

Commercial Real Estate

This local architect has been tasked with modernizing the Ritz-Carlton. Here's how he plans to do it



Future views from the Ritz-Carlton in SoBro.

METRO PLANNING DEPARTMENT



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The Ritz-Carlton name can conjure a distinct image: candel chandeliers, maroon velvet, shiny brass, maybe a white-haired man standing in a plush lobby, sporting a monocle and a gold-handled cane.

But [Jared Bradley](#) – a local architect who is also one-third of the development team behind [Nashville's Ritz-Carlton hotel](#) – is bringing the luxury brand into the 21st century.

Bradley says he and business partner [Tim Morris](#), who is married to [Angela Marriott](#), of the famous Marriott hotel family, were recently tapped by an executive in the hotel company to start reimagining the brand for the modern day. The development team, which also includes Nashville businessman [Steve Armistead](#), are now pursuing several Ritz-Carltons across the country.

“We’re not changing the service and the quality; we’re changing more of the aesthetic,” Bradley told the Business Journal during a recent visit in his downtown office.



Jared Bradley, who owns The Bradley Project and is one member of M2 Development Partners, which is developing the Ritz-Carlton in SoBro.

PROVIDED BY THE BRADLEY PROJECTS

Nashville’s Ritz-Carlton is expected to break ground in SoBro by year’s end. Lead developer Morris announced the project last year, bringing hopes of another luxury hospitality company’s Nashville debut. But Ritz-Carlton, unlike millennium-era brands like the W, has 100 years of history behind it.

The hotel brand’s original user, the generation that liked things like merlot, dark color palettes and gold everywhere, has shifted, Bradley said. Now, baby boomers and Gen X are the hotel’s main demographics – and their preferences are very different.

“There’s sort of been a void in the market because that shift has happened. But the Ritz-Carlton maybe hasn’t really evolved,” he said.

Now, Bradley said, the goal is to revamp the brand without offending the people who are loyal brand supporters.

So what will Nashville’s Ritz-Carlton look like?

“It’s really about finishes; it’s about natural light, it’s about colors,” coupled with the hotel’s five-star service, Bradley said. “It’s like theater design: We’re changing the set, but the play is still the same.”

For instance, marble is a classic building material that evokes sophistication and luxury. But in older architecture, much of the marble used is dark in color, like emerald green or black. Using lighter marble is one way to modernize the aesthetic while paying homage to classic signs of opulence, Bradley said.

“It’s still going to have that heavy, ornate feel at some level. But the color palette changes, which makes the space feel lighter, makes it breathe better.”

That’s the essence of what Bradley wants for a Ritz-Carlton in 2022: ease and function, coupled with luxury. That can be accomplished through wood as well – preserving natural finishes of different wood types to keep an organic feel, as opposed to dyeing them.

Even the ultra-dated brass can be salvaged in design, Bradley said. It just comes down to thinking about the building on a location-by-location basis, instead of trying to design a one-size-fits-all project. That takes a lot of restraint, he said.

“One or two wrong moves, and you can mess the entire space up pretty quickly.”

<https://www.bizjournals.com/nashville/news/2022/08/22/jared-bradley-ritz-carlton.html>