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Boutique Hotel Preston's \$6M facelift includes 'living art'

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As developers announce plans for more downtown boutique hotels, the city's first boutique hotel has spent \$6 million to make the experience even more edgy and artsy.

Hotel Preston, located at Interstate 40 and Briley Parkway has undergone a facelift that includes "living art" in its bar the Pink Slip, old black and white photos of music stars and a pillow menu.

While sipping on a drink, bar goers can watch a woman wearing a little pink slip walk around in a bedroom scene, doing "whatever she would do at home."

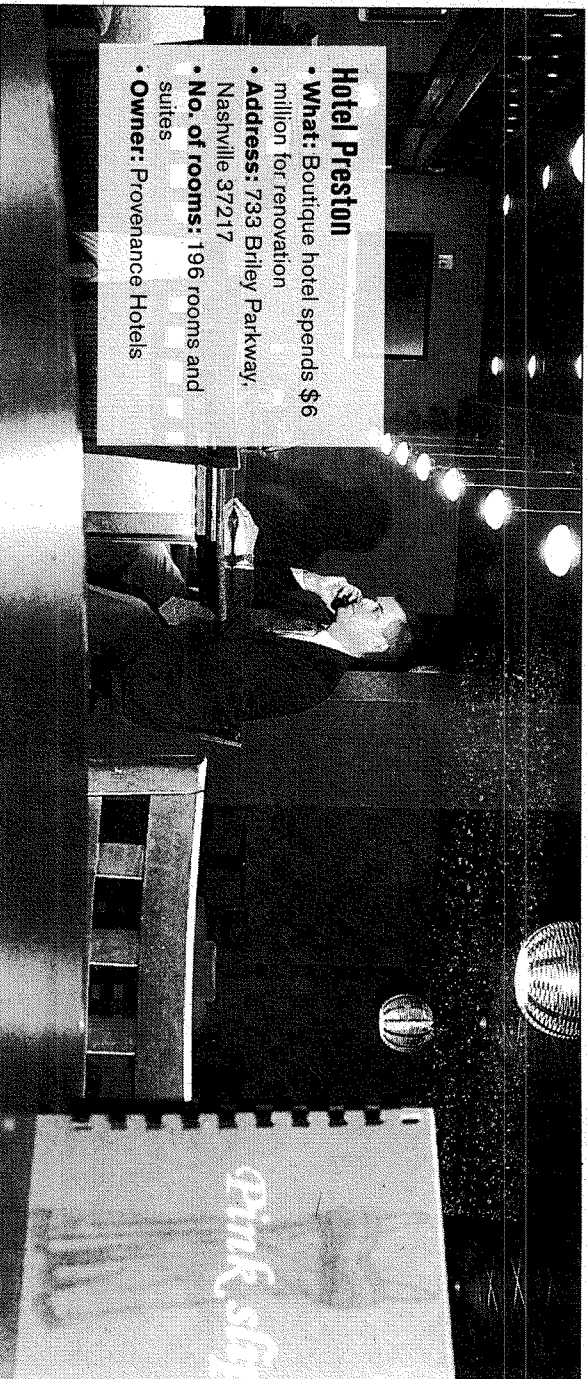
Since investing in Nashville three years ago and opening Hotel Preston, Howard Jacobs, COO of Provenance Hotels of Portland, Ore., says he is looking for opportunities to open more boutique hotels here.

Rising hotel rates and a city dominated by branded hotels make it the prime spot.

The average daily hotel rate for the Nashville area from January through October of last year (latest data available) was \$90.64 compared to \$83.85 in 2006 and \$78.39 in 2004, according to Smith Travel Research based in Hendersonville.

"Our customers love the non-brand. This market is ripe for an independent boutique," Jacobs says.

The key to boutique hotel success: keeping it "edgy and fresh."



Boutique hotels such as the Provenance Hotels-owned Hotel Preston have seen a resurgence in the Nashville area.

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While a new boutique hotel – Hotel Indigo – just opened in West End and two more are coming to downtown, Jacobs isn't worried about the competition because of his location.

He says being next to the airport, Opryland and many corporate locations caters to the busy business traveler.

Jacobs says his customers are tired of waking up in the same room, with the same desk and table, but in a new city.

And they like airport convenience.

While Hotel Indigo also has a hip, fresh approach to its hotel decor, Jacobs says it's still a chain of boutiques which cannot deliver a true independent boutique experience.

"It still feels like a chain hotel. Between the original art from hand-picked artists – many from Nashville – the Ed Clark photographs, our Pink Slip bar with its unique Pink Slip woman, guests clearly experience the Preston's individuality," he says.

Hotel Indigo owner and developer Richard Goodrum says Hotel Indigo is a branded boutique hotel – the West

End property was the brand's 10th – but its murals and decor change with the seasons, offering guests something that's always fresh.

Goodrum says his downtown/West End location doesn't compete with Hotel Preston's airport location because travelers who want to stay downtown are looking for a different type of boutique hotel.

"People want location and proximity [to attractions] especially if they are not renting a car," Goodrum says.

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