

NEWS

DC Fairmont Completes \$27 Million Renovation

By Grant Broadhurst

The 413-room Fairmont Washington, DC, Georgetown completed a \$27 million renovation on Jan. 17, just in time for the inauguration.

The renovation began in late 2015 with the intention of finishing before the inauguration, a goal it met by three days. The redesigned hotel has themes, images and echoes of its Washington, DC location throughout its guestrooms and public areas. It also features the new Kennedy Ballroom.

"The hotel had not had a substantial renovation in prior years. It was time to breathe a little new life and rejuvenation into the property," General Manager Shane Krige told *USAE*. He added, "Our hotel was recently purchased by MetLife – who are wonderful owners – who wanted to upgrade the property and make it one of their flagship hotels."

The hotel began taking rooms offline in Nov. 2015 as part of the first phase of the renovation, doing three floors at a time to minimize the impact of the construction.

Designed by New York-based Wimberly Interiors, every room mixes classic and contemporary styles, and the artwork in the guestrooms reflects DC itself. The Gold Floor – the Fairmont's "hotel within a hotel" – also had a major redesign of the food and beverage area, making it more residential in feel. The floor also features modern takes on classic patterns in its carpeting and fabrics.

"We added some new suites in anticipation of more diplomatic and high level entertainment business," Krige said. He added, "What's exciting about our hotel is that we appeal to all market segments."

The second phase renovated the

public areas of the hotel – most notably the Kennedy Ballroom, the lobby and the courtyard.

"We have just under 30,000 square feet of meeting space that was renovated about four years ago," Krige said. "The Kennedy Ballroom is brand-new because we took a nonfunctional space and turned it into a ballroom."

The 2,900-square-foot Kennedy Ballroom can now host a variety of events of up to 300 people and offers updated audiovisual technology.

The Fairmont's lobby also received a complete redesign from Amanda Jackson, of Dallas-based Forrest Perkins, and it was finished days before the inauguration. Inspired by DC as seen from the air, Jackson designed a geometric lobby with blue, green and warm neutral tones. The lobby features a variety of seating and a redesigned u-shaped bar capable of seating up to 16 people with the idea that guests can use the space to relax, socialize or even do business.

"That's the beauty of our hotel. The bone structure is so amazing, and new hotels have such little lobbies," Krige said. He added, "The Washington, DC historic elements are authentically local."

The courtyard was leveled and redesigned in order to better accommodate events. "Our courtyard is the jewel of Washington, DC," Krige said, citing the courtyard's water features, fire pits and wide variety of seating – both modern and traditional.

"From a group perspective, you've got brand new guest rooms, amazing space, the lobby and the deal clincher is the courtyard," Krige said.

Groups and guests can also expect fast internet since the event areas and guestrooms are on two different systems,



The Fairmont Washington, DC, Georgetown's lobby and Kennedy Ballroom following a \$27 million renovation of the hotel. Photos provided by Fairmont Washington, DC, Georgetown.

according to Krige.

"In early 2016 we completely upgraded the whole internet infrastructure," Krige said. "We have a large pipeline that

comes into the hotel that is about four times what was needed."

Going forward renovation of the hotel restaurant Juniper is planned.

CMA Association Management Celebrating 30th Anniversary

By Todd McElwee

In the beginning marketing executive Jeffrey Barnhart saw an opportunity. In 1987, while working with his first association client the Founder & CEO of Creative Marketing Alliance (CMA) decided to diversify this company and launched CMA Association Management. Three decades onward Barnhart and his firm are celebrating its continued opportunity to serve clients as it commemorates its 30th anniversary.

"Our primary business philosophy is to drive growth and results for the clients," Barnhart told *USAE*. "The goal was to surround ourselves with talented people who had a passion for creating results for clients."

Barnhart continued: "As I say to clients, we are in it for the long-term, long haul, not for a short-term project. I can always do a short-term project for more money, but I wouldn't have the long term relationship that I prefer to have with our clients."

The National Association of Innovative Lighting Distributors (NAILD) was Barnhart's first association client.

"I was approached by the president of NAILD, who was looking for an executive director and they couldn't afford a full-time executive director," said Barnhart. "To me, running the organization was no different than running a business. Sometimes when you are in a start-up company, you can't afford to say no, and with my experience in the lighting

industry we were successful in growing that client."

Also early on, a credit card manufacturer hired CMA to rebrand the company. During his work with the client Barnhart launched a new association, the International Card Manufacturers Association (ICMA), in 1989; seeing there was no association representing credit card manufacturers. Today it encompasses more than 240 card manufacturers, personalizers, suppliers, issuers and other industry participants.

CMA's list of clients continued to grow. Providing leadership and governance, association headquarters, membership and member programs, growth-engine platforms, financial oversight, event-management and full-service marketing the firm, along with ICMA, the organization counts the New Jersey State Nurses Association, Healthcare Manufacturers Management Council, North American Association of Commencement Officers, Event Service Professionals Association and the National Association of Innovative Lighting Distributors amongst its clients.

CMA has earned more than 325 awards with Barnhart named the first Entrepreneur of the Year by the Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce in 1993 and CMA named the 2016 Outstanding Small Business of the Year by the MIDJersey Chamber of Commerce.

Starting ICMA and rebranding the Event Service Professionals Associ-



CMA Association Management is celebrating its 30th anniversary. Shown here are founder Jeffrey Barnhart (seated, striped shirt) and associates. Standing top row (left to right): Anna Cifelli, Michele Giovine, Diane Webster, Jen Samuel, Jennifer Kohlhepp and Kelsey Brooks. Bottom row: Al Vrancart, Keith Yeates, Lynn McCullough and Christian Amato.

ation (ESPA), which used to be the Association for Convention Operations Management (ACOM), are two of the accomplishments Barnhart is proudest of. He's also extremely proud of those who have comprised his staff throughout the years.

"I've been fortunate to work with many talented professionals along the way who have proven we can all do more together," said Barnhart. "We have done our part to make associations throughout the U.S. and abroad work more effectively and efficiently for their respective member."

As for the future Barnhart sees more

opportunity ahead.

"I see every association challenge as an opportunity to help," said Barnhart. "The secret is hard work, but if you love what you do, it is true you will never work a day in your life. It has been said that if you get excited about Friday, you have a job, but if you get excited about Monday, you're following your passion. I love Mondays."

He added: "And then there is always fishing," said Barnhart, a U.S. Coast Guard licensed 100-ton Master Captain. "I always look forward to my time on the water, it helps me clear my head and focus my thoughts."