

Redesigning Classic Hotels for Jackson Holes Competitive Market

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Ward + Blake Architects gives two aging properties fresh curb appeal, new pools



Two Jackson Hole hotels, the 49er Inn (left) and Jackson Hole Lodge (right), have received remodels from

Ward + Blake Architects that boost their street appeal.

Jackson Hole, Wyo. – June 15, 2015 – Hotel occupancy and room rates are on the rise in the mountain resort town of Jackson, Wyo., according to a recent Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce [tourism forecast](#) that characterizes summer 2015 as “the first time in years that we enter a drive season with mostly positive economic pieces in place.” But with rising rates come heightened expectations from guests, prompting some of Jackson’s older hotels to make some changes, according to Jackson Hole-based architecture firm [Ward + Blake Architects](#), which recently completed facelifts for two local properties, the Jackson Hole Lodge and the 49er Inn.

Despite more tourists to go around, new hotels opening in the area and extensive renovations by others have spurred existing properties to upgrade. “As with any kind of real estate, curb appeal is crucial,” explains Ward + Blake principal Mitch Blake. “A great street

presence, nice lobbies and nice bathrooms are important for attracting guests. Swimming pools and hot tubs also resonate.”

It was a dated indoor swimming pool that motivated the owners of the Jackson Hole Lodge to contact Ward + Blake. The architects opened up the area, replacing the aging pool and hot tub with new larger facilities, creating inviting outdoor spaces. “Pools and hot tubs are very important to Jackson Hole hotels,” says Ward + Blake principal Tom Ward. “The hot tub extends the outdoor season by about a month on the shoulder of each season, and the animation of poolside activities also serves as a catalyst to persuade motorists to stop and stay the evening.”

To complement the Jackson Hole Lodge’s retro frontier feel, the new pool area uses simple, durable materials of concrete, wood and glass. “We built a contemporary set of small buildings, using color scheme and log siding in a way that historically links the upgrades to the hotel’s vintage log lodge look, which dates back to the ‘50s or earlier,” says Ward.

Ward + Blake’s renovations of the 49er Inn were more extensive – and included the challenge of creating a cohesive modern resort property out of an original motel that had undergone five additions over the years. The architects found a unifying theme in the historical context of Western mining that had first inspired the property’s “49er” name. “We refinished the buildings in rusted metal and stained cedar siding to reflect the nature of old mining operations while introducing a contemporary twist,” says Mitch Blake.

The renovation also added a new lobby, breakfast area and swimming pool to the complex, while creating a “street wall” along Jackson’s Pearl Avenue that includes a porte cochere and landscaping to provide a signature presence in the historic town that’s much different from the hotel’s original asphalt-paved setback. “The pool was placed on the second floor to reduce the building footprint and exploit the upper-level views to Snow King Mountain,” adds Blake. “Interiors were finished with reclaimed lumber, exposed and unpainted structural steel and concrete floors, and the Glu-Lam trusses emphasize the arrival experience – all serving to set the stage for old time Jackson Hole within the modern ski town vernacular.”

Since 1996, Ward + Blake Architects has earned recognition for architecture that is sensitive to its environment and successfully integrated with its surroundings, including being named Architect of the Year by International Design Awards, having a project shortlisted at the World Architecture Festival in Singapore, and being named Firm of the Year by the six-state AIA Western Mountain Region. Recently featured in media including the *Wall Street Journal*, Ward + Blake creates buildings that are tactile, modern, bio-climatically responsible, honestly expressed, technologically sound and artfully crafted. A recent monograph, *In the Shadows of the Tetons: Selected Works of Ward + Blake Architects*, provides an overview of the firm’s award-winning work. For additional information, visit Ward + Blake online at www.wardblakearchitects.com or call 307.733.6867.

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