

## Noteworthy

# Wurzak Group's Dalmar Hotel Breaks Ground In Downtown Fort Lauderdale, Ready To Bring Trendy Rooftop Bar To Flagler Village In 2018

by [Lyssa Goldberg](#) | Summer 2016



Our trendy, modern hotels won't be limited to Fort Lauderdale Beach anymore.

A new dual-branded Starwood Hotel coming to downtown Fort Lauderdale celebrated its groundbreaking on Wednesday, Sept. 21. The 24-story, 323-room hotel will be a design-driven property inspired by the surrounding Flagler Village neighborhood. It will offer an independent coffee shop, restaurant and retail, plus the city's first high-rise rooftop bar.

The property, which is being developed by Wurzak Hotel Group, is divided into two hotels: The Dalmar, a four-star independent boutique hotel in Starwood's Tribute Portfolio, and The Element by Westin, geared toward extended-stay travelers. With an 18-month construction timeline, the hotel—located at the corner of NE Third Street and U.S. 1—should be open by spring 2018.

At the groundbreaking ceremony, Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jack Seiler noted The Dalmar Hotel represents the city's opportunity to change the image of its downtown. It used to be that if someone planned to open up a hotel in Fort Lauderdale, it had to be on the beach, he said—but that's not the case anymore.

"This is a hot area," Seiler said.

While The Element, taking up the seventh through 12th floors, will offer guest rooms with kitchens for long-term guests, The Dalmar, which makes up floors 13 through 23, is a design-driven lifestyle hotel. They'll have two separate lobbies, but both will share all of the hotel amenities.

"[The Element] appeals to people here for longer stays, maybe even snowbirds, families, but you still get the fun factor from The Dalmar," Jake Wurzak, president of Wurzak Hotel Group, said.

These days, Starwood guests are steering away from cookie-cutter hotels and instead looking for authentic travel experiences at "indie hotels" that reflect the character of the neighborhood they're in, Tribute Portfolio global brand leader Dave Marr said. Tribute hotels like The Dalmar are doing this through their dining options, feel of the guest rooms, and even amenities sourced from local retailers.

For example, chocolates placed on pillows may come from a local chocolatier, the house coffee blend from a local bean purveyor, and the beer from craft breweries, according to Wurzak.

"That's our goal—to get people from the community in the hotel, give it a soul, give it a vibe, and I think that's lacking in a lot of the properties here," he said.

The Dalmar will offer a sky lobby, lobby bar, pool deck, secret garden, and fitness room—all on the sixth floor—as well as 12,000 square feet of meeting and ballroom space, and a new ground-floor coffee shop concept in partnership with a popular local roaster.

"I think every great hotel should have a coffee shop because people want to hang out and drink coffee," Wurzak said.

Other proposed retail concepts on the ground floor include a juice bar, and Wurzak is in talks with two fitness concepts about bringing in a studio.

One of Wurzak's favorite elements is the design of The Dalmar's lobby.

"You can't even find it in Miami. It's very eclectic," he said. "It's designed like the coolest AirBnB apartment you could ever find, or your best friend's apartment that lives in L.A. that looks like it was curated from a life's worth of travels."

And, of course, the 24th floor rooftop bar will be The Dalmar's crown jewel—attracting everyone from business professionals at 5 p.m. to millennials at 11 p.m., Wurzak predicts. The lounge's primary focus will be on craft cocktails, with indoor and outdoor bars and an open-plan kitchen serving small plates.

The trendy space, which will offer its own identity separate from that of the hotel, will even have its own elevator to whisk people up to the rooftop.

"It'll be the spot," Wurzak said.

*The Dalmar Hotel and Element by Westin; 299 N. Federal Highway, Fort Lauderdale*