

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Friday, December 8, 2017

BUSINESS

TRAVEL



CINDY YAMANAKA — STAFF FILE PHOTO

Aqua Lounge's happy hour, pictured, draws a crowd on Oct. 12. The renaming of the 295-room Island Hotel comes two years after the Irvine Co. invested in a multimillion makeover of the property.

Irvine Co. unveils its new branding for luxury hotel

Name change among efforts to more closely align properties

By Nancy Luna
nluna@scng.com
@fastfoodmaven on Twitter

As it turns 50 this year, it looks like Fashion Island is getting a big birthday gift: a hotel.

The Irvine Co. plans to rename the Island Hotel in Newport Beach as the Fashion Island Hotel. Executives for the company's resort division made the announcement during the hotel's annual holiday party on Thursday.

"Adding 'fashion' to the hotel name bolsters the alignment between these two important properties while emphasizing Fashion Island as an iconic and luxury destination," Ralph Grippo, president of Irvine Co. Resort Properties, said in a statement.

Rebranding the hotel, which the Irvine Co. built in 1986, will allow the developer to market the two



COURTESY OF FASHION ISLAND HOTEL

The refresh of the hotel includes the guest rooms, the lobby and the hotel's premium restaurants.

Newport Beach properties together.

The hotel previously was managed by the Four Seasons until the Irvine Co. took over in 2005.

Gerard Widder, the general manager of the 295-room hotel, said the move makes sense because the hotel and mall have always complemented one another.

"Now that they are more closely aligned, both help complete the culture of the Fashion Island area — fortifying our commitment to its position as an important destination for local, regional and inter-

national business and leisure travelers," Widder said in a statement.

Hotel guests will see rebranding efforts surface in parts of the hotel over the next few months starting with a new aquamarine "Fashion Island Hotel" logo.

New mall perks for hotel guests include getting access to a Fashion Island personal shopper. The hotel, adjacent to the oval loop that encircles Fashion Island, is also planning to host trunk shows and add a trolley stop to shuttle hotel guests to and from the open-air shopping center.

The Irvine Co. said other rebranding efforts will include a new website, signage and new cocktails inspired by fashion designers — a nod to Fashion Island's luxury tenants.

The renaming of the hotel comes two years after the Irvine Co. invested in a multimillion makeover of the hotel.

The upscale coastal redesign included a refresh to guest rooms, the lobby and the hotel's premium restaurants.

The former in-house restaurant Palm Terrace was replaced with Oak Grill. A separate swanky bar dubbed the Aqua Lounge, featuring a 360-degree bar, also opened.

The top-to-bottom hotel makeover is part of a trend in the local hotel industry, especially coastal properties.

The overall hotel industry is on the upswing, according to market research firm IBISWorld. Industry revenue in 2016 rose 2.7 percent to \$169.5 billion. Much of that growth is tied to increases to consumer spending and travel, IBIS said.