

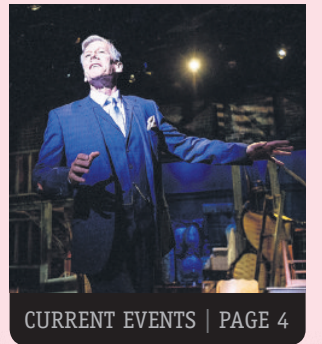
Aspen

CULTURE/CHARACTERS/COMMENTARY

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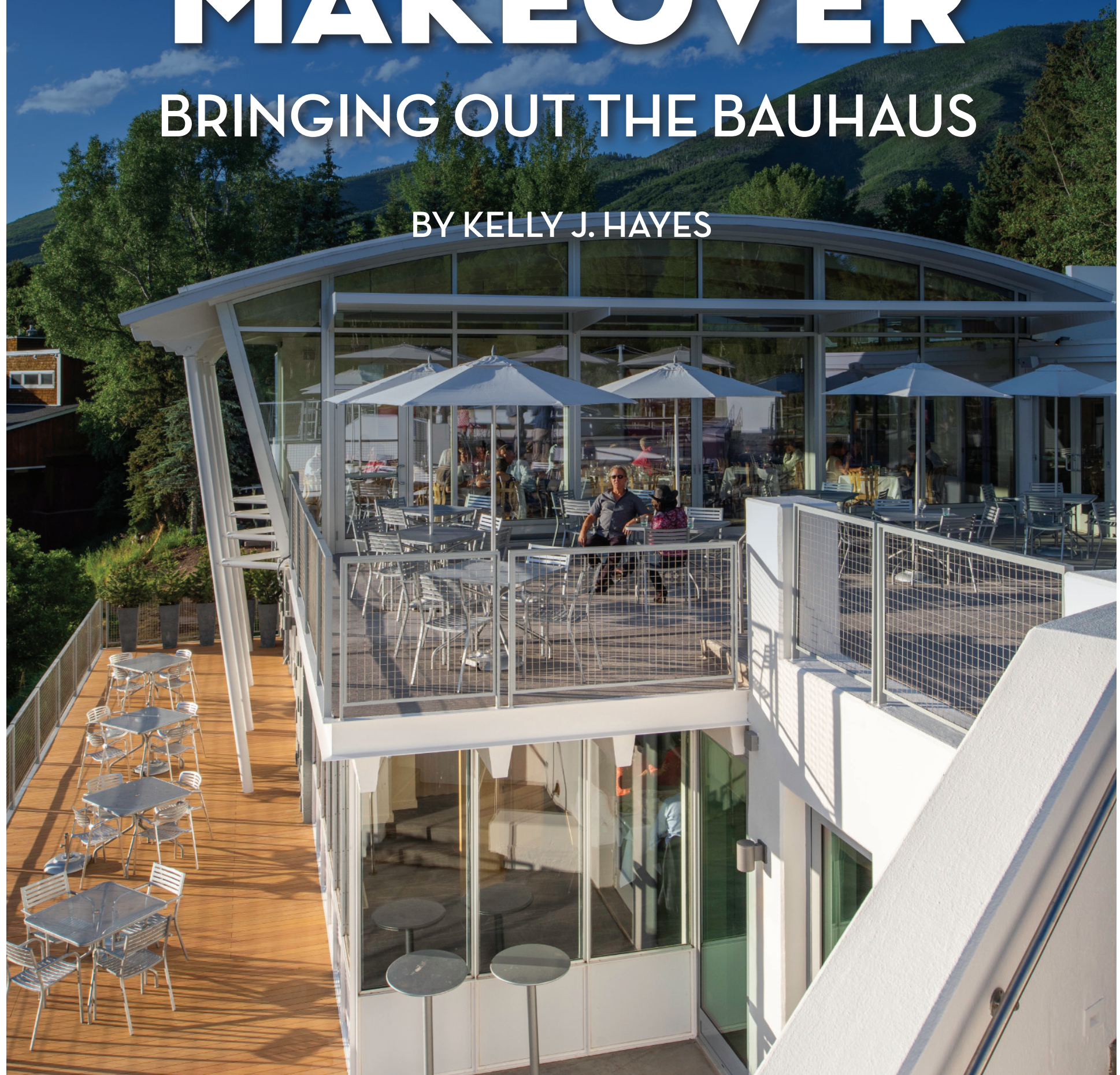
ASPEN MEADOWS BAUHAUS IN BLOOM



MEADOWS MAKEOVER

BRINGING OUT THE BAUHAUS

BY KELLY J. HAYES





OPENING PAGE: The newly renovated Walter Isaacson Center was designed by Aspen based Jeffrey Berkus Architects using the original concepts of Herbert Bayer when the building was constructed in the 1950s. THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The newly renovated and rechristened Walter Isaacson Center and the Madeleine K. Albright Pavilion are to be dedicated on Aug. 2; guests at Plato's dine between the splendors of a Herbert Bayer tapestry and views of the Castle Creek Valley and beyond; perhaps no other hotel is as influenced by the works of a single designer as is the Aspen Meadows Resort by Herbert Bayer.



ON THE PLANET, FEW PLACES, IF ANY, COMBINE AS MUCH HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, CULTURAL COMMOTION AND NATURAL BEAUTY AS THE 40 ACRES IN THE WEST END THAT MAKE UP THE CAMPUS OF THE ASPEN INSTITUTE.

Stroll from one side to the other on any given summer afternoon and you will hear the Aspen Music Festival orchestra tuning up for an evening performance in the Music Tent, bear witness to visiting intellectuals and dignitaries as they deliver presentations or provide protestations to the world's media, or bask in the beauty of Bauhaus designer Herbert Bayer's signature outdoor landscapes. Then, at the end of your stroll, you'll find yourself at the reception center of the Aspen Meadows Resort, a master work of Bauhaus influences.

This June, the Meadows quietly reopened its signature building after a 10-month renovation that expanded its size and scope while remaining true to the style and ethos of its original design. Rechristened as the Walter Isaacson Center, the building today stands in tribute to the biographer and media executive who helmed the Aspen Institute as president and CEO from 2003 until this past spring.

The June opening was just in time for a packed summer lineup at the Aspen Institute Campus, which included the Aspen Ideas Festival,

the Fortune Brainstorm Conference, the internationally covered Aspen Security Forum and the Resnick Aspen Action Forum. The response from visitors and guests to the new construction was overwhelmingly positive with many fawning over an expansion that provided much needed spaces for events, meetings and presentations. Not to mention a showcase patio for dining, discussion and summer sips.

Jud Hawk, general manager of the Aspen Meadows, said the result of the renovation met expectations.

"It's one thing to see our wishes laid out on an architectural rendering and quite something else to see that rendering become a reality that not only remains true to our Bauhaus beginnings and historic aesthetic, but also offers guests major new amenities to enjoy," he said.

The Aspen Meadows, and in fact the entire Aspen Institute campus, is one of the great living examples of the Bauhaus school of design. Next year, in 2019, Bauhaus design will celebrate its 100th anniversary and the buildings that make up the Aspen Meadows will be at the forefront.

BAYER, BENEDICT AND BAUHAUS

For insiders and those who are tuned into modern art and the history of contemporary Aspen, the Aspen Meadows occupies sacred ground. Its West End location was ground zero for the first significant cultural event of the post-war Aspen Renaissance.

In 1949, Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke, founders of the Aspen Institute and the Aspen Music Festival, hosted a gathering of writers, musicians, designers, business leaders and intellectuals to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of the German philosopher Goethe. They commissioned Finnish architect Eero Saarinen (designer of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis and Dulles Airport in Washington, D.C.) to construct a tent to host the soiree, the precursor to today's Music Tent, and proceeded to have a ball.

The event so inspired Paepcke that he soon founded the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies and centered it on 40 acres, which were once home to the old Aspen Race Track. He authorized Herbert Bayer, an Austrian immigrant who had been an influential designer in pre-war Germany's Bauhaus School, to design a campus where the Paepckes' concept of a utopian Mind-Body-Spirit gathering place could thrive.

Bayer, working closely with Fritz Benedict, an architect who studied under Frank Lloyd Wright, spent 20 years, from 1953 through 1973, creating the buildings and the landscapes that make up the Aspen Institute's Main Campus. Bayer also produced an astonishing collection of

art, from paintings to sculptures and tapestries to landscape art, that are the focal points of both the Institute and the Meadows buildings.

The Bauhaus design tenets, which heavily influenced the buildings, promoted the use of spare, clean, transparent spaces that were unencumbered by decoration, or what was considered to be bourgeois elements. Flat roofs, large windows, metal and brick were the favored components of the design movement. In addition, a color palette based on three primary colors — red, yellow and blue — on white, gray or black backgrounds was a significant part of the Bauhaus practice.

These colors can be seen on the balconies of the six buildings that house the lodging component of today's Aspen Meadows. Facing East on each deck, the walls are painted yellow to greet the rising sun. Facing west, they are red to reflect the sunset. The large glass windows in each guest room offer not just transparency but also vistas of the mountains on either side of the campus.

These rooms are completely unique in mountain-based lodging. From the photos, all taken by local Aspen legend Ferenc Berko, that hang on the walls to the modern designs of the spare furnishings, to the muted color palette, they provide an immersion in Bauhaus sensibilities.

THE RENOVATION

Owned by the Aspen Institute and operated by Dolce Hotels and Resorts, a brand of Wyndham Hotels, the Aspen Meadows is a star in the Aspen hotel galaxy. Its 98 rooms, all of which

THE INSTITUTE HAS ALWAYS BEEN CONNECTED TO NATURE AND WE NEEDED TO MAINTAIN THAT CONNECTION."

-Jeffrey Berkus

celebrate the Bauhaus style of Bayer and Benedict, are perched above the Roaring Fork River and provide a link to the natural environment.

The Isaacson Center renovation was designed by local architectural firm Jeffrey Berkus Architects and constructed by Shaw Construction, the team that worked together on the Aspen Institute's lauded Doerr-Hosier Building in the mid-2000s.

"This was by far the most challenging project we have ever been a part of," said Berkus about the Meadows remodel. "We had a nine-month time frame and working with a building that dated back to the 1950s (Bayer's original construction was in 1954), we had to basically take everything down to the studs. Billy Sallee and Shaw did an amazing job with a really difficult timeline."

The overarching feature of the new space is the ever-present and vibrant art of Herbert Bayer that hangs everywhere on the clean white walls, lending a museum-like quality to the space. In fact, the Bayer collection, owned by the Institute, is celebrated throughout, along with the natural beauty of the mountains.

"Perhaps the most gratifying element was being able to add life and longevity to this structure and give Bayer's art a home," Berkus said.

The renovation and expansion has brought a stunning extended, elevated patio, the Bren and Mel Simon Terrace, beyond the reception area. The open patio, covered by a hyper-modern umbrella system for, hopefully, rainy days, features 270-degree views of Aspen Mountain, Aspen Highlands and Buttermilk to the south and provides epic sunsets to the west behind Red Butte.

"Leonard Lauder (chairman emeritus of the Aspen Institute) challenged us to make sure we maintained the integrity of the Merrill Ford patio," Berkus said, "so it was important to us to keep the patio consistent, even though it was to be much larger."

Below the patio sits a new, multi-seasonal meeting space, dubbed the Madeleine K. Albright Pavilion in honor of the first female secretary of state, who is also an Aspen Institute trustee and a member of the Aspen Strategy Group. The simple room opens on three sides to the natural surroundings, while the burbling waters of Castle Creek provided a calming symphony of sound.



GUIDED ART TOURS

Wednesday Aug. 15, 11 a.m. - noon

Guided walking tour of "Earth Works and Land Art of Herbert Bayer," led by landscape architect Ann Mullins; meet at Doerr-Hosier Center.

Open to the public; no tickets or RSVPs required.

Wednesday, September 5 and 12, 11 a.m. - noon

Guided art tours of the exhibit "The Legacy of Herbert Bayer," led by curator and art registrar Lissa Ballinger; meet at the Resnick Gallery, Doerr-Hosier Center.

Open to the public; no tickets or RSVP required.

DRINKS AND DINING

PLATO'S

"It felt like a lot longer than 10 months," said one longtime local about the time Plato's and the Bar at the Meadows were closed for renovations.

The good news is that Plato's has reopened and the views are unchanged, though the cuisine of Chef Jason Thompson seems to have been elevated by the increased size of his kitchen, which features a custom, state-of-the-art Hestan cooking suite. Desserts by pastry chef Aleece Alexander also impress, especially the Bayer-themed cakes made in the forms and colors of the Bauhaus design movement. Truly unique.

Open: Monday-Sunday 5:30 p.m.-10 p.m.

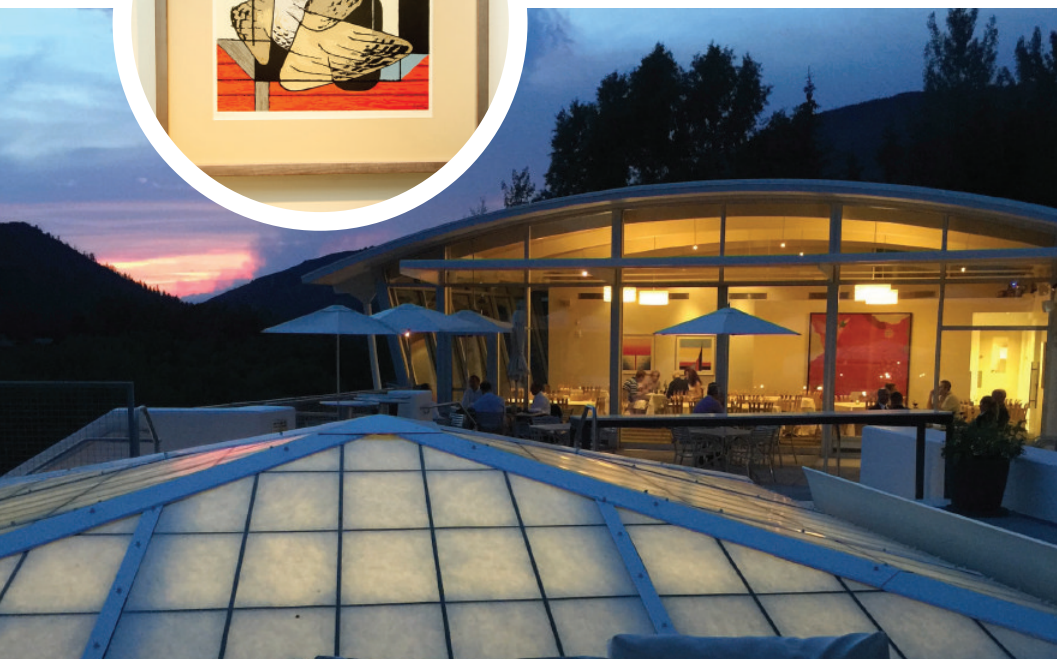
For reservations: 970-544-7824, platosaspen.com

LIMESLICERS

Limeslicers is the new name for the Meadows bar and the furnishings and décor have taken on a tropical feel. The name was chosen by a group of donors to the Institute who used it in their seminars as an homage to a Cuban member who grew up with fresh limes as a culinary staple. Bar food and farm-fresh cocktails are the fare of choice with a summer refresher, the "Island Time" made with Goslings dark rum, lime, maple syrup, scotch float, coconut flake rim is a personal favorite. Hop a lime-green bar stool and savor.

Open: Monday-Sunday 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

For reservations: 970-544-7824, platosaspen.com



TOP: Cocktails and bar treats greet guests at the colorful Limeslicers off the main reception area in the Walter Isaacson Center. The many periods of Herbert Bayer's prolific career as an artist are tucked into corners of the Isaacson Center. The "Owl" at left is an homage to a pair of birds that actor Gary Cooper gave to the artist (inset). ABOVE: The enlarged patio above the Madeleine K. Albright Pavilion with the signature pyramid provides drama in the night sky.



“The Institute has always been connected to nature,” said Berkus, “and we needed to maintain that connection.”

The Albright Pavilion is highlighted by a pyramid-shaped skylight that sits above the main room and serves as both an architectural feature and a connection to the rest of the campus.

“There is a glass pyramid in the entrance to the Paepcke Building and one in Doerr-Hosier, as well,” Berkus explained. “We wanted to tie the energy, the light of the three buildings together. When you walk in under the skylights in each building you should get the same energy from the pyramid, the same kind of light.”

Another artistic element that harkens back to Bayer was the inclusion of a “Fibonacci Wall”

“Bayer always put outdoor art



LEFT: The Bauhaus colors are in play once again in this series of cakes produced by the property’s executive pastry chef Aleece Alexander. RIGHT: Color is a key component of the Bauhaus style — where the east facing walls of the guest buildings are painted yellow to greet the rising sun. (The opposite walls are painted red, another color in the Bauhaus palette to reflect the setting sun in the evening.) INSET: Herbert Bayer (1900-2005) was one of the Bauhaus movement’s most significant figures and one of Aspen’s most significant creators.

pieces adjacent to his buildings,” Berkus said. “With Doerr-Hosier we installed the Andy Goldsworthy wall. For this building we put in the curving wall with the Fibonacci sequence (a mathematical scale that occurs frequently in nature) notched into the concrete.”

In addition, the main reception area has been expanded, the bar renovated and a much larger and more functional kitchen was built to accommodate a staff that, in addition to providing cuisine for signature Plato’s restaurant and the newly rechristened Limeslicers bar, is responsible for innumerable large events (see box).

This week, the Aspen Institute board of trustees will meet on campus and many will get their first look at the recent changes to the six-decade-old building.

At the Walter Isaacson Center in the Aspen Meadows, everything old is new again.

“It’s all new and exciting, of course,” the Meadows’ general manager Hawk said. “From the additional meeting space below that can be rented out for events or dinners to the amazing sunset views that guests can watch while relaxing on the couches, this new space is quickly becoming a favorite destination for both guests and locals.”

KEEPING IT LOCAL

While the hotel is often booked fully in the summertime for assorted conferences, many of which are presentations of the Aspen Institute (Aspen Ideas Festival, etc.) and others of which are booked by independent groups who contract with the Institute and the hotel (X Games/Food & Wine, etc.) for their own events, it is open to the general public for much of the year.

The property is open for bookings for weddings, private events and meetings by contacting the property directly.

Many locals use the hotel for staycations, particularly during the offseason when locals’ rates as low as \$129 are offered depending upon availability. They, like the tourists and conference attendees, appreciate the amenities.

And many simply wish to partake in a place that has played a pivotal role in the history of the community.

ANACONDA



In addition to the renovation of the Aspen Meadows the other significant addition to the Institute campus this year was the instillation of a large marble sculpture that Herbert Bayer completed in the mid 1970s.

“So we got a call from the Denver Art Museum out of the blue,” explains the Aspen Institute’s Curator and Art Registrar Lissa Ballinger about the acquisition of the piece. “They said, ‘We have a sculpture in storage and we wondered if you were interested?’ I was there the next day.”

It seems that Robert O. Anderson, who served as chairman of the board of trustees of the Aspen Institute for 30 years and was the founder of the Atlantic Richfield Oil Co., had commissioned the sculpture for a Denver Office Building. The seven-piece sculpture — made of marble from Carrara, Italy, that had been hand-selected by Bayer — was completed and installed in the lobby of the Anaconda building in 1978.

It was acquired but never shown by the Denver Art Museum until this year when a grant from Melony and Adam Lewis made it feasible to bring it back to Bayer’s home and the Institute.

Today, it sits in alignment with the Paepcke Building and the Benedict Music Tent with the Highland Bowl as its backdrop. A fitting tribute to one of Aspen’s most important players of the 20th century, Herbert Bayer.