

# CALGARY HERALD

BREAKING NEWS AT CALGARYHERALD.COM

PROUDLY CALGARY SINCE 1883

SATURDAY, JULY 3, 2010

## Acquisition all part of the plan

KATHY MCCORMICK  
CALGARY HERALD

**B**ellstar Hotels and Resorts is on the move — and that fits perfectly with the plan for the Calgary-based company, says its president and CEO.

"It's all part of the vacation and family get-together experience that is Bellstar's philosophy," says Ed Romanowski.

"We're trying to build on a series of resorts that will be tied to the same management and offer the same quality."

The company, which first started managing boutique resort hotels, has expanded to include development of destination resorts and boutique hotels in Western Canada.

Its latest acquisition is Solara Resort and Spa in Canmore.

"It was a troubled property, but the basic design and concept were very good," says Romanowski.

"Our job is to finish up the resort and bring the full vision to

completion.

That means finishing the property largely as it was envisioned so we can gain the confidence of the consumers that they will have the amenities that were originally planned."

It includes various elements such as a deli, spa, fitness area and pool, but Bellstar will also add a conference room and 207-seat theatre, he says.

"The meeting and conference facilities are critical in this market, especially because it is so competitive in Canmore."

Spirit Ridge — the vineyard resort and spa in Osoyoos, B.C., that is a partnership with the Nk'Mip First Nation — was the first and most successful project to start the diversification of Bellstar to include development as well as management.

Now in its second phase, Spirit Ridge is offering one- to three-bedroom suites and one- and two-bedroom villas.

The first private residence club will be in the next phase of the development, with 40 luxu-

rious villas between the desert cliffs and Sonora golf course. A 4,500-square-foot clubhouse is also planned.

"We've also just finished the conference centre," says Romanowski.

Other developments include Kokanee Springs Resort in B.C., "a long-term destination resort," says Romanowski. "It has a 42-year-old golf course that was designed by the same person who designed the Jasper Park Lodge golf course."

Plans call for a 64-unit hotel, as well as villas and cottages "to appeal to a broader family market for golfers who want a more luxurious, longer stay," says Romanowski.

Canyon Desert in Oliver, B.C. is a resort community based on golf that will be another partnership with the Osoyoos Indian Band.

The key "is having a variety of different resorts," he says.

"Each is unique and different from each other, but all offer the consistent service and quality. It



also satisfies people's needs and wants by giving them a variety of experiences."

The company continues to manage other destination resorts and boutique hotels.

"At the same time as we are expanding our operations, we are increasing our management of condos across Western Canada," says Romanowski.

"We've just added Whistler and Pemberton to our destination operations.

"We'll continue to expand in different locations."

Calgary Herald Archive  
**Spirit Ridge was the first and most successful project in Bellstar's diversification into development management.**