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Thursday, February 6, 2020

POSTANDCOURIER.COM

Charleston, S.C. \$1.50

## BUSINESS

### Church St. lodging to reopen as Emeline

212-room hotel to offer retail, gallery, dining

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A former chain hotel in the heart of downtown Charleston's tourism district is almost ready to open after a complete overhaul of the property was launched last year.

Emeline, a new lodging concept opening in what used to operate under the DoubleTree flag, is slated to debut in May.

The Church Street property will have 212 guest rooms — the same as the DoubleTree — and about 13,000 square feet of event space divided between 10 meeting venues.

Emeline will feature two dining options and a retail store that will be open to the public.

Clerks Coffee Co. will be a coffee shop with cafe-style dining. The second dining option, Frannie & Fox, will be open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The restaurant will serve "American ingredients with Italian sensibilities," according to the hotel's website.

The retail venue, the Keep Shop, is being described as a "luxury retail experience."

Guests will also be able to browse a gallery with work from local artisans, relax in an outdoor courtyard and exercise at an on-site fitness center.

Rooms will feature custom-made record players, ceramic vanity accessories made by Charleston artist Susan Gregory and bath products with an Emeline-branded signature scent.

Rockbridge, a private investment firm headquartered in central Ohio, is developing Emeline. Dallas-based hotel operator Makeready will manage it.

Rockbridge acquired the Charleston DoubleTree, which is on leased land, in late 2015. The sale price was not disclosed, but public records show the buyer took out a mortgage for up to \$95 million as part of the transaction, which also included the acquisition of Hank's Seafood Restaurant on nearby Hayne Street.

Makeready manages Hank's, too, as well as the recently opened event venue Hank's Social Hall.

Both the restaurant and the hall will be partner properties with Emeline.

### Church St. hotel to reopen as Emeline

LODGING, from B1

The hotel property, which is steps from Charleston's historic City Market, has been open to guests since 1991. It started as a Hawthorne Suites, and the flag was changed to DoubleTree in 1998.

During the renovations, which started in mid-2019, the majority of the hotel's rooms were closed but a portion of them were kept open and branded as the Hotel on Market.

The renovations involved redoing guest rooms, expanding bathroom facilities, freshening up the building's exterior and creating the new dining ven-

ues. The process was so extensive that general manager Brad Harvey, who will continue as general manager for Emeline, said it was "almost like starting over."

While the peninsula still has multiple large chain hotels, almost all of the more recently-opened lodgings or in-development hotel projects are independently branded and lean toward the luxury category.

That's true for two other hotels that are scheduled to open this year in Charleston's Historic District. A few streets over from Emeline, an as-yet-unnamed boutique hotel on State Street will likely open

later this year.

And on East Bay Street, the 45-room Saint Hotel is scheduled to open mid-year. The Saint also bills itself as a "luxury boutique" property.

Emeline is currently accepting reservations online for May 1 and beyond. The starting rate is around \$400 a night.

The hotel is also one of seven downtown lodgings offering hotel-and-ticket packages during Spoleto Festival USA, a 17-day arts extravaganza that starts May 22.

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