

RETRO MEETS REFINED AT BOZEMAN'S NEW MOTEL

RSVP, PLEASE

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Hillary and Haylee Folkvord launched Bozeman's stylish RSVP Motel and Farmer's Daughters cafe serving locavore food amid bold art, coffered ceilings and a chandelier from Ngala Trading Co.

When sisters Hillary and Haylee Folkvord leapt into the boutique hotel business with the restoration

of the Sacajawea Hotel, a 1910 building in Three Forks, Montana, they couldn't have anticipated how much they would love the process. But entrepreneurialism is in their DNA. Their parents founded the Montana Wheat company, and the sisters started their first business venture at the ages of 12 (Hillary) and 6 (Haylee), selling wheat bouquets to tourists. Once the hotel was launched, they were soon eyeing a defunct motel in Bozeman.

The Rainbow Motel was in deplorable condition when they purchased it. "We thought we'd just put a little lipstick on it," recalls Hillary, "but ended up taking it down to the studs. And it's been really cool to see the building come back to life."

The Folkvord sisters retained Love Schack Architecture and Abby Hetherington Interiors to oversee the renova-

tion. Their approach to design was holistic. "Every hotel should have a signature scent, a signature color and a signature play list," says Hillary. At the RSVP Motel, guests are offered a glass of champagne upon check-in and can mingle with locals at the Farmer's Daughters cafe, which emphasizes healthy, sustainable and locally sourced ingredients and has become a community gathering spot.

Hetherington chose energetic statement colors and made some bold moves in such items as pink plaid dressers and blue velvet headboards. "Hillary's and Haylee's aesthetic is more refined than would have been appropriate; >>

BELOW, LEFT: Designer Abby Hetherington forged partnerships with artists and Italian furniture designers for the boutique hotel's interiors. BELOW, RIGHT: The rooms feature saturated colors, modern lines and unexpected details such as "wall wraps" of enlarged fine art photos and playful furniture, like the pouf on legs.





it needed to tell the story of an old motor inn,” she explains. “They wanted pink, with soft colors. We took their palette and used more primary colors and mauve pink.”

Hetherington flew with her staff to Italy to meet manufacturers and craftsmen, forging partnerships with high-end Italian lines for closet systems, beds, side tables, chairs and sofas. She worked with artists to create wall wraps, such as feather patterns and abstract designs she enlarged. Everything had to be commercial grade, indestructible and nonflammable, a learning process for all.

For a designer who undertakes a lot of residential projects, the opportunity to work on a hotel and restau-

rant was transformative. And unlike residential projects, this high-end design is accessible to the public, and at a reasonable price. The RSVP’s 40 rooms consistently receive rave reviews from travelers, who appreciate the motel’s blend of comfort, design, attention to detail and luxurious amenities. As one TripAdvisor reviewer says in a typical 5-star rating, “This newly renovated motel is the definition of retro meets refined.” ○

ABOVE, LEFT: Love Schack Architecture led the radical remodel of the old Rainbow Motel, which has revitalized a quiet area in downtown Bozeman. ABOVE, RIGHT: Designer Hetherington delights in creating surprising combinations, such as a pink plaid console set against a deep blue wall.