

Cozy Teton Club Rebounds In Style

By Michael Pearlman

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With financial problems settled, resort refocuses on guest service

In the four years since the Teton Club opened its doors, the luxury property's financial travails have attracted as much attention as its amenities.

But after weathering a storm that ended when the property emerged from bankruptcy in August, the valley's first residency club is now ready to refocus attention on providing the amenities of a high-end hotel in an intimate, family-friendly atmosphere.

"Members feel like members of a Club" Associate Director Sarah Jane Hedbabny said. "You're known by the staff and you become friends with other owners in a way that wouldn't be possible in a larger facility."

Intimate feel

With only 37 two- and three-bedroom units, the Teton Club is the most intimate luxury property in Teton Village and has one of the lowest staff-to-guest ratios. Many members of the resort's staff of nearly 50, including General Manager Steve Michel, have worked at the Teton Club since opening day.

"People like to see the same faces each time they return," Hedbabny said. "Staff and member interaction is much higher here than at a typical hotel."

The property's main level is dominated by an inviting great room that features comfortable couches, a stone fireplace and a private bar to encourage Member interaction. Downstairs, the Hollee Armstrong Spa offers a full spectrum of massages and treatments, along with fitness equipment, a sauna and four outdoor hot tubs. All the property's suites are sold fully furnished, have completely stocked kitchens and are impeccably maintained.

Teton Club ownership also comes with an attractive package of amenities. While in residence, members get free lift tickets to Jackson Hole Mountain Resort and enjoy golf membership privileges at Teton Pines Country Club. The Club also offers Members private long-term storage, valet parking and the option to stay at the club for a discounted rate if they want to take a last minute trip.

Fiscal woes

Since its opening, the Teton Club has sold 63 percent of its inventory. It began to suffer financial problems in June 2003, and the property filed for bankruptcy five months later.

Last summer, American Resorts Development Jackson, a group of investors headed by Doug Bech, CEO of Raintree Resorts International, injected \$2.4 million into the resort to satisfy creditors, Bech said in July. The investment will allow the resort to complete a long-awaited restaurant by July 1 and continue selling memberships.

"It was a confluence of unlikely events coming together," Hedbabny said of the Resort's financial struggles. "I'm confident in saying it had nothing to do with the quality, value or presentation of the product."

To encourage a positive relationship between owners and staff, the Resort's

website has a private forum for Members to provide feedback and communications. Reservations are handled by a single person who is familiar with Members' preferences and special requests.

Ownership options range from three to 12 weeks of the year and include an option for owners to utilize vacation properties owned by Raintree Resorts in other North American locations.