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The Hotelitarians

How Valor Hospitality Partners
is changing the hotel game

Paige Harris
Director of Design and
Development,
Valor Hospitality

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Welcome to the show

**How Valor Hospitality Partners
is changing the hotel game**

Curious. Courageous. Does. If you're looking for a definition to define the Valor Hospitality Partners team and the impact they are having in the marketplace, you can start there.

Forging a reputation built on relationships, Valor Hospitality is a full-service hospitality acquisition, development and management company driven by excellence and innovation.

It all started in a restaurant kitchen, where co-founder and now CEO Euan McGlashan's career began. McGlashan was one of just six out of 100 entrants accepted into a university program for Hotel & Institutional Management. Accepted based on his work experience rather than high school results, he began working part-time jobs to pay his tuition.

Working his way up the ladder and into the industry, McGlashan ended up buying a small contract catering company, which he grew and sold. After being hired to help build and open a luxury hotel in Cape Town, South Africa, he surrounded himself with mentors, eventually finding his way to starting Valor

While the pandemic brought a need for comfort and health to the forefront of hotel guests' minds, as people's desires to get back out and travel, we feel that today's customers are looking for authentic experiences and a genuine connection.

Hospitality in 2012 with friend and business partner Steve Cesinger.

In 10 years, the company experienced an accelerated growth spurt, expanding its global footprint to include more than 80 properties throughout the US, Asia, Africa and Europe. Most recently, Valor Hospitality expanded its corporate office locations to include the Middle East.

We sat down with Valor Hospitality's Director of Design and Development Paige Harris to get an inside peek at how and why they do what they do.

Give us a snapshot of Valor Hospitality

Valor Hospitality Partners is a full-service hospitality acquisition, development and management company of alternative thinking enthusiasts, driven by excellence and innovation.



How does the overall design cater to what the area needs?

I've had the most involvement with McLemore and we have great photos of the ongoing construction, as well as good renderings to share.

McLemore is located in Rising Fawn, Georgia, atop Lookout Mountain and will be the first high-end resort in the area. It will offer one-of-a-kind mountaintop experiences to accompany the existing golf destination. Within the resort is over 10,000 square feet of conference space, a boutique spa, fitness center with separate Peloton spin room, infinity edge pool and multiple restaurants.

What are today's customers looking for?

While the pandemic brought a need for comfort and health to the forefront of hotel guests' minds, as people's desires to get back out

and travel, we feel that today's customers are looking for authentic experiences and a genuine connection. I see it in the change to a living room feel in a hotel lobby, the ability of guests to bring a laptop to the lobby and work (furniture connectivity) while surrounded by the buzz of other guests.

Also, it can be felt in how a guest wishes to understand more about the city in which they are staying – local purveyors and artisans products used in the hotel and available for guest purchase. Local artists work hanging on the walls. Design focused on the history of the place.

What's the brand's short-term strategy? Long-term?

From a hotel design perspective, our short-term goals focus on pushing our partners (architects, designers, branding specialists) for the best in creativity and innovation to make each property unique and remarkable.

Long-term goals are more focused on the overall success of a property, including teaching the staff about the design and/or technology that continues to tell the story of each property to our guests.

Give us a rundown of what you are seeing out there.

We are continuing to see increased innovation across hotel design, along with hotel owners being receptive to higher levels of creativity to help differentiate their product in the marketplace. One main area we are noticing in design is a move away from tradition.

Desks are being replaced with FF&E that can be used by a guest to work while in bed, or in a lounge chair. Freestanding nightstands with bulky drawers are becoming curated tables, or wall mounted/floating ledges. The need for drawers is not desired in hotel rooms because, who unpacks? FF&E design can be more streamlined as a result.

One-on-One with Valor Hospitality's Paige Harris



(architect, interior designer, owner, brand, construction team, etc.), communicating with hotel staff to help solve problems that arise after a hotel is open. For example: If guest-room lighting is a common complaint, how can I assist?, creating budgets for potential CapEx projects, making site visits to hotels under construction to make sure operational needs are met as field changes are made. I could probably go on and on about what I do.

What's the biggest item on your to-do list?

The list grows at a faster pace than it shrinks, but

currently it is a balancing act of reviewing architectural plans to critique operational efficiencies of a proposed hotel, managing various artisans who are executing design modifications at an operating hotel as part of ongoing capital improvements, and working closely with a GM on a renovation and FF&E refurbishment project to satisfy a PIP.

What's the most rewarding part of your job?

Working for a global hospitality company allows me to blend my love of design and travel. Being able to travel across our portfolio of hotels

and see firsthand an array of creative ideas allows me to constantly find inspiration.

What was the best advice you ever received?

Something that I carry from my professional to personal life, is to always be the best I can be. Whether that is in how hard I work or how I treat others.

What's the best thing a client ever said to you?

Honestly, a sincere thank you. A thank you for the hard work I put into a presentation, a project, the ongoing construction, and coordination efforts.

Describe a typical day.

Thankfully there are no typical days in my role at Valor, but if I were to try to describe a typical week, it would include reviewing design plans and presentations with the entire team



Every single Valor employee identifies as a Hotelitarian, creating a rare group of bold, creative specialists who have reimagined the hospitality industry.

What’s the biggest issue today related to design and construction?

Similar to other industries, the ongoing supply chain issues and related cost increase of materials continues to be one of the largest issues on the design/construction side.

Talk about the continued importance of sustainability today.

Valor Hospitality intends to become the leading hospitality company for sustainability. With each property we manage, we strive to partner with local businesses and

organizations to ESG to limit our impact on the environment.

For example, we are designing a pool bar at a beach front property and in the design, we are utilizing native (and sustainable) materials, wildlife friendly lighting to safeguard the sea turtle population, and keeping within a footprint to not encroach into the preserved ecosystem.

What type of opportunities do you see moving ahead?

Through the use of both design and technology, hotels have the opportunity

to create experiences that are more personalized to every guest. With so many people using their smartphones—including bypassing the front desk experience and opting for mobile check-in—how can hotels accept this technology?

Allowing guests to use their mobile phones in their rooms to control temperature and light levels, perhaps even a Bluetooth speaker to create their own soundtrack.

Also, using QR codes, especially for an artwork collection, guests can quickly scan and learn about a variety of the design details surrounding them. Lastly, social media usage. Creating areas within the hotel that will drive a guest to snap a photo and post to Instagram—could be a cozy corner, a unique piece of artwork or any other eye-catching moment that is purposefully designed.

What type of challenges have you seen?

Projects are becoming increasingly more complex and at times with condensed schedules, leading to challenges in the ongoing coordination between design principles and the pace of construction.

What changes do you expect to see for the 2nd half of 2022 and into 2023?

With business travel still not fully rebounded from the pandemic, we are seeing a good amount of shifting in the planning stages of a project.

For example, should we pivot away from ballrooms and private meeting rooms and reprogram to commingling work/idea rooms and studios? Our team is working closely to help hotel owners make those crucial design decisions to help best meet the future traveler’s needs.

What are the brand’s plans moving forward?

To continue to drive innovative ideas from all our design partners—from architects, interior designers and branding companies—so that we can deliver the best in market hotels, for both our owners and our guests. **CCR**