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The 65,000 s/f Madison Beach Hotel owned by the Duques family nears completion

April 14, 2011 - Connecticut

As the curtain prepares to rise on the new Madison Beach Hotel at 94 West Wharf Rd., near Guilford and New Haven, New England beach lovers are already buzzing about architect and designer Glen Coben's creative rendition of the classic 19th century inn. And while the new cedar shingle façade pays homage to humble origins, the interior of the four-story inn reflects an intimate and understated luxury. With 33 guest rooms and three restaurants, the 65,000 s/f hotel is nestled at the curve of the Connecticut coastline on the Long Island Sound, directly on the beach.

Guest rooms, designed to evoke a nautical vernacular, are bolstered by water views that embrace a rich seafaring history with the benefit of modern creature comforts. Warm hues and custom millwork sheath the guest rooms, many of which include working fireplaces. In addition, each room has floor-to-ceiling French doors that lead out to private balconies overlooking the beach and Sound.

Under the meticulous direction of the Duques family, philanthropists and long-time residents of Madison Beach who are developing the site, the new structure alludes to the hotel's significant past but in a luxury environment.

"Ric Duques spent his childhood summers in Madison Beach, which is one reason why he cares so much about the area's history," points out Coben, principal and founder of Glen & Company Architecture. "His original intention was to restore the existing hotel, but there was too much damage. So instead, we captured the charm and essence of this quintessential New England beach inn, giving it a modern context in a gracious setting."

Located on the site of a circa 1800s rooming house for sailors and shipbuilders that later became a quaint tourist getaway, the architecture engages at first sight. Starting with a natural island and rock formation at the front, a first impression of the Madison Beach Hotel is instantly defined by a circular entrance. The reception lobby is framed by a huge picture window facing the beach. Off to the side is the Wharf Restaurant & Bar for casual dining. The second floor features a fine dining restaurant, banquet rooms and a small lounge, in addition to some guest rooms. On the third and fourth floors are guest rooms, exclusively, including a Honeymoon Suite with full kitchen and services, and views.

"In many ways, guests may expect a sophisticated Hamptons-style experience, especially in terms of comfort and beach accessibility," said Coben. "But the hotel is easier to get to from New York City and offers a more private, low-key ambiance, which I think many vacationers can appreciate."

The Madison Beach Hotel is privately owned by Henry "Ric" and Dawn Duques and slated to open in June 2011.

Founded in 2000 by Glen Coben, award-winning Glen & Company is an architectural and interior design firm specializing in the commercial, hospitality and retail sectors. The firm's experienced design professionals have a unique understanding of the special needs of the industries for which they design - from cultural and geographic considerations to strict budgetary and programming

requirements.

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