

**GRADUATE MADISON**

**OPENING DATE:** May 14, 2015

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** 72 guestrooms

**LOCATION:** Madison, Wisconsin, next to the University of Wisconsin

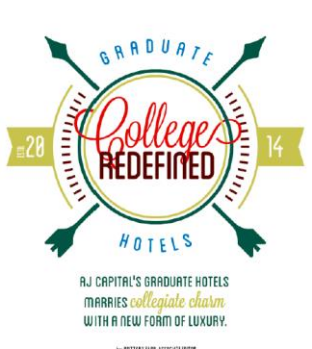
**GENERAL MANAGER:** Bill McIlwain

**OWNER:** AJ Capital Partners, Chicago

**DESIGNER:** Andrew Allford, chief creative officer, AJ Capital Partners

**DESIGN INSPIRATION:** Rustic meets modern. Part patina, part sleek, modern pieces hang from the lobby's ceiling, while contemporary art and books are tucked into a red leather sofa. The room is a mix of old and new, with a focus on local history and culture.

**NOTABLE FEATURES:** Complimentary Wi-Fi, 24-hour fitness center, high-end television in guestrooms, on-site restaurant, parking, grab-and-go and sit-down dining options, and rooftop bar.



**AJ CAPITAL'S GRADUATE HOTELS MARRIES COLLEGIATE CHARM WITH A NEW FORM OF LUXURY.**

By **WENDY WATSON**

When AJ Capital Partners opened Hotel Lincoln in Chicago in 2012, founder Ben Weprin and Andrew Allford, former chief development officer at Jose de Vries Hospitality, which operated the hotel, were quickly accepted by their clientele. Located about a mile from DePaul University, a considerable amount of business came from visitors, families and other guests associated with the school. This observation ultimately inspired Weprin to explore hotel development in underserved college markets. "The model really added up and we realized college towns were full of dark corners and great food," Allford explains. "These locals are excited about what they have, but the hotel product usually doesn't match up with the passion of the community."

The following year, Weprin convinced Allford to close his new San Francisco-based design business, Dirty Lines Design, to join him in Chicago full time to work exclusively on developing the Graduate Hotels brand. Today, the Graduate Hotels properties are open in several U.S. college towns, with several additional locations on the pipeline. Most recently, hotels in Madison, Wisconsin, Charlottesville, Virginia, and Oxford, Mississippi, opened as part of the Graduate Hotel collection.

"We're trying to recreate the typical college experience. Rather, we want to create a luxurious college experience," Allford says.

**Must-see grad in Madison**  
Formerly one of Campus Life, the

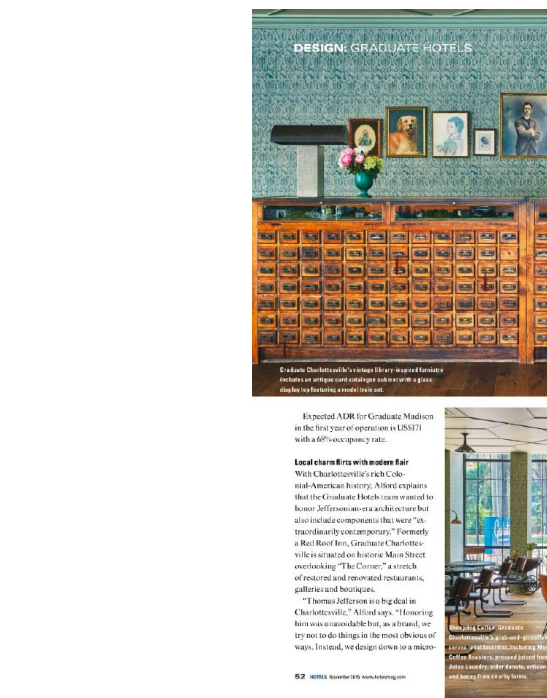


**GRADUATE MADISON OFFERS A CONSUMMATE COLLEGIATE STYLE WITH ITS PLANT PATTERNS AND RUSTIC CHARM. INSPIRED BY THE WATERFRONT LOCATION AND THE COMMUNITY'S TAKESTAY TRADITION, THE HOTEL STRIVES TO PROVIDE GUESTS WITH AN ACADEMIC MADISON EXPERIENCE.**

Among Allford's favorite design elements in the Graduate Madison is the bright lobby, where wooden canopies with lightbulbs hang from the ceiling and the front desk is inspired by a vintage typewriter case. "When guests are staying with us in Madison, they definitely know they are in Madison," Allford says. "Graduate Madison was designed to reflect the community's 'collegiate lifestyle and its civility awareness.'"

Other design elements include hallway carpeting with a pattern reminiscent of an aerial view of the Wisconsin state capital, ink drawings of the popular local fringe character "Stoner," Dan Madson, and locally inspired pillows labeled "local" and "wild."

Graduate Madison also features the Madson Blood, a rooftop bar and restaurant serving craft cocktails with panoramic views of downtown, and Portage PA, an all-day restaurant with grab-and-go and sit-down options.



**GRADUATE CHARLOTTESVILLE**

**OPENING DATE:** June 25, 2015

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** 135 guestrooms

**LOCATION:** Charlottesville, Virginia, across the street from the University of Virginia

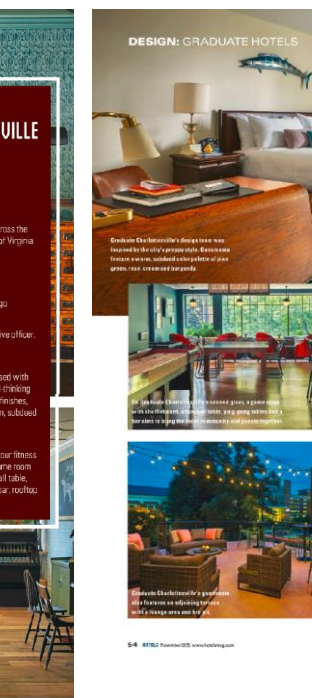
**GENERAL MANAGER:** Yolanda Armstrong

**OWNER:** AJ Capital Partners, Chicago

**DESIGNER:** Andrew Allford, chief creative officer, AJ Capital Partners

**DESIGN INSPIRATION:** Jeffersonian style juxtaposed with contemporary and forward-thinking design. Colonial-American finishes, rustic flooring and a modern, subdued color palette.

**NOTABLE FEATURES:** Complimentary Wi-Fi, 24-hour fitness center, hotel bike rental, game room with shuffleboard, a foosball table, two ping-pong tables and bar, rooftop bar and coffee shop.



**GRADUATE CHARLOTTESVILLE'S VINTAGE LIBRARY INSPIRED FACILITY INCLUDES AN ANTIQUE CABINET COLLECTOR WITH A PASSION FOR COLLECTING SMALL ART.**

Expected ADR for Graduate Madison in the first year of operation is US\$171 with a 68% occupancy rate.

**Local charm thrives with modern flair**  
With Charlottesville's rich Colonial-American history, a story explains that the Graduate Hotel team wanted to honor Jeffersonian-era architecture but also include components that were "a bit more contemporary." Formerly a Red Roof Inn, Graduate Charlottesville is situated on historic Main Street overlooking "The Corner," a stretch of restored and renovated restaurants, galleries and boutiques.

"Thomas Jefferson is a legend in Charlottesville," Allford says. "His vision for this town was a model of civility, as a brand, we try not to do things in the most obvious of ways. Instead, we design down to a micro-

level, which a guest is not initially ever going to walk in and immediately pick up on. However, we hope that guests will see there is something really special in our locale."

For thirty guests, student and local, Shopping Cart Coffee and a rooftop bar offer a variety of beverages. On the hotel's second floor, a game room with the foosball, a foosball table, two ping-pong tables and a bar designed to bring the local community and guests together in a relaxed, unique atmosphere. The space also includes an adjoining patio with a lounge area and fire pit.

"We try to design for the locals because we want the locals to see our spaces as a community living room," Allford says. "If there are local people hanging out at our hotel, our guests will have an opportunity meet the real community. Hopefully, friendships and memorable experiences come out of that."

Expected ADR for Graduate Charlottesville in the first year of operation is US\$185 with a 68% occupancy rate.