

Business |

Two hotels in tourism corridor finish multimillion dollar renovation projects



The Holiday Inn & Suites across from Universal got a fresh new look inside and out. (Handout courtesy of Hemswoth Communications)

Trends change and two Orlando hotels just finished comprehensive renovations to bring new styles to life.

The Fairfield Orlando I-Drive Convention Center at 8214 Universal Blvd. just went through a \$3.5 million renovation, and the Holiday Inn & Suites Across from Universal Orlando at 5916 Caravan Ct had a multimillion dollar facelift.

It's something industry experts say has to happen about every seven years or around an ownership change.

“Brands go through quality assurance inspections once or twice a year to ensure an accommodation provider maintains the expected levels of quality throughout the property,” said Tammy Bateman, Vice President at [HREC Investment Advisors](#)-Orlando, which represents hospitality properties in various ways. “[Owners] keep the properties up to date and make sure they stay with their brand standards.”

The Fairfield Inn near ICON Park, built in 2001, was acquired in 2021 by Dallas-based [Paceline Equity Partners](#) for \$13.7 million. The new owners immediately turned over management and construction oversight to Rhode Island-based [StepStone Hospitality](#). Renovations began that July. All 160 guest rooms and all public spaces were part of the redesign to create a more modern aesthetic.





StepStone Hospitality added a new lobby bar to the Fairfield Inn as part of the comprehensive renovation. (Handout courtesy of StepStone Hospitality)

A key component of the renovation included adding a lobby bar.

“There’s a lot of revenue if you have the occupancy and clientele who will come in if you have food and beverage options,” Bateman explained. “There’s so much profit in beverages and food.”

Fort Lauderdale-based **InSite Group** purchased the Holiday Inn & Suites hotel across from Universal Orlando in 2020 for \$46.2 million and followed with the property improvement plan that included each of the 239 guest rooms and 151 suites with new seating, lighting, headboards, and more in a coral coastal color palette to create a more home-like feeling. Accommodations also boast new modern kitchenettes with mini-fridges, microwaves (suites only), and Keurig® machines.



The Holiday Inn has 151 suites, and each got a makeover with the blue and coral color palette, 55-inche TVs and new kitchenette. (Handout courtesy of Hemsworth Communications)

“These renovations deliver the hotel into the modern era and provide a comfortable stay at an exceptional price, which is a valuable opportunity for those visiting our local theme parks and attractions,” Carlos Adorno, general manager of the property, said in a written statement.

Both properties also overhauled conference facilities.

The Holiday Inn & Suites, which was built in 1971, has 13,000-square-feet of meeting and event space, including ballrooms. All have new paint, carpet, lighting, and other furnishings.

At the Fairfield, the 3,004-square-feet of conference space has new technology and versatile layouts to create a good environment for all kinds of events.



The Fairfield Inn upgraded its meeting rooms with new tech and flexible layouts. (Handout courtesy of StepStone Hospitality)

“This project represents our commitment to delivering exceptional guest experiences and providing event planners with an outstanding venue to host their events,” Jeff VanDiver, General Manager of the Fairfield, said in a written statement. “With the addition of the lobby bar and the complete revitalization of our guest rooms and conference spaces, we are confident that the Fairfield Orlando I-Drive Convention Center will exceed the expectations of both leisure and business travelers alike.”

The recent projects followed the December reopening of [Holiday Inn Orlando International Drive – ICON](#) in December 2022 after a two-year, \$10 million renovation. Alpesh Khushal, owner of Sun Vista Hotels, said the 223-room hotel was outfitted with IHG’s modern H4 design package. “My operational team and myself are very proud of the finished product to offer the leisure and business travelers,” he told GrowthSpotter.

Bateman said other hotels in the area will probably go through renovations in the next year or so, in anticipation of the expected opening of Epic Universe in summer 2025.

“I imagine everybody on I-Drive is gearing up and not only doing what is required by brand, but also gearing up for the fact that there is going to be new inventory there,” she said. “A lot of families book a year or at least six months out, so you want to make sure you’re overriding all the stuff that’s on the internet so you can get your name out there and make sure they see you’re new and improved or recently renovated.”

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