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# The posh pivot: Palm Beach County hotels open, renovate with more perks, luxury focus

***Palm Beach County hotels unveil multi-million dollar renovations, new restaurants and lots of extras for guests. Many of these hotels are aiming for business and leisure luxury-minded travelers.***

Alexandra Clough | Palm Beach Post

The Ben hotel in [West Palm Beach](#) is a popular destination known for its glamorous interiors and waterview rooftop bar.

But for the winter months, general manager Bernardo Neto wanted an extra perk for hotel guests. After weighing different ideas, Neto finally settled on something not only outside the box, but also outside a typical Florida activity: [an outdoor frozen ice skating rink](#). In November, The Ben opened the rink outside the hotel at 251 N. Narcissus Ave.

Neto said The Ben's hotel's success is enhanced by not only offering a place to stay and dine, but also by offering "great experiences ... The Ben is a boutique hotel, and we have to sell our story."

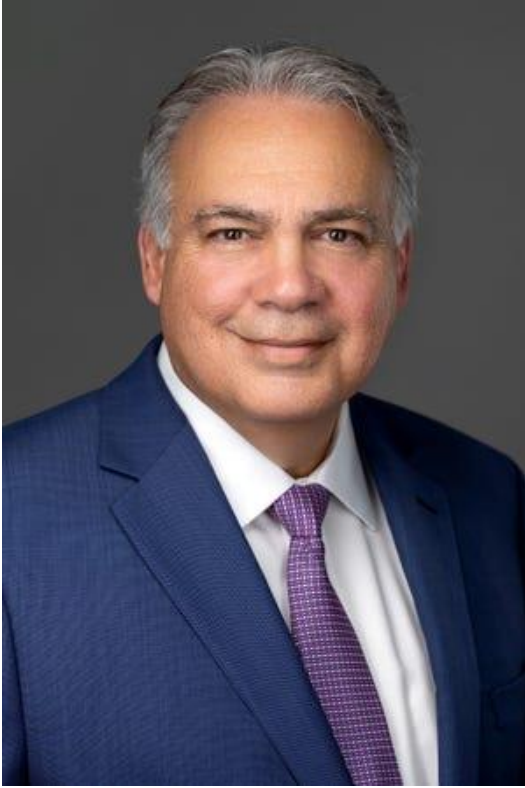
The Ben isn't alone in trying to offer fresh attractions to hotel guests.

Throughout Palm Beach County, hotels are unveiling multi-million dollar renovations, new restaurants and even access to new private clubs. Many of these hotels are aiming for luxury-minded travelers in the business and leisure sectors.

Hotel operators and investors say the county is becoming more of a year-round destination thanks to the growth of its financial and health care industries.

From June to September, Palm Beach County ranked No. 1 in terms of occupancy growth, and No. 2 for average daily rates, outperformed other parts of the state during the past few months, according to the The Palm Beaches, Palm Beach County's tourism marketing arm.

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And 2025 looks very bright: The county expects not only individual leisure and business travelers but also an increase in group travel, said Milton Segarra, president and chief executive of The Palm Beaches tourism group.

"It's a good time to be in the hospitality and tourism business in Palm Beach County," Segarra said.

### **Hotels unveil upgrades as economy booms post-COVID**

The timing is good for hotels just opening or completing renovations.

In northern Palm Beach County, the Hilton Singer Island Resort on Singer Island in Riviera Beach recently completed a renovation and rebranded as the Singer Oceanfront Resort, part of the Curio Collection, an upscale brand by Hilton.

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Another upscale hotel, the luxury wellness-oriented Amrit Ocean Resort, opened last year on Singer Island.

In southern Palm Beach County, both the The Seagate Hotel in downtown Delray Beach and The Boca Raton's Beach Club recently completed extensive renovations.

Meanwhile, new hotels are in the works or are starting construction in West Palm Beach.

The 404-room [Signia hotel](#) is planned as a second Hilton-branded hotel for the Palm Beach County Convention Center. Construction is slated to begin this year.

Just north of the downtown, the 201-room [Nora Hotel](#) is starting construction in the Nora District, a newly-created dining and retail destination set to open in a few months.

Real estate experts say the hotel upgrades are a consequence of the county's vibrant economy, thanks to the [migration of companies and residents](#) during and after the COVID pandemic.

## **Investors planning boutique hotel for new WPB district**

Although Wheelock hopes to sell The Ben for a big profit, the firm isn't taking all of its money off the hospitality table in Palm Beach County.

In November, Wheelock and its hotel partners broke ground on The Nora Hotel in the new Nora dining and entertainment district in West Palm Beach. The hotel is slated for completion by the fall of 2026.



The Nora Hotel's [operators](#), Richard Born and Ira Drukier of BD Hotels, along with acclaimed hotelier Sean MacPherson, are seasoned pros from New York. Their properties include The Mercer and The Bowery hotels.

In an interview, Born said he felt very comfortable designing and opening a hotel in West Palm Beach, which Born calls ["the coolest part of Palm Beach County."](#)

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"What's happened since COVID has driven this market to prices where the high-end hotels are definitely worth developing," Born said.

Much of that demand is driven by relocating New Yorkers, he said.

As a result, "we have a very good handle on the market" as it relates to the types of hotel flourishes sought by these new Palm Beach County residents, Born said.

Born describes The Nora Hotel as a sophisticated boutique hotel. Prices aren't yet set but are likely to hover in the \$500 to \$700 range during season, under the \$1,000 or more mark typically found in Palm Beach during winter season, Born said.

A major perk for The Nora Hotel is its main restaurant, Pastis. The famed New York City Parisian-style brasserie is by James Beard Award-winning restaurateur Stephen Starr.

A rooftop restaurant and bar planned by Starr are also in the works, Born said.

Timothy Hodes, managing director and head of hotel acquisitions at Wheelock Street Capital, explained why Wheelock is staying in the hotel business in Palm Beach County.

"It used to be a major leisure market," Hodes said. "But there's a diversity of demand that has changed over the years. There's a lot more corporate travel and businesses coming into this submarket to make it a year-round market."

***To read the entire article, click [here](#).***