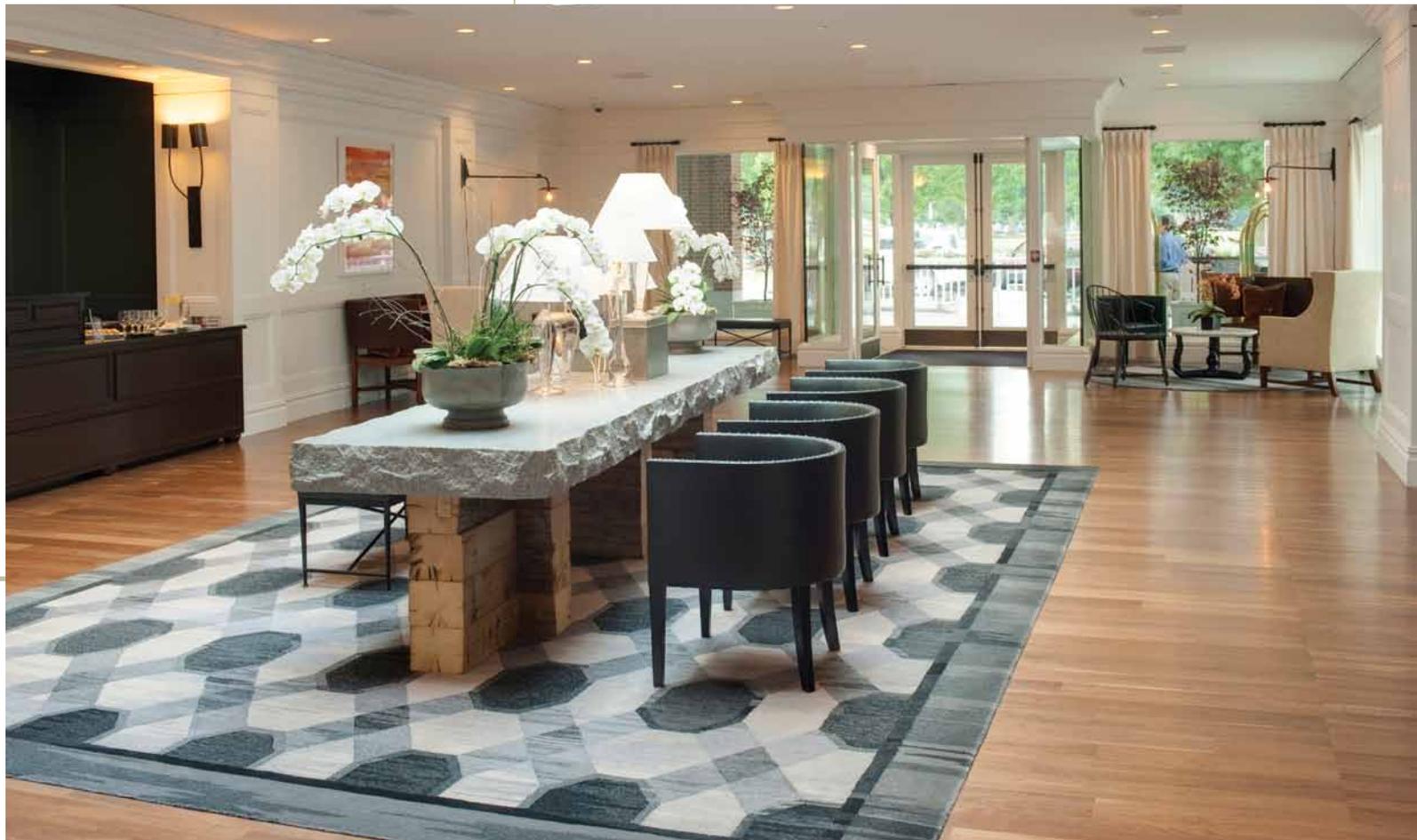


↪ This article will be followed by Part 2 in a future issue and will highlight the grand reopening of the inn's newly renovated restaurant, ballroom, and other spaces.

*Clockwise from below: Bright, light, and cheerful lobby awaits hotel guests and the local Hanover community. Hotel guests can utilize public wireless Internet in a comfortable setting. Apples in the morning and fresh-baked cookies in the afternoon welcome guests.*



“It’s just magnificent! I love the way you’ve captured the ambience of the town. You feel like you’re in New Hampshire—the granite, the colors—

and it’s so light. I love the Simon Pearce lamps,” says a past (and future) guest of the Hanover Inn to the inn’s manager, Joe Mellia. With her husband, a Dartmouth alumnus from a few decades back, she stopped in to see the hotel’s transformation after being hidden for months behind scaffolding and covered windows.

Standing in the airy, new lobby, the couple admires the fireplace alcove, the antique clocks behind the reception desks, the modern art, and the spectacular granite table—the centerpiece of the room. As they look around and hear about the renovations from Mellia, they are clearly impressed and enthusiastic about the inn’s fresh, new look and the overall three-phase project. »

By Mary Gow  
Photos by Jack Rowell

# THE HANOVER INN

Renovation honors modern spirit and enduring heritage







*Clockwise from left: Hanover Inn general manager Joe Mellia welcomes hotel guest Gracie Gallen with fresh-baked cookies. Guests checking in at the newly appointed lobby. Spacious guest rooms offer the latest conveniences. Elegant toiletries and amenities abound in the stylish guest bathrooms.*

### Recreating the Inn

Mellia has been hearing a lot of enthusiasm for the renovated Hanover Inn. “People are really passionate about this inn. It’s more than bricks and mortar. Connections to the inn continue through generations,” says Mellia after the couple heads off to look at the dining room. This \$41-million-dollar renovation, he explains, was planned with great attention to the inn’s place in the community and the experience it offers guests. “This has been a massive undertaking to get the hotel up to the expectations of the college and to be a showcase for the town of Hanover.”

On a tight timeline, the accelerated renovation process has seen the inn stripped down to its studs and recreated—in less than a year. The first phase, completed for the June 1 re-opening, includes the lobby, 94 guest rooms, and the small restaurant that seats 38 people. Phase two, opened in mid August, adds the Hayward Room, with almost 1,800 square feet, looking out on the Dartmouth Green, four new executive function rooms, and a grand staircase leading down to them.



The third phase of the project includes the new Minary Conference Center, with almost 11,000 square feet of state-of-the-art meeting and event space. Its grand ballroom accommodates up to 330 people with a grand staircase leading upstairs to the Hopkins Center terrace. There is also a connector to the Hopkins Center from the lower level Minary Conference Center. A health club and fitness center, 13 more guest rooms, and a fifth suite are all slated for a grand opening in early November. Its signature restaurant, led by Chef Justin Dain and a consulting celebrity chef from Boston, are planned to open in the first quarter of 2013 to complete the inn.





### History & Innovation

Owned by Dartmouth College and now managed by the Pyramid Hotel Group, the Hanover Inn has long been a local landmark. Its roots stretch back to the early days of the college, with lodging for guests continuing here in the hotel's various incarnations for more than two centuries. In 1780, General Ebenezer Brewster, who served as College Steward, converted his home on this site to a tavern. A larger Dartmouth Hotel and Wheelock Hotel succeeded it in the 1800s. Between 1901 and 1903, the



“THIS HAS BEEN A MASSIVE UNDERTAKING TO GET THE HOTEL UP TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE COLLEGE AND TO BE A SHOWCASE FOR THE TOWN OF HANOVER.”



*Left: Hanover Inn boasts five one-bedroom suites.*

*Below: Small dining room features the cuisine of Chef Justin Dain.*

*Opposite: Orchids in full bloom are throughout the lobby.*

“THE HANOVER  
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THE LOBBY IS ITS  
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college renovated and expanded the property and gave the hotel its current name. The 20th century saw additions and replacements of older parts of the structure as the inn was adapted to the times. With this new extensive renovation, the Hanover Inn is positioned to serve guests for many decades to come.

“The idea of juxtaposition is central to the design,” says Bill Rooney of Bill Rooney Studio, the interior design firm that shaped Hanover Inn’s new look. “Dartmouth is an innovative, contemporary institution that comes out of a great heritage. In the Hanover Inn, we have tried to express this modern spirit juxtaposed with enduring heritage.”

“Words form the sentences that form the paragraphs; in our vision for the inn, the words are elements from New England and the history of Dartmouth,” says Rooney. “In the color scheme, for example, we used Dartmouth green.” The green belongs to the overall color scheme, which Rooney explains, “relates to the birch trees of New Hampshire.” Beyond connections to the region’s environment, Rooney notes, “We also drew from 18th and 19th century designs. The rugs that you see in the lobby and the carpets throughout the inn are inspired by geometric patterns of rag rugs of the 18th century. We used those traditional patterns and transformed them into modern carpeting.”

The meticulous selection and design of elements set the tone for the Hanover Inn from the first step inside the lobby. “The Hanover Inn is the front door of Dartmouth; the lobby is its living room. The lobby is a gathering space; it’s a civic space, a place to meet people,” says Rooney.

A massive granite table is the centerpiece of the new lobby. The long rectangular slab—2,800 pounds of stone—polished smooth on top and rough on its sides, sits on a base of antique timbers. Simon Pearce glass lamps and delicate, blooming white orchids glow in the sunshine that cascades through the skylight directly over the table.

“As an element of the hotel, the granite table is a focal point, a place to



meet and come together. Granite is the foundation of New Hampshire,” says Rooney. Granite is also prominent in the lines of Dartmouth’s “Alma Mater”—where for sons and daughters of the college, “the granite of New Hampshire is made part of them till death.”

The lobby’s fireplace alcove and intimate seating groupings are rich with carefully chosen elements. The round marble tables have bases derived from historic designs, but inverted, giving them a familiar but new look. Chairs around them have different shapes and heights, but the seats are all at the same level for comfortable conversation. The colors of a few of the chairs and cushions are the pale-golden shades of maple sap and syrup. In the alcove with its Dartmouth-green painted paneling, the fireplace has a familiar look to past guests—it was moved to this new setting from the inn’s former Daniel Webster room.

References to the hotel’s and Dartmouth’s history are also prominent in the new design. The weather station and the old guest register are among the class gifts on display. Historic photographs of events and students of the past decorate many guest rooms.

### Warm, Attentive & Gracious

In the guest rooms and suites, transformed New England elements offer luxury as well as functionality. Most rooms include a combination hardwood bench and round table pairing. “The bench is derived from New England hall bench design,” says Rooney. This traditional functional piece has been updated to provide seating, luggage storage, and dresser drawers; the television is mounted on it, and network cable outlets are discreetly installed in it. “It’s very simple, but with the table it is remarkably useful,” says Rooney. He notes that its versatility serves guests for business, meeting with family, and quiet relaxation. “The space evolves as you experience it,” he adds.

In creating this ambience, local companies and craftspeople figured prominently. Simon Pearce lamps are in guest rooms and the lobby, and much of the hardwood furniture was made by Pompanoosuc Mills.

To provide a gracious experience for guests, considerable attention has been paid to details—right down to high-quality writing pens in the rooms and carefully selected towels for removing cosmetics that accompany the selection of toiletries in each room. Bathrobes and umbrellas are provided for guests’ use.

“The three words I would use most to describe the new Hanover Inn,” sums up Melia, “are warm, attentive, and gracious.” As the couple who stopped in for a peek observed, “magnificent” also fits. ←



#### Hanover Inn Dartmouth

Two East Wheelock Street  
Hanover, NH  
(603) 643-4300  
(800) 443-7024  
[www.hanoverinn.com](http://www.hanoverinn.com)