

"New" Westport Inn offers relaxed, comforting getaway

By ROBIN KAMINSKI Hour Staff Writer

WESTPORT -- Walking in from a brisk chill outdoors, a cozy living room space with a roaring stone fireplace awaits. With warm rays of sunshine flooding the lobby and a welcoming ambiance, the Westport Inn feels like a home away from home the second you step inside.

No expense was spared at the recently revamped inn, where a six-month, multi-million dollar project completely transformed the 51-year-old property into an upscale local hangout and charming getaway.

"It really gave the Inn a re-birth," said General Manager Yolande Lacan.

Rich, earthy colors flood every room with natural materials and contemporary furniture throughout. A total of 117 guestrooms make up the accommodations at the inn, which Lacan said offer cathedral ceilings, luxurious bedding and bath products, flat-screen TV's, iPod alarm clocks and free internet access. Bathrooms are outfitted with glossy subway tiles and a soothing spa-quality feel.

"One of the fun facts at the inn, is that the owner (Sheldon Stein) has started making furniture to destress and has since provided the inn with two tables made out of a large section of a maple tree," Lacan said. "There is also art on the walls, which he brought in from his office."

Lacan said the inn is poised to unveil its new saltwater indoor swimming pool in the next couple of weeks, which has moved from the "classic" building to the "deluxe" building. A brand new fitness center rounds out the area with Precor cardio equipment and free weights.

"The biggest complaint in this building was the smell of chlorine, so we wanted to create a more green, eco-friendly version," Lacan said. "The saltwater filtration system is also easier on the skin, hair and eyes than chlorine."

The re-design also includes 6,000 square feet of event space, including a ballroom entirely of windows on the wall and ceiling, offering natural light and a view of the wooded backdrop.

"One of the first events we held at the inn was a wedding on the night of Hurricane Irene," Lacan said. "I got a scramble call saying the venue they had no longer existed, so we made it happen. We've since had a number of events, including weddings, Bat Mitzvahs and corporate gatherings."

For those craving a bite to eat, Lacan said guests and those not staying at the inn can indulge in breakfast and dinner at its boutique restaurant, Eramosa, located adjacent to the lobby. Chef David Donnelly, formerly of Barcelona Restaurant is on hand to whip up an American-style menu that focuses on naturally raised and fresh-caught ingredients from Eastern Connecticut.

"It's comfortable and casual with munchies for food and wonderful dinners," Lacan said. "And it's ever evolving because we want to make sure our guests' needs are met first and foremost."

Another space located at the inn is in the works to become either another meeting space or possibly a comedy club, according to Lacan.

For more information or to book a stay, call (203) 418-2500.