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COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

With Hotel Versailles project, Midmark wants to turn this small Ohio village into a world-class destination



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In less than a year, Midmark Corp. will cut the ribbon on its transformation of the former Inn at Versailles in Darke County.

Destroyed by a fire in late 2019, the inn is being revived and re-branded as a boutique hotel, restaurant and event space. Midmark is targeting March 2022 for a soft opening, with a grand opening to take place the following month.

It's a major rebirth for the historic site and the surrounding 2,700-person village. It's also envisioned to become a catalyst for international attention – one that will introduce Versailles to visitors from across the nation and beyond.

Click through the slideshow above for a glimpse at the project.

Jack Olshan, a third-generation hotelier whose management experience includes stints at The Greenbrier, Hotel Covington and the only Forbes five-star restaurant in Texas, is overseeing all

aspects of the new Hotel Versailles, restaurant Silas and the 1819 Room event space.

The DBJ recently sat down with Olshan to learn more about Midmark's ambitious revitalization effort:

Hotel Versailles

The site's anchor, Hotel Versailles, is already under roof. The 30-room boutique hotel will be outfitted with six suites, a fitness room, a courtyard, patio and enhanced amenities.

But Hotel Versailles isn't going to mimic big-box hotels, Olshan said. Instead, it will offer a resort-style experience unlike any other in the Miami Valley.

"People are looking for those smaller, more intimate boutique experiences," he said. "They don't want a cookie-cutter hotel room ... They want something they can go home and talk about. That's something Hotel Versailles is really going to deliver on."

Guests will be able to personalize nearly every detail of their stay

DAYTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

– including turndown service, flower delivery and transportation to downtown amenities.

There will be iPads in every room, and the hotel's interior design will reflect the community, Olshan said. All the artwork will come from local artisans, and Midmark is sourcing the linens from Cincinnati-based Standard Textile.

"The hotel is truly going to be a one-of-a-kind destination," he said. "Our guests will get to experience everything great this region has to offer."

Silas

Midmark is taking quite a few creative liberties with Silas – its in-house restaurant and the centerpiece of Hotel Versailles.

Named after village founder Silas Atchison, the restaurant will feature a bar and lounge, an expansive indoor dining area and outdoor seating with a gas fireplace. Silas will offer frequent live entertainment as well.

Outdoor seating includes a covered patio for parties of 24 or less, as well as an open courtyard that seats about 50 guests and mirrors the historic town square. All spaces can be reserved for private parties upon request.

"The goal here is to create comfortable luxury," Olshan said. "We expect these food and beverage areas to be really lively community living rooms."

Led by executive chef Aaron Allen, Silas will rely on local purveyors to develop its farm-to-table menu. The restaurant will routinely update its entrée selections based on seasonality.

"If you added all the entrées that are available throughout the year, it's going to be a huge menu," Olshan said. "But at any given time, it's going to be a snapshot of what's available from the farms."

The dining and lounge areas will be separate, and they'll each have their own menus. That should enable returning guests to have different experiences based on where they sit and what they order, Olshan said.

The bar will have wine and beer on tap, as well as a handful of cocktails and mocktails – the latter of which will be a signature part of the restaurant's beverage program.

"A lot of people want to be a part of a lounge or bar environment, but they may not necessarily drink alcohol," Olshan said. "That's

something where we're going to have some very creative items on our menus."

Silas also will have a "mini bar program" offering snacks and drinks from local distilleries and breweries – another part of Midmark's push to source locally.

"My thought is, if you've got something really great in your backyard, use it," Olshan said. "I think you'll see a lot of that on the restaurant menu and within the spaces that you wouldn't otherwise find in a big-box hotel."

1819 Room

With capacity for up to 200 guests, the 1819 Room will have its own bar, audio-visual technologies, private bathrooms, a coat room and a mother's room.

The event space will be open to the public and can host a wide variety of events. Several parties have already booked it, Olshan said – including multiple weddings, corporate events and an 87th birthday party.

"Part of the enticing nature of the 1819 Room is that it's going to be exclusively catered by Silas," Olshan said. "So if you love amazing food, you can get it in our event space."

In addition to third-party private engagements, Midmark plans to use the 1819 Room to host events of its own. Those will include pop-up shops, seasonal activities and other community-focused events to support local vendors and entrepreneurs.

"This is going to be a really flexible space – very beautifully designed, but not with any particular demographic in mind," Olshan said. "It's going to be a very well-blended, adaptable space."

Midmark will hire more than 50 people to staff the new hotel, restaurant and event space. A number of high-level positions are still available, including a pastry chef, sous chef, hotel manager and restaurant manager.

Open positions will be posted on the Hotel Versailles website as they become available.

Founded in 1915, Midmark is a clinical environmental design company that manufactures medical, dental and veterinary equipment, technology and services. With more than 1,000 local workers and nearly \$509 million in revenue last year, it is one of the largest employers in the Dayton region, according to DBJ research.