

The Vendue reopens with new restaurants, art focus

By Ashley Barker

abarker@scbiznews.com

Published May 27, 2014

After a six-month renovation, [The Vendue](#) reopened earlier this month as a boutique hotel dedicated to the arts.

The hotel in the French Quarter of downtown Charleston is made up of two main structures at 19 and 26 Vendue Range. The renovation project opened two new eateries, [The Drawing Room](#) restaurant and [The Press](#) coffee shop, in addition to its Rooftop bar.



The renovation also includes an arts program and room improvements. No two rooms are alike, according to a news release, as each is decorated with different period reproduction furnishings or antiques.

As an arts hotel, The Vendue will feature two or three rotating exhibits each year that will be curated under the direction of Charleston-based [Robert Lange Studios](#). More than 300 pieces of art are now on the property, the news release said, and a full-time docent will offer daily tours of the exhibits.

The first exhibit, on display now, is *Here Now*, which features about 65 pieces of work from more than 30 artists. It will be on display through October.

Jonathan Weitz — president of The Vendue’s parent company, [Avocet Hospitality Group](#) — said he hopes The Vendue will become an integral part of the Charleston art community.

“We have challenged our team to introduce artistic elements into nearly all aspects of the hotel, in order to create a place where guests and locals can be inspired at every turn,” Weitz said in a statement.

The main exhibition covers public spaces within 19 Vendue, and works are on display in guestroom corridors in 26 Vendue. Guests who stay in the hotel's concierge-level rooms will have access to artwork unique to their rooms provided by the [Mary Martin Gallery](#), according to the news release.

"We've designed the space to allow anyone, whether they're art enthusiasts or novices, the opportunity to explore and enjoy art from around the globe," Robert Lange said in a statement. "Hopefully, in doing so, guests will be inspired to discover their own artistic abilities."

An artist-in-residence program was developed during the renovation, and the first artist to participate will be [Charles Williams](#), a contemporary realist painter from Georgetown.

The Drawing Room restaurant replaced the property's former restaurant, The Library. The new eatery, open daily for breakfast and dinner, will be overseen by executive chef Jon Cropf.

"We're having a lot of fun playing off of the art focus of the hotel here within The Drawing Room," Cropf said in a statement. "Our presentations are also quite artistic, using bright colors and innovative local ingredients to deliver a creative array of seasonally inspired menu items."

At the corner of East Bay Street and Vendue Range, The Press serves Starbucks coffee and small snacks. The Rooftop Bar has also been revamped.

The entire renovation was expected to cost \$4.8 million and was managed by [LS3P Associates](#) and [Hill Construction](#), according to Weitz.

Avocet Hospitality Group's portfolio includes The Vendue in downtown Charleston; [Tides Folly Beach](#) on Folly Beach; [St. Barth Exclusives](#), a vacation rental company in St. Barthelemy in the French West Indies; and [Avocet Properties](#), a vacation rental company on Folly Beach.

Reach staff writer Ashley Barker at 843-849-3144 or [@AshleyNBarker](#) on Twitter.

