

GOODMAN TAFT

Rollins / EXHIBITIONS

The Alford Inn at Rollins Celebrates Philanthropy & Art on its First Anniversary

This month, The Alford Inn marks the anniversary of its opening one year ago in Winter Park.

BY OFFICE OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
AUGUST 29, 2014

Since opening in August 2013, The Alford Inn at Rollins has redefined the concept of hotel philanthropy; established itself as a venue for The Alford Collection of Contemporary Art for Rollins College, an extension of the Cornell Fine Art Museum's collection that is on display in the hotel's public areas; earned a prestigious AAA Four Diamond status just eight months after opening; and has become the hub for top-level CEO association meetings, weddings, and fundraising events in the greater Orlando area. Additionally, Hamilton's Kitchen, The Alford Inn's restaurant, has quickly become a bright light in the dynamic restaurant scene in Winter Park and a dining destination for Greater Orlando.

Redefining Philanthropy

Owned by Rollins College and managed by The Olympia Companies, The Alford Inn was funded in part with a \$12.5-million grant from the Harold Alford Foundation. The additional \$20 million was financed by the school's cash reserve. Philanthropist Harold Alford '97H, founder of Dexter Shoe Company, had long supported the college, and two of his children and two of his grandchildren attended Rollins.

The intention of the Harold Alford Foundation was that the net operating income from The Alford Inn would be directed to The Alford Scholars program fund, Rollins College's premier scholarship fund, over the next 25 years or until the endowment principal reached \$50 million, whichever came later.

In fact, The Alford Inn has vastly exceeded its expectations. Projected to have net operating income of \$1.9 million in 2014, that figure is now expected to top \$4.3 million

by the end of the year. Following a loan payment, The Alford Inn expects to be able to give back \$3.2 million to The Alford Scholars program.

“This year, \$157,000 will be used to fund three full scholarships,” says Jeffrey G. Eisenbarth, Rollins’ vice president for business and finance and treasurer. “It’s so much better than what we had projected.”

As The Alford Inn’s business continues to grow, and the endowment grows with it, there are expectations that the Fund will be able to award more scholarships with each passing year. “The Alford Scholars Fund has a 4.5 percent spending rate,” Eisenbarth says, “and we’re projecting that at this rate of growth and an investment return of 10 percent, that within 10 years, we’ll be able to award 30 full, 4-year, merit-based scholarships every year.”

A Leader in Showcasing Contemporary Art

The Alford Inn is a showcase for The Alford Collection of Contemporary Art for Rollins College, a growing collection of more than 220 works of art purchased for the Cornell Fine Arts Museum (CFAM) by alumni Barbara ’68 and Ted ’68 Alford. The evolving collection, conceived as a visual syllabus for the College, includes paintings, photographs, sculptures, and mixed-media works by established and emerging artists from around the world.

“These artworks are a new and important chapter of our collection,” says Ena Heller, the Bruce A. Beal director of CFAM. “I can’t think of another museum that uses a hotel property as an extension of their exhibition space.”

The Alford family are both avid and knowledgeable art collectors, and Barbara Alford serves on the board of trustees at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Works by contemporary artists and photographers such as Tracey Emin, Joseph Kosuth, Trevor Paglen, and Maya Lin can be found in The Alford Collection. The hotel offers complimentary guided tours of the collection every Friday at 1 p.m. and changes in the installation are made every few months, due to new acquisitions made by the Alford family with the advice of independent curator Abigail Ross Goodman. This fall’s exhibition at CFAM, *Fractured Narratives: a strategy to engage*, is inspired by The Alford Collection of Contemporary Art, with some art works on display at The Alford Inn, which Heller refers to as “a continuation of the main exhibit.”

Culinary Achievements

In the spring, the hotel welcomed Executive Chef Marc Kusche to Hamilton's Kitchen. A veteran of some of the finest kitchens in the world, including several Four Seasons properties as well as Silversea Cruises, Chef Kusche has become a familiar face at Winter Park's weekly Farmers' Market, where he meets with the more than 20 local suppliers and personally selects the best local produce, meat, and citrus. Hamilton's Kitchen, with its warm and inviting dining room, alfresco courtyard seating, and private dining room, has quickly become an integral part of the vibrant Winter Park dining scene.

From now until December 15, 2014, the Alford Inn is offering a One-Year Anniversary Special, with a starting rate of \$259 per night in a Classic Room based on double occupancy, including a full breakfast for two at Hamilton's Kitchen or delivered by Room Service. *Rate does not include room tax or restaurant gratuity.

For reservations and information call 407-998-8090, or visit rollins.edu/visit-rollins/alfond-inn.

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