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THE ALLISON INN & SPA

VISION, COMMITMENT, COMMUNICATION & TEAM-WORK LEAD TO SUCCESS

By Judy Singer, HFD Spa and Carol Schaefer, GGLO

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Newberg, Oregon is the site for one of the newest lifestyle resorts in the United States. Since its opening in September 2009, The Allison Inn & Spa, a Preferred Hotels & Resorts member, has established itself as the premier destination resort in Oregon's renowned wine region in the Willamette Valley. Both the resort and spa were individually featured in the Conde Nast's Traveler 2010 Hot List. Demonstrating that luxury can also be "green," the resort was awarded LEED Gold certification by U.S. Green Building Council. The Allison's development team recognized early that a spa would be a key ingredient for the resort's overall success. The fruitful result is an integrated, full-service luxury spa that provides the perfect complement to the Inn's winning formula of relaxed style, comfort, and service.

From the outset, The Allison's owner, Mrs. Joan Austin - whose family has lived in the fertile, picturesque Willamette Valley of western Oregon for seven generations - envisioned a resort, conference facility and spa that would become a family-held legacy project. That long-term perspective allowed project planning and business strategy decisions to be made without undue concern about a temporary economic downturn. Bruce Hraba, President of Waterford Hotels and Inns, who advises the Austin family about their hospitality investment states, "Joan's vision for this facility is proving to be a remarkable success in exceeding our guests' expectations, and at the same time meeting our financial goals. Her long term approach to this development has greatly contributed to the quality of the property as well as insured its viability far into the future."

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Mrs. Austin carefully assembled a project team that would not only bring her long-term vision to reality but also meet her development expectations and enable the success of her business plan. With a goal of promoting the productive integration of design, function and business considerations, the Austin family's development company, Springbrook Properties, sought out expert consultants who excelled in collaborative thinking and cross-disciplinary teamwork. Sonja Haugen, Project Manager for the Springbrook Development adds, "We wanted a consultant team that would be a fit. Expertise, experience, availability and cost-effectiveness were baseline qualifications. It was equally important to make sure we had the right personalities who could truly work together and share the common goal of creating an exceptional project from a complex program and tight schedule."

Seattle-based integrated design firm GGLO provided architecture, interior design and landscape architecture services. Health Fitness Dynamics, Inc. (HFD Spa) provided spa consulting services for the market and feasibility study, facility program, design brief, construction specifications and floor plan review. GGLO and HFD Spa worked collaboratively to ensure that the spa's design was firmly grounded in function, ease of operation, synergy with the overall resort experience and making sure the spa would provide a unique experience and a strong profit potential. Judy Singer, President and Co-Owner, of HFD Spa says that "Mrs. Austin was very specific on her vision and objectives. The team she assembled made it easy to work together with clear direction to create a first-class resort that would be attractive to lodging and spa connoisseurs and to create employment opportunities for the community. Right from the start, HFD Spa knew that the project would be successful because every decision was carefully and thoughtfully explored from the guest, employee, operator and owner perspective."

Overall, the unique design of The Allison Spa was a result of a fresh, out-of-the-box approach based on tight collaboration between project team members, with the objective of creating a holistic design solution that is distinctly Pacific Northwest. Every design decision integrated aesthetic, functional and cost-benefit considerations. Does the space plan allow for easy operations while creating a serene environment? Do architectural elements that allow natural light and fresh air into

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treatment rooms and lounges also provide adequate privacy and acoustical control? Are the finish materials durable and easily maintained, and do they meet the project's sustainable design goals while still creating the desired visual appeal? Does lighting offer flexible controls to create mood and drama while being a responsible solution for energy consumption? "We had many ingredients and many cooks working together to determine the final design recipe for the spa," states Carol Schaefer, Project Interior Designer and a Principal at GGLO. "The end result is successful from all perspectives: design, function, operations, and the bottom line."

The idea to incorporate a full-service spa into the 85-room destination resort and conference facility emerged early in the design phase. Initially, Mrs. Austin believed that a salon within the resort would add practical value, providing resort guests - especially wedding parties - the convenience of hair, make-up and nail services on-site. During the concept stages, the team recognized the merits of expanding that "initial convenience" into a 15,000 square foot up-scale, comfort-oriented, indigenous spa that would enhance the overall experience of the leisure, conference and business guests. The Spa brings a harmonious and synergistic completion to the resort's state-of-the-art Technogym-equipped fitness studio, infinity edge swimming pool and whirlpool.



Allison Inn & Spa - Main Pool (credit Barbara Kraft)

In addition to the salon, The Allison Spa has twelve treatment rooms, including one designed for couples. Three treatment rooms are designed for wet treatments and feature Vichy showers, air-jet hydro-tubs and private hydro-massage showers. Men's, Women's, Co-Ed and Private lounges

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provide quiet environments with soft seating for relaxation between treatments. Three lounges have exterior window walls that open to stone-walled, private terraces with outdoor fireplaces and water features, accented with lavender and lemongrass grown on-site in the The Allison garden. Patty Monteson, Vice President and Co-Owner of HFD Spa says “every effort has been taken to create a resort and spa that has a ‘heart and soul’ and is not just another beautiful ‘bricks and mortar’ project. There was always a balance between what was sensible yet sensuous. We focused on being ‘on-trend’ rather than trendy. This project would make an excellent case study on how projects are planned for success.”

The Spa’s locker rooms feature spacious steam rooms and saunas, translucent glass-walled showers with glass mosaic tiles. Interior aspen wood flooring, made from a rapidly renewable timber, echoes an exterior grove of Aspen trees just outside the Spa. Shimmering metal drapery, manufactured locally, creates striking wall treatments in the spa reception and main spa corridor. Tara Calton, Spa Director for The Allison Inn and Spa, adds “The exceptional design of The Allison Spa has provided endless customer service opportunities, therapy options, and operational efficiencies. The abundant, beautiful spaces meet the needs of our guests, as well as our staff, which is uncommonly achieved. We couldn’t be more pleased and proud.”



Allison Inn & Spa - Spa Pool (credit Barbara Kraft)

In addition to direct indoor access to the Spa for resort guests, The Allison Spa has its own distinct entrance for day guests. This adds a nice touch of convenience if the day guest is focused totally on

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the Spa and will not be enjoying any of the resort's public areas such as JORY restaurant and bar or the function and meeting rooms. The arrival sequence for day guests is enhanced by massive custom gates that lead to wood bridges over exterior and interior reflecting pools, as well as by the always present visual connection to nature provided by the verdant 32-acre site. James Bradley, Design Architect and a Principal at GGLO, states that "this sense of entry and progression was key in introducing the spa experience at arrival rather than in the treatment room."

The natural beauty and bounty of The Allison Inn & Spa have helped make it both a regional travel destination and an attractive amenity for people from the neighboring wine region. This synergistic connection to the local community is destined to grow, because The Allison Inn & Spa is only the first phase of a planned 450-acre development by Springbrook Properties. Future development phases will result in approximately 1,200 new homes and a new retail village on the site of the historic town of Springbrook. Joan Austin wants to create new homes and neighborhoods, parks and open spaces for future generations to experience the splendor of the Willamette Valley and all it has to offer. As she puts it, "Our family will do it right."

The Allison Inn & Spa: www.theallison.com

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