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Silicon Valley Structures 2018: Hospitality Project

## Marriott's boutique hotel is a beacon to business travelers

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When building out Hotel Nia in Menlo Park, Ensemble Real Estate Solutions and Investments wanted to create an escape of sorts for guests in the center of bustling Silicon Valley.

"The name itself, Nia, is Gaelic for 'bright light' or 'beacon,'" said [Conrad Garner](#), Ensemble's senior vice president of development. "So our goal was to create a refined, yet relaxed, area with an atmosphere focused on mind inspiring and mind clearing."

Yet it is subtly designed for its largely targeted business guests in that it offers wired outdoor settings, "encouraging people to go outside and work or have a conversation or meeting."

Hotel Nia is part of Marriott's Autograph Collection Hotels' portfolio of more than 135 independent hotels that each have their own unique local flair. The hotel had been part of Bohannon Development's Menlo Gateway Plan, which took a decade to get entitled.

The hotel's proximity to Facebook was a draw for Ensemble.

"Being next to Facebook is a significant part of why we're there," said [Ed Proenza](#), chief investment officer of hotels for Ensemble. "We're aiming to be a go-to hotel for corporate visitors, but also a great option for Silicon Valley residents looking for a luxury weekend staycation."

### Hotel Nia

Hospitality Project

200 Independence Drive, Menlo Park

**Size:** 173,000 square feet**Rooms:** 250 rooms, including nine suites**Height:** 11 stories**Cost:** \$150 million

CARLOS R. HERNANDEZ

**Status:** Design began in 2015, construction in 2016 and the hotel opened in March 2018

**Amenities:** Courtyard with outdoor gardens, outdoor pool, state-of-the-art fitness center with floor-to-ceiling windows, and numerous indoor or outdoor spaces that are all wired — and wireless — for business use; 12,000 square feet meeting space

**Challenges:** Working through Bay Area cost escalations. The developers also encountered a shortage on the labor side with subcontractors and tradespeople. On the manufacturing side there was a glut of work that affected quality of products such as furniture. The developers also discovered active underground water flows during construction.

**Tidbit:** Virtually every element of the hotel — including the interior design, furniture, lighting and related products — is an original work by Colum McCartan, an internationally renowned interior and product designer based in New York.

**Unique feature:** Alternating panels on the facade aim to bring to mind numeric sequences of the zeroes and ones used by Silicon Valley coders.

### **Key Players**

**Developers:** Ensemble Real Estate Investments; AECOM Capital

**Architects:** Cuningham Group; McCartan Design (interiors)

**Landscape architect:** Lifescapes International

**Engineer:** Nishkian Menninger

**Key subcontractor:** Integral Group

**Financial partner:** Acore Capital

**Editor's note:** *This is one of the 26 Silicon Valley Structures winners, which will be profiled in print on Friday, Sept. 21.*