

https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/hotel-st-bernard-construction-to-pause-for-taos-ski-valley-season/article_16066962-9ded-11ef-8a91-e7cf93b2e681.html

Hotel St. Bernard construction to pause for Taos Ski Valley season

By Geoffrey Plant The Taos News

Nov 9, 2024



The Hotel St. Bernard under construction in Taos Ski Valley late last month. The larger-footprint homage to the much-smaller original Hotel St. Bernard, which ski valley legend Jean Mayer built in 1960, will recreate some features of the first iteration, including wall furnishings and the layout in some communal interior spaces, as well as the exterior deck next to Lift 1. Daniel Pearson/The Taos News

Daniel Pearson/The Taos News

TAOS SKI VALLEY — When Taos Ski Valley opens Thanksgiving Day, skiers and snowboarders will be able to gauge the scale of the ski corporation's new Hotel St. Bernard, although construction has been paused during the winter months.

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)

What they'll see is a concrete monolith much larger than the original Hotel St. Bernard, which ski valley legend Jean Mayer built in 1960 and owned and operated until his death in 2020. But when complete, the new will recall the original through familiar wall furnishings, the layout in some communal interior spaces, and the exterior deck next to Lift 1, a popular gathering spot.

Mayer had an agreement with Taos Ski Valley owner Louis Bacon that the ski resort would purchase the property upon Mayer's death and honor the spirit of the hotel. Peter Talty, Taos Ski Valley Inc. vice president, said the company intends to honor that agreement by reusing what it can and supplementing with local materials.

For example, the wood frame being prefabricated in Albuquerque comes from trees felled in Kachina Basin during the December 2022 high-wind event that knocked down huge swaths of forest across the Enchanted Circle, he said.

"We continue to be driven by preserving the special spirit and essence that proprietor Jean Mayer infused in the Hotel St. Bernard," Talty said.

While the ski resort is open during the winter months, crews will attend only to maintenance and snow removal. Construction will resume in the spring with installation of the wood frame.

"We're working hard to keep a tight and confined construction site to not impact the guest experience," Talty said.

The reconstruction project was announced in 2022 but quickly hit delays. The first involved a legal challenge to the original conditional use permit from the Village of Taos Ski Valley, which opponents said ignored eight conditions recommended by then-Community Development Director Patrick Nicholson.

The permit was eventually reissued with several added conditions, including a caveat that the village should supply drinking water only if there is actually adequate water and reliable infrastructure to deliver it. Taos Ski Valley Inc., meanwhile, has doubled down on helping the village improve the reliability of its municipal water system.

Nicholson was fired in April, not long after he sent a letter to the ski corporation accusing it of modifying construction plans substantially without disclosing the changes. Taos Ski Valley Inc. responded, saying it had followed to the letter the detailed construction plans it filed with Nicholson's office, contending it was up to Nicholson to catch the modifications.

The village never gave an official reason for Nicholson's termination.

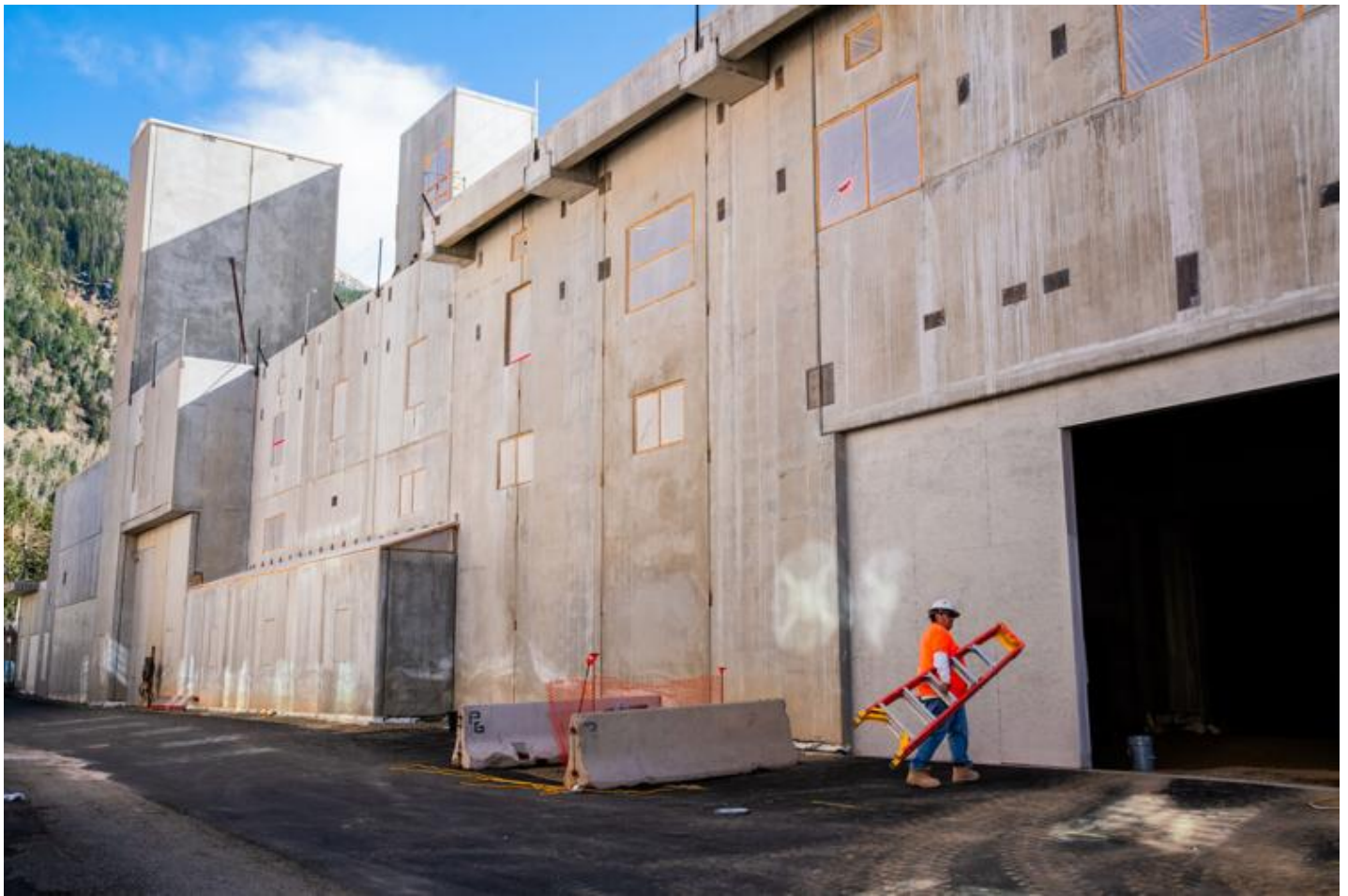
Construction changes included moving an underground parking garage entrance and modifying the alley that runs between the new hotel and the Snakedance Condominiums next door. The new Hotel St. Bernard appears destined to block most, if not all, southern-facing condo views, said John Childress, president of the Snakedance Homeowners Association.

"We're in negotiations with TSV over the issues; we're looking for a solution," he said.



The Hotel St. Bernard rises next to The Blake, left, in Taos Ski Valley.

Daniel Pearson/The Taos News



The Hotel St. Bernard is set for completion in 2025.

Daniel Pearson/The Taos News

Newly appointed village of Taos Ski Valley Administrator Rick Bellis said he wasn't quite up to speed yet on the design and permit issues Nicholson had highlighted before he was terminated. "I have a meeting set up with the ski valley [corporation]," said Bellis, a former manager for the town of Taos. "I'm preparing for that meeting."



The Hotel St. Bernard is under construction in Taos Ski Valley.

Daniel Pearson/The Taos News

This story first appeared in The Taos News, a sister publication of The Santa Fe New Mexican.