The opening of the Ritz-Carlton Denver was originally scheduled to open Dec. 12, but was delayed a month, so that the hotel's operators and developers could further fine-tune customer service.

Construction on the 202-room, \$75 million Ritz started in spring 2006. It first was scheduled to open May 15, 2007, but that was pushed to early August, then again to the fall, then to December.

The hotel's rooms occupies the first 14 floors of the 19-story, former Embassy Suites located at 18th and Curtis streets. The hotel features five room models.

The Ritz in late October started taking room reservations for after Jan. 15, with rates starting at \$249 a night and going up to \$3,000 a night for the most expensive accommodations: the Ritz Carlton Suite. It's a 3,000-square-foot suite with a panoramic view of the mountains, a media room, wet bar, living and dining rooms, and a king-size bed.

Guests are expected to receive top-notch customer service from the hotel's 300 employees. Each employee was required to complete a 240-hour customer service training course that cost the Ritz Denver about \$50,000 for of instruction for each of its employees.

Biederman wants the Ritz to become the first Denver hotel to earn a five-star rating. The Brown Palace has held a four-star rating for 40 consecutive years and a four-diamond rating for 30 consecutive years.

"I think the Ritz is incredibly important for Denver hotel community," said Mike Cahill, president and founder of Englewood-based HREC Inc. -- Hospitality Real Estate Consultants. "I think it shows that we've grown up and we're no longer a cow town and that Denver an important enough town that it can sustain a five-star hotel."

Four- and five-star ratings mean higher room rates. The Ritz's roommates are about \$150 more than Denver's average room-rate in November of \$112, according to the Rocky Mountain Lodging Report.

The Ritz isn't the only hotel shooting for a five-star or five-diamond rating.

The Four Seasons Private Residences -- a 230-room project under construction at 14th and Arapahoe -- also

is hoping to achieve those ratings. The upscale, \$350 million hotel broke ground on Sept. 24, and is slated to open in early 2010.

Rather than constructing a new hotel like the Four Seasons, the Ritz is a redevelopment of an existing structure, making it easier and cheaper to get started. Biederman, along with developers Steve Roitman and Jim Cobb of BWAB Real Estate Ventures LLC, gutted the Embassy Suites down to the concrete and steel, and all the guest rooms were reframed.

Elway's -- the Ritz's signature restaurant -- opened also Friday, making it the second Elway's in Denver.

The first Elway's is located in Cherry Creek at 2500 E. First Ave. and opened in October 2004.

All contents of this site © American City Business Journals Inc. All rights reserved.