Architects Jason Mackertich, Germano Botelho and Ted Wood

Historic Hotel's $90 Million Makeover

Builders dig deep to continue the spectacular transformation of the Hamilton Princess & Beach Club

By now, most local residents will be familiar with the restaurant name Marcus', even if they have not eaten there, but few will be aware of the enormous construction issues that had to be overcome to make it a reality.

Marcus Samuellson's signature restaurant with the centrally located bar, looks New York chic and the new wrap-around balcony gives stunning views.

Sitting under the restaurant and bar at the Hamilton Princess & Beach Club,

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The Hamilton Princess Beach Club — site of the former Sonesta Beach Hotel

however, is a vast water tank that caused several design issues.

"Because of building code issues, we could not allow service lines to transfer over the tank. Therefore, we came up with a concrete tunnel that was suspended over the existing tank," said Jason Mackertich, a partner in architectural firm BotelhoWood.

"The concrete tunnel allowed for all the service lines to be fed from the back of the house storage area to the central bar location. This formed the required separation from the water tank. It also allows the hotel to fully service the bar lines from below."

This is just one example of the many design and construction issues that are unseen by the hotel's guests, yet which had to be overcome before the completion of the second phase of the hotel's redevelopment.

Phase One included the new marina, the 1609 restaurant, a new swimming pool and the refurbishment of the Poinciana wing, as well as significant investment in back-of-house facilities, such as new fire and sewage pumps.

Phase Two involved renovating 90 rooms, remodelling the old bar by the lobby, which is now called Crown and Anchor, adding the Marcus Samuellson restaurant in the old Gazebo room

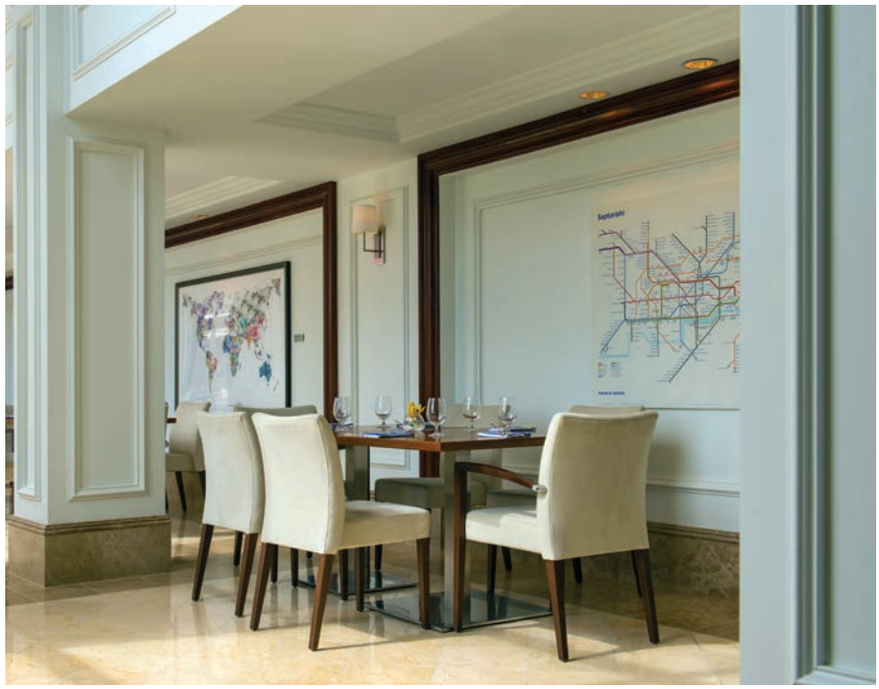
and remodelling the Harbourview Ballroom as well as the Princess Room and two boardrooms.

Phase Three will involve a new spa and gym, new shops that will have frontage to the courtyard and upgrading of function and guest rooms. Overall, more than $90 million is being invested in the project.

Mr. Mackertich added: "Another major design issue was how to build an independent self-contained signature restaurant in the existing Gazebo Lounge.

"The Gazebo had always been used for functions but suffered with service (food/staff) having to cross a public space. We spent many weeks and varying options trying to connect the main central kitchen, with its associated ancillary storage areas and staff rooms, to the existing Gazebo lounge.

"An extra issue to address was the fact that the Gazebo lounge was in between floors of the old Heritage Court and the Harbourview Ballroom so there was no practical way to run



food carts or service the space.

"We realised we had to have a service elevator and the 'eureka' moment was to visualise moving vertically from the old Gazebo lounge level and excavating down into the substrate and penetrating into the service basement.

"The concept, once realised, seemed simple but it was far from that. D&J Construction had to 'hand' excavate a

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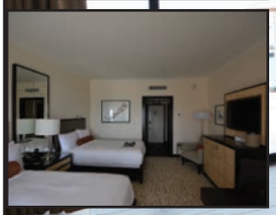

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whole story down into the existing sub-grade and then penetrate an existing basement retaining wall to form an uninterrupted staff and service access from the back of house through the Marcus's lower kitchen right up to the main display kitchen you see from the restaurant," said Mr. Mackertich.

"It took a lot of hard work and coordination on the part of the D&J team to pull this off. However, what this helps to achieve is a seamless flow of service to the restaurant while having no detrimental effect of the guest experience."

There is also a wood burning stove in the kitchen, which caused a technical challenge – requiring an exhaust eight stories high.

Another major change that visitors to the property will notice is the leveling of the landscaping that opens up the central core of the hotel to the harbour views.

Unlike pre-renovation days, guests now can enjoy a view of

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Hamilton Harbour when they first enter the lobby from Pitts Bay Road. They also can walk to the waterfront on one flat, level surface, whereas previously a number of steps had to be negotiated.

To achieve this, the top five feet of the existing surface had to be removed. Five feet also had to be removed from the top of an existing 300,000 gallon water tank, and then the bottom of the tank had to be lowered. Walking over the remodeled surface to the Flag Pole terrace, you see no clue as to the work that had to be done.

By comparison, remodeling the rooms was a relatively easy task, with only asbestos to remove and dispose of. The new Crown and Anchor bar area involved removing false pillars, bringing light into the space and employing brighter finishes and furniture.

One neat feature is the breakfast bar at the Crown and Anchor that has heated areas under the marble countertop so they cannot be seen. They are specially designed so they do not get too hot.

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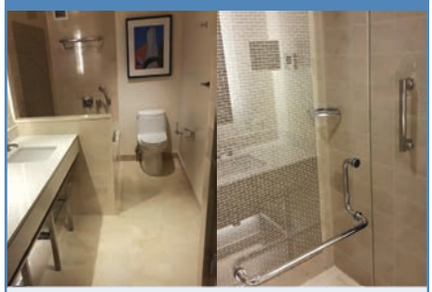

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Investment in the hotel's facilities by the owners, the Green family, has also included the Hamilton Princess Beach Club, on the site of the old Sonesta property, in Sinky Bay, Southampton. The property was bought last year at a reported cost of $10.5 million.

A hotel guest club, it has a dining pavilion and mobile units for the club's kitchen, bar and restroom facilities. Ted Wood, also a partner in BotelhoWood, which is overseeing the redevelopment of the Hamilton Princess, said the biggest challenge was the timing of the project and the ability to keep things moving, as the hotel was still operating throughout the renovation process.

"There were a few unknowns because of the age of the building," said Mr. Wood. "Trying to shut down parts of the building was problematic because we had to keep everything operating throughout the work.

"We had to work very closely with the hotel's operational team. They were taking bookings and we had to make sure that the bookings did not

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coincide with our schedule. We had a really good team; everyone cooperated."

The work on Phase Two took place between September 1, 2014, and May 23, this year. Like Phase One, it was a tight schedule.

Mr. Wood added: "The cooperation between people did not happen by itself; it took effort to make that happen and we take pride in that."

Planning already is underway for Phase Three, which involves the central part of the hotel. The existing four shops and an art gallery closed at end of July 2015.

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