

### Menlo Park: Hotel Nia set to open early 2018

Part of Menlo Gateway project, luxury lodgings will cater to executives, cost from \$400 to \$550 a night



MENLO PARK — The hotel rising along Highway 101 in Menlo Park has been given a name — Hotel Nia, gaelic for “bright light,” in honor of the primarily glass exterior.

Nia, a 250-room, 11-story luxury hotel financed by Ensemble Real Estate Investments and AECOM Capital, is valued at roughly \$100 million. It is situated in the Menlo Gateway project along Independence Drive and is expected to open by early 2018. The hotel will be managed by Denver-based Sage Hospitality.

Nia is part of Marriott’s Autograph collection, with rooms starting around \$400 a night, 43 larger suites going for between \$50 and \$150 higher and an even pricier presidential suite on the top floor that can hold up to 30 people. Each room will feature 9-foot-high floor-to-ceiling windows.

“The individual business traveler is going to be the driving force for the hotel,” said Brian Ehrlich, Ensemble’s chief investment officer for hotels. “Folks visiting Facebook, Amazon just moved into the area, venture capital and legal firms and other existing businesses.”

On weekends, rooms would be discounted to “make it more attractive to the leisure traveler,” he said.

The site was chosen not only for its proximity to Facebook, but due to the amenities at the Gateway site, Ehrlich said. When Nia opens, it expects to pull some business from tenants of one of three planned office buildings that will be occupied at that time. Ensemble and AECOM also have an agreement with property owner Bohannon Development Corp. to lease spaces from a parking structure expected to be completed over the summer.

“It’s part of our strategic plan to build within mixed-use projects,” Ehrlich said. “It’s more financially viable. In this particular case, we do not have to pay for a parking structure.”

What will set Nia apart from other Autograph hotels, he said, is there will be 20,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, including a large ballroom, that spills out onto additional outdoor space with an expansive deck, garden courtyard, event lawns and a fire pit. A cocktail bar that attaches to a planned coastal Mediterranean restaurant will also link to the outdoors.

The hotel will have a coffee bar that turns into an ice cream bar at night, and a 20-by-60-foot pool with an additional bar that features a multi-level deck to allow for private functions.

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