Dream rises in the East

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

A stylish $75 million hotel is the latest dramatic landmark to grace Melbourne's Eastern suburbs.

The 171-room Hyatt Place Melbourne Caribbean Park, which towers next to Eastlink in Wantirna, was officially unveiled on Wednesday 16 February.

The hotel, designed by award-winning Peter Ryan Architects and SJB Interior designers, is aimed for both business guests and leisure travellers.

It takes advantage of being next to the giant Caribbean Park business precinct, as well as golf, wineries and attractions in the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges.

The hotel features spacious guestrooms with separate sleep, work and play spaces, free Wi-Fi, complimentary breakfast, meeting spaces and a fitness centre.

Open for lunch and dinner, there's 'farm-to-table' a la carte dining at Archie's Farm Restaurant & Bar.

It was named after the late Archie Spooner who in 1943 bought the 255-acre former farmland for 19 pounds per acre.

His family has since transformed the area to Caribbean Park's multi-billion-dollar business precinct over the past 30 years.

His grandson Ben Spooner, who is Caribbean Park's director, said the farm now resembled a "micro city of industrial, office, retail and entertainment precincts" – something that would "exceed Archie's wildest of dreams".

Rodney Spooner, Robert Dawson and Ben Spooner at the entrance. 267997 Pictures: GARY SISSONS

Caribbean Park director Ben Spooner. 267997

Mr Spooner declared Caribbean Park was now the "largest and fastest growing business precinct outside of the CBD".

The hotel was another piece of the family's incredible vision.

"It is an important milestone in the development of Caribbean Park that today we officially open a new Hyatt Place hotel," he said.

"It's a big day for our family. We're incredibly proud of this latest addition to the park."

After the travails and delays of Covid, Mr Spooner was expecting its hotel to benefit from a "strong bounce back in corporate travel in 2022".

"We are very proud of the quality of construction of this new Hyatt Place hotel which combines style, innovation and 24/7 conveniences to create an easy to navigate experience for today's multi-tasking traveller."

Hyatt's Pacific general manager and area vice-president Robert Dawson celebrated what was the second Hyatt Place hotel's opening in Melbourne. It is the 10th in Australia.

He acknowledged that the Spooner family had "pushed to make things better", creating a hotel that was "accessible and open".

"We want to really take our place in the community."

Mr Dawson welcomed the "opening" borders, though it would take a "few months" for the hotel to kick on.

"By the end of the year I think it will be a really successful operation.

"Hyatt congratulates the Spooner family on this significant investment.

"We are proud to partner with Caribbean Park to create this new hotel which will introduce new standards in service and accommodation into this region."

Mr Spooner's father and family patriarch Rodney Spooner still remembers the former pastures on the site.

And keeps an image of the original contract signed by his father Archie to buy the land.

"To see them build this building is a dream come true."

FOCUS ON ... SENIORS ENJOYING LIFE

Age, health and nutrition

As we age our nutrition needs also change and it's important to understand and recognise how a well-balanced diet can help reduce the risk of many age-related health issues and help maintain the best quality of life in our older years. Illness, loss of appetite and reduced independence can all contribute to malnutrition in many older persons. Loss of appetite is common in the elderly and can cause significant weight loss, frailty and exacerbate chronic illnesses.

When requiring aged care services, new residents often present with common health ailments brought on by diet deficiencies, dehydration and food textures that hinder the intake and enjoyment of food. At Belvedere, the seasonal menus are carefully planned by the in-house Chef in collaboration with their Dietician and residents. This ensures nutritionally balanced menu offerings that delight the residents and support their nutritional intake.

At Belvedere Aged Care they celebrate the culturally rich residence with a menu offering that acknowledges the cultural heritage, customs, and uniqueness of every resident. They proudly source local, fresh ingredients with careful attention to ensure reduced salt and the limited use of processed foods and sugars. For modified foods textured meals are beautifully presented with rich natural colours, flavours and high nutritional value.

As part of the commitment to continuously improving the menu, all residents and their representative are welcomed to provide direct feedback to the Chef and attend their regular Food Focus meetings. Regular feedback is encouraged and valued to support the residents' agency and contribution to their menu selections.

Belvedere is proud to be at the forefront of aged care dining. To find out more about Belvedere Aged Care, book a private tour of their home and see how they can best support your care needs. Call Belvedere Aged Care today on 03 9574 1355 or visit belvedere.com.au

For the hard of hearing

Audiology professionals are urging Victorians to look out for their loved ones during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

With the use of masks now a normal sight across the state due to COVID-19, those that are hard of hearing are continuing to suffer heightened anxiety and struggle to communicate given lip reading is common for the hearing impaired.

One in six Australians is affected by hearing loss and may rely on lip reading. These people have been left with reduced means to understand and communicate with those around them.

Chief audiologist at Specsavers, Nick Taylor, says that there are many reasons why masks are challenging for those with hearing loss.

"Wearing a face mask can have some unintended consequences for those with hearing loss," Nick says.

"It may break down the ability to communicate as we know lip reading is a common work around.

"A face mask can also muffle speech, which along with the loss of visuals, can mean extra concentration is needed to listen.

"We can all work together to make sure this isn't so anxiety provoking for those that are hard of hearing."

Nick says the same goes for those that may be noticing they are having trouble hearing for the first time now that masks are on.

"Similarly, if you think a loved one is struggling please speak up and let them know that you think they would benefit from seeing an audiology professional," he says.

"Hearing loss can be incredibly socially isolating, and we need to look out for everyone in the community, now more than ever."

Specsavers Audiology remains open as an essential health service, and we are here to help discuss your options with you.

For more information, visit www.specsavers.com.au/hearing.

The Things You Love

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We proudly embrace all vibrant and multicultural communities with our resident-led and community focused spiritual and culturally rich lifestyle programs.

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