

Sports franchise mogul opens Hyatt Place Phoenix/Mesa

by **Angelique Soenarie** - Apr. 7, 2009 10:01 AM
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Lewis Wolff, real estate developer and sports franchise mogul, is adding another hotel franchise to his collection.

Wolff, owner of the Oakland A's major league baseball team will open Mesa's first Hyatt Place hotel on April 14.

Workers are still putting the finishing touches on the The Hyatt Place Phoenix/Mesa, 1422 W. Bass Pro Drive, which is on the east side of the Mesa Riverview development's

The \$27 million hotel will target corporate guests and tourists from all over. Hyatt Place is a business-travel franchise brand of Chicago-based Global Hyatt Corporation

The Mesa hotel offers 152 rooms and is considered an economic boost for the district and the city. It is within walking distance of Riverview's Cinemark Theatres, Toby Keith's I Love This Bar and Grill, Bass Pro Shops and other family entertainment, restaurants and shops.

Originally, Wolff considered designing the hotel with a baseball theme because it is minutes away from local spring training games, but he changed his mind saying it would have been "silly and stale after awhile."

Delving into mid-scale hotels is a new venture for Los Angeles-based Wolff Urban Development, LLC a real estate investment group with a portfolio that boasts luxury hotels and resorts, sports teams, upscale restaurants and commercial properties. Wolff said he is not trying to build a hotel empire, but he likes being apart of the business.

"We do a hotel only when we want to do one," Wolff said. He added that Mesa Riverview "is a well-located piece of land that nobody noticed, and where someone can walk out (from the hotel) and go to six or seven restaurants."

"We do think the limited-service hotel with an upbeat kind of design has a market that is different than our Four Season resorts. And we like to experiment. This is new to us," said Wolff, who is developing a second Hyatt Place in Fresno, Calif.



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The 9-hole executive putting green next to a gated pool with waterfall for guests at the new Hyatt Place in Mesa. The hotel opens April 14.

The four-story hotel, with a 40-member staff, will feature a 24-hour café where guests order from a computer, swipe their room key and wait for their meal. A lounge area and public computers are available. Guest rooms are equipped with a refrigerator, sofa sleepers and media and entertainment centers. Other amenities include a fitness center, a heated outdoor pool with a rock waterfall and a nine-hole executive putting green. A shuttle will transport guests back and forth to the Mesa Riverview's theater district.

"We still think Mesa is a fantastic growing and solid area. The second reason is we really liked dealing with the city and city manager," Wolff said.

Wolff is well aware of the national decline in leisure travel given the down economy, but he thinks Hyatt Place hotels have a better chance of filling up for business meetings and ongoing events. The Hyatt Place Phoenix/Mesa will have several meeting rooms and is equipped with Wi-Fi and other high-technology for business meetings.

"Spring training always comes at the high season, so it's not too hard to fill a hotel. We'll have a quite a bit of activity," he said. In addition to year-round executive meetings, "There's a lot of professional sports activities that people don't realize go on the rest of year," he said.