

Stagewest bucks no-frills trend with big payoffs Full-service hospitality is Pechet family way

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Bucking the trend to no-frills hotels with basic services seems to be paying off for the Pechet family's Mayfield Hospitality group, just renamed Stagewest Hospitality.

"I've always had a passion for amenities and we like to pamper our customers with full service," president Jason Pechet says.

"We've had great success with hotels that have the complete package -- dinner theatre, large food and beverage services, and in some cases casinos."

They operate Camrose Resort Casino, Stoney Nakoda Resort, Stage West Calgary and Stage West All Suite Hotel in Mississauga, and are partners with Bellstar Hotels and Resorts in properties in Canmore and B.C.

As for the name change, Pechet says it made sense to grab onto the most recognizable name associated with the group, especially as they no longer own the Mayfield Inn.

Dinner theatre trends have moved more to musical fare and comedy over the years, but the Calgary and Mississauga locations still sell 25,000 season tickets, Pechet says.

Jason's father Howard, a fixture around Edmonton for decades, now splits his time between here and California. Jason and brother David both moved from California to Calgary last year to be more hands on with the business. Howard still produces the dinner theatre shows, but has backed off the day-to-day operations somewhat. And they all come to Edmonton quite regularly to visit with 91-year-old family patriarch Eugene, who founded the company in 1944 when he bought the Auditorium Hotel in North Battleford, Sask.

Their only commercial presence in Edmonton these days is the recently opened Violino Gastronomia restaurant. "It gets us back in the door, and in the next five years I'd like to see us have a hotel property there," Jason says.



CREDIT: Ed Kaiser, The Journal

Jason Pechet, president of Stagewest Hospitality, stands outside Violino Gastronomia, a potential future hotel site in Edmonton.

"We feel very comfortable in Alberta and Edmonton."

BUILDING PIONEER DIES

Family and friends of Lloyd Christenson gathered at Calvary Lutheran Church Tuesday to say farewell to the founder of Christenson Developments.

The apartment, condo and church building pioneer died of a heart attack last week at 79.

He was born in Strongfield, Sask., and lived in Kingman and Camrose before moving to Edmonton in 1954 with wife Joyce. They had five children, Greg, Lynne, Randy, Jeff and Gary. Greg now runs the successful company, and Lynne and Randy are also involved.

A service was also held Monday for his friends at Devonshire Village, the Christenson-built facility where he lived.

RETAIL SUPERSTAR

Brick Warehouse founder Bill Comrie is getting a relatively rare lifetime achievement award from the Retail Council of Canada.

"Over the course of his distinguished career, Bill's combination of ingenuity, business acumen, work ethic and kindness continue to leave an indelible mark on the Canadian retail landscape," RCC president Diane Brisebois says.

The award is only presented to people with at least 25 consecutive years in an executive retail position. Former winners include Walter Hachborn of Home Hardware Stores, Herschel Segal of Le Chateau, Richard Currie of Loblaws, and Thomas and Sonja Bata of Bata Shoes.

Comrie, who stepped down as The Brick's chairman and CEO in 2004, can add the award to the dozens of others he has in his trophy room, including the Order of Canada.

HERE AND THERE

Dine Alberta, the program that encourages restaurants to use local ingredients, has gone year-round after five years as a fall event. There are now 100 participating restaurants across the province. Got to www.dinealberta.ca for listings and driving directions ... Montana Congressman Denny Rehberg and 10 companies interested in doing business with Edmonton partners will be at the World Trade Centre May 29 and 30. There are one-on-one meetings, a lunch, and a networking reception. Info at www.edmonton.com/montana ... You can have your picture taken with Skimmer, the world's largest rubber duck at 24 feet tall, at the official opening of Sundance Spas of Edmonton's new location at 11279-170 St. on May 29. Proceeds from the sale of hot dogs and pop will go to the Alberta Lung Association. It's Sundance's 30th year in Edmonton, president Don Wilson says ... Retiring CV Technologies board member Harry Buddle, former CEO of Servus, received an award from the Cold-fX company for his service at the official opening of the \$11-million headquarters in Edmonton Research Park last week ... During a presentation to the Canadian Association of University Research Parks conference on the trend to sustainable buildings,

Edmonton architect Vivian Manasc made reference to something called low-energy vertical circulation devices. That would be stairs, she added with a smile ...

Micralyne Inc. is a finalist for the 2008 Canadian Advanced Technology Alliance award for private sector leadership in advanced technology. Micralyne develops and manufactures MEMS (Micro-Electro-Mechanical-Systems) based products that enable industrial components to be significantly smaller, faster and less expensive. The awards are in Ottawa June 10.

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