

New hotel sets May opening in SoNo

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Photo: Alexander Soule / Hearst Connecticut Media

The Residence Inn by Marriott SoNo nearing completion on April 26, 2019, with the extended-stay hotel eyeing an opening for an unspecified day in May in South Norwalk, Conn.

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Marriott International has set an unspecified day in May for the opening of its newest extended-stay hotel in Connecticut: the Residence Inn by Marriott South Norwalk, around the corner from the city's restaurant row on Washington Street.

Construction started nearly two years ago on the eight-story hotel that will have just over 100 suites, with the chain now including the Residence Inn by Marriott SoNo on its main reservations website with an "opening soon" notation.

Marriott has more than 800 Residence Inn locations, among the newest located in downtown Stamford that [opened](#) late last year after an extended delay stemming to an investigation and [conviction](#) of its original developer, John DiMenna, on charges of fraud, with the Stamford portfolio of DiMenna's Seaboard Properties getting auctioned off piecemeal in bankruptcy court.

Danbury, Milford and Shelton also have Residence Inn by Marriott locations, with rates for a weekend stay in late May posted between \$145 and \$235 as of Friday, depending on the location and suite. The chain offers free breakfast and fitness rooms, among other amenities that include some suites accommodating pets.

The Stamford firm FD Rich led the development of the Residence Inn by Marriott SoNo at 45 S. Main St., with other FD Rich projects the past few years in Norwalk including the Pearl Apartments on Washington Street and the proposed Harbourside SoNo apartments on Water Street.

While those projects and others like the Washington Village and 19 Day have helped build up South Norwalk's residential population, the district has long lacked a hotel that can funnel visitors to the eateries at the crossroads of Washington Street and North Main Street.

Like other extended-stay hotels, Residence Inn by Marriott suites are geared toward business and leisure travelers who want a kitchenette to hold down meal costs, but presumably restaurateurs can expect some spillover business from entertainment tabs those visitors generate. In mid-April, Connecticut regulators gave a conditional approval for the chain to operate a bar at the Residence Inn by Marriott SoNo.

Connecticut hotel occupancies climbed only slightly last year to 62 percent on average, according to STR, a Henderson, Tenn. firm that compiles the figure from a monthly census covering nearly 370 venues statewide, including more than 70 in Fairfield County.

The dozen hotels in Norwalk had a better performance as tracked by STR, closing out the year with an average occupancy rate of 68 percent for a gain of 3.5 percentage points from 2017, while dipping slightly in the first quarter of this year.

Includes prior reporting by Paul Schott.

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