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## Go

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## Get Schooled: Graduate Hotels are Here

AJ Capital Partner's recent concept (these guys are responsible for the Chicago Athletic Association and Auberge Resorts among other outstanding properties) accomplishes something that hadn't even been attempted by the hospitality industry: The Graduate Hotels seamlessly blend the nostalgia associated with college, the convenience of a central location, and really great design. By setting up outposts exclusively in college towns across the country (Tempe, Arizona; Charlottesville, Virginia; Athens, Georgia; Oxford, Mississippi; and Madison, Wisconsin), the thesis is to offer visiting parents, returning alumni, and tourists of every stripe a fun, and most importantly, well-priced place to stay.

In another brilliant stroke of why-didn't-we-think-of-it-first genius, the brains behind the Graduate, founder and CEO Ben Weprin, opted to revamp preexisting soul-less motels and shuttered hotels rather than build-out each space from scratch. To ensure the lobbies and guestrooms hearken back to each town's heritage, interior designers scoured local flea markets and antique stores for special regional accents, in addition to thoughtfully scattered elements of school pride, like University of Georgia's mascot Uga the bulldog adorning the bedside lamps in hotel in Athens. The on-site restaurants and bars also aim to please the local community just as much as hotel guests—the Oxford outpost, for example, plays host to nightly live blues at the rooftop bar, The Coop.

This year promises to bring with it brand-new Graduates to Ann Arbor, Berkeley, Durham, Richmond, and Lincoln. Check out the video for more behind-the-scenes info.

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