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Austins break ground on Newberg luxury inn

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By YVETTE SAARINEN
Of the News-Register

NEWBERG - The luxury wine country hotel planned in conjunction with the Springbrook development in Newberg will be called The Allison, according to the Austin family, which is developing the 450-acre property.

It will be an 85-room country estate inn, Joan Austin announced at the recent groundbreaking ceremony. Alan Grainger, a principal in the Seattle design firm GGLO, said it will provide luxurious accommodations befitting the Willamette Valley's famed pinot noir wine region.

The overall project includes 1,200 homes and a retail village, to be built out over a decade on land already lying within Newberg's urban growth boundary.

The inn will be one of the initial components, along with a spa, restaurant and conference center. Those core facilities are scheduled to open in the late spring of 2009.

Austin was joined at the ceremony by her daughter, Loni Austin Parrish; son, Ken Austin III; and daughter-in-law, Celia Austin. She said it marked another step toward fulfillment of a family dream.

Austin, partner with her husband, Ken, in the A-dec dental equipment company, said the inn takes its name from a 300-square-mile lake that covered the entire Willamette Valley for a time during the last ice age.

Lake Allison was formed when massive ice-age floods washed down from glacial Lake Missoula in Montana, scouring away the topsoil from eastern Washington and depositing much of it in the Willamette Valley. It was named in turn for the late Ira Allison, an Oregon State University geologist who documented its place in geologic history.

In addition to the hospitality and residential areas, the development will feature 50 acres of green spaces, including recreational trails for biking and walking, wetlands, streams and a small vineyard. The name pays homage to the historic community of Springbrook, once a major shipping center for the bounty of the Willamette Valley.

As the development begins to take shape, the historic Springbrook Schoolhouse will be renovated. An old church and train station may be restored as well.

"A great deal of consideration has gone into the planning, design, construction and operation of the development," Grainger said. A Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification will be pursued for the inn and spa.

Guests of the inn will drive under a porte-cochere and enter the natural stone building. Through the windows, they will see groves of shimmering aspen trees, enjoy the scents of a crackling fire and hear the gentle sounds of a water feature that begins outdoors and continues indoors.

The lobby will echo the exterior's natural feel with reclaimed limestone floors, slate and a rich combination of Northwest woods such as black walnut, white oak and Douglas fir. Floor-to-ceiling windows will let light pour into the lobby. The adjacent great room and restaurant will function as the inn's "living room," and will feature a massive two-sided stone fireplace and an adjoining 15-seat bar.

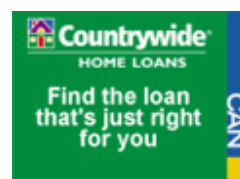
GGLO interior design principal Carol Schaefer said she was inspired by the area's natural surroundings in creating a color palette that draws on the rich farmland legacy of nearby woodlots and vineyards.

Guest rooms will range from 500 to 600 square feet for singles and 900 square feet for one-bedroom suites. The inn will feature one two-bedroom deluxe suite of 1,600 square feet.

The spa will feature a waterfall that will spill gently from one level to the next. International spa designer Health Fitness Dynamics of Pompano Beach, Fla., has been retained to handle the design details.

The Allison's conference center will host up to 200 for meetings and social events. Large shade trees on rolling hills of green will welcome guests to a stately arboretum.

For more information, visit www.springbrookproperties.com or call 1-503-537-2000.



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