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SEPTEMBER 2019

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On the cover

The Detroit Foundation Hotel's Apparatus Room offers New American cuisine — apt, given that the hotel and restaurant itself represents a sort of revival. Formerly the headquarters of the city's fire department, the renovation incorporated original touches from the 1929 building with standout updates. The result is an homage to a city that is reinventing itself. "We hope the way we inspire our team to grow and develop, while giving back the best we can to our guest, will be what in the long run makes the restaurant a future Detroit icon," the restaurant says. Read more about the restaurant and others in this month's F&B focus on casual luxury (page 22).

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APPARATUS ROOM

DETROIT FOUNDATION HOTEL

Detroit, Michigan

CHEF: *Thomas Lents*

CUISINE: *New American rooted in Midwestern ingredients*

SIGNATURE DISH: *Pici with coney style Bolognese and fresh horseradish. The Bolognese sauce is made with beef heart, the traditional meat in coney style chili for coney dogs, a Detroit dish.*

AVERAGE CHECK: *US\$70*

OPENED: *May 2017*

Local market positioning: The iconic location in the old Detroit Fire Headquarters and the amazing design physically place us apart. We were the first boutique hotel to hit the market that had a top-notch food and beverage program attached to it.

What's been tweaked since opening: We have been much busier than projected, and our adjustments to equipment, staffing and operations infrastructure have been substantial. When we built the hotel, we thought we'd do about half of what we're doing in food and beverage revenue.

We were just exceeding expectations so greatly out of the gate, and when you go into a building that has an adaptive, re-use style concept, you're limited to square footage. Later this year, we are adding additional refrigeration to meet demand.

Most successful promotion: Jazz Brunch is the second Sunday of every month and is gaining steam. It provides us with an opportunity to support local jazz musicians in a historical venue that brings people together as a place of community. We consistently bring in over 200 covers each Jazz Brunch Sunday, so the cost of the band is more than covered.

Biggest operations challenges: Managing expenses and especially labor is most difficult when there is a lack of historical trends and metrics to lean on. It is now easier as we enter our third year of operation and better understand the impact of citywide conventions and other demand generators. We also calculate and manage each line item

down to a cost per occupied room number on the hotel side and a percentage of revenue in the restaurant.

Future plans: We will continue to develop our concept with the inclusion of an in-house butcher shop, as we are getting approvals for it right now so we can process our meats in-house, and the development of our Chef Table incubator space. But our focus will be on continuing to develop our culture of hospitality in our staff and with our guests, and strengthen our collaborations with partners in the city.

Advice for hoteliers: We look at our space very much as a restaurant with hotels rooms built on top. This turns the traditional hotel format on its head a bit, but it has really centered us as a place in the community, a place in Detroit. The F&B component of our hotel is our connection to our community and makes us able to welcome in visitors as a true ambassador of our city and community.