

Your Room is Ready

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Hotel Indigo is open with a boldly modern, open-concept theme that features midcentury modern furniture and contemporary art.

A grand opening for the downtown hotel at 400 Brown St. is set for March or April, but the first guests were greeted Tuesday.

From hotel developer Tim Dora of Carmel, the building is the first official Hotel Indigo built from the ground up for the Dora Hotel Co. and InterContinental Hotels Group.

The project began construction in August with Dimensions Architect Firm of Kokomo. "(Hotel Indigos) have generally been in bigger cities. This is the first to be built in a smaller town," said Cindy Waddle, hotel manager.

Others reside in large cities including Atlanta, Boston, Chicago and Dallas.

The Vision 20/20 plan for downtown rejuvenation heavily influenced the hotel company's decision to build here, Waddle said.

About 60 to 70 more Hotel Indigos are in the pipeline for smaller towns, she added.

Tom Vujovich, president of Columbus Redevelopment Commission, is excited about the hotel's opening.

"It's a welcome addition to downtown," he said. "The impact is already visible because of the momentum it created to help get the other (Vision 20/20) projects going."

Vujovich believes the recent announcement of 500 Cummins jobs further indicates the hotel's positive impact on downtown Columbus.

Modern flare

Midcentury modern furniture sits on maple wooden floors in the open-concept lobby of the hotel. Splashes of red and teal cover sections of wall by the cafe and front desk. Suspended modern lamps and recessed lighting give dimension over contemporary framed artwork and sculpture.

"We also have (womb) chairs by (Eero) Saarinen," Waddle said. "I'm so happy with all the accents. (They are) very Columbus ... unexpected and unforgettable."

Hotel Indigo's trademarks are present throughout the structure. Leonardo da Vinci script wraps around pillars in the lobby and Fibonacci numbers are displayed by art pieces and furniture groupings of two and three.

Another trademark, the use of Japanese poetry, is represented with haikus throughout the lobby and guest rooms.

Board games and books for adults and children make for a family-friendly atmosphere, Waddle said.

"We want people to be in the public space and really enjoy themselves," she said.

Large windows on the vaulted ceilings allow natural light to brighten the lobby and cafe.

A variety of seating, including stools and couches, furnish the cafe, along with art deco accents and a 52-inch flat screen television.

"The menu reflects the whimsical atmosphere," said Dianna Stoffer, food and beverage manager.

The cafe offers breakfast, lunch and dinner options from steak entrees to light salads, paninis and grab-and-go breakfast sandwiches. "We have added healthier items based on guest feedback," Stoffer said. The cafe also carries Starbucks products.

Guests can dine in the patio seating area in the spring, summer and fall. "We will possibly have some music artists play out there during the warmer months," Waddle said.

A wall of the cafe designated for local art will feature pieces from area artists in 6- to 8-week stints and coordinate with downtown's weekly art walks from March to October.

Standard rooms to king suites feature modern furniture and lamps in solid red, lime green and teal, or black and white geometric patterns.

Rooms also include dark wood floors and 32-inch flat screen televisions. Wireless connection is available in each room.

A tranquil CD developed by the hotel company is available for background music in each room. "We want to make it relaxing and peaceful, to get away from the rush of the corporate world," Waddle said.

A black and white mural covers one wall of each room, and an angled red wall divides the entry way from the bedroom and sitting area.

The bathroom includes a shower with spa products and a teak spa bench.

"It gives it a sauna feel," Waddle said.

Nine rooms have balconies.

For exercising and taking a dip, a fitness room, is open 5 a.m. to 11 p.m., and a pool and hot tub reside across the hall.

A business center in the lobby provides guests with office and mailing supplies and two computers with Internet access and word processing programs.

Two board rooms can be rented for meetings. They are named for the first two Columbus hotels, St. Dennis (\$150 rental) and Belvedere (\$300).

Two 55-foot murals at the Brown and Lindsey street entrances display outdoor scenes from photos taken by Paul Miller and Todd Maze, both of Columbus. Two smaller exterior murals also decorate the front of the building. The exterior and guest room murals will change every four years, Waddle said.

Many of the hotel's other accents, including small murals and photos wallpapering the front desk and cafe counter, will be changed seasonally.

Finishing touches are still being made such as illuminating the arched canopy that welcomes guests at the hotel's main entrance. More furniture also will arrive, including a large meeting table for the cafe.

Elaine Seitz and her son, Derek Gumm, have kept a close eye on the hotel's construction for more than a year.

They toured the building and enjoyed a meal in the cafe Thursday.

"It's just beautiful," Seitz said.

"We looked at a room and decided to rent one for next weekend."

By the numbers

Standard room rate \$ 149

Outdoor murals 4

Board rooms 2

Rooms 85

Balconies 9

Floors 4