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Alexandra Jaritz is the global head of Tru by Hilton, and Champ Patel is CEO of Champion Hotels.

The first Tru by Hilton is opening May 25 in Oklahoma City. It also happens to be the 5000th property by Hilton Hotels & Resorts. We had the opportunity to sit down with global head Alexandra Jaritz at the AAHOA conference in San Antonio last month.

SHAKING UP THE MIDSCALE SEGMENT

"We have identified a market segment," Jaritz said, "then developed it, launched it, grew it, and are opening up our first hotel—all in 20 months. The excitement that we have created in such a short amount of time is super."

Tru's hallmarks are a "modern fresh design and an affordable price point." With digital keys and check-in, a POS marketplace, free 10Mbps internet, plenty of charging stations, and 55-inch televisions with 150 channels of DirecTV, this is the fastest growing brand ever in the history of Hilton.

The first-ever Tru by Hilton broke ground in Oklahoma City on May 20, 2016, with the soft opening on April 21, 2017 by local developer Champ Patel, CEO of Champion Hotels. The grand opening for the hotel is slated for May 25.

"Our Oklahoma City property is right by the airport," Patel said, "close to the

interstate and fairgrounds, which is an ideal location for us. Tru's compact footprint makes it affordable to build anywhere and gives developers like me the opportunity to be profitable in smaller markets."

The numbers are showing a lot of development interest, and before the end of the year, Tru will also open locations in Cheyenne, Wyoming; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; McDonough, Georgia; and Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Jaritz believes that Tru is even the fastest growing brand in the history of the industry among all new hotels.

Jaritz describes the brand as "fresh, affordable, and vibrant. The people we are targeting don't want to sit in their rooms by themselves at night." And she knows the midscale segment well. "I've always seen there is a really great opportunity," she says, "to bring fresh thinking to a segment that hasn't really done a lot in some time, to disrupt that segment and create your own with the power of Hilton behind it."

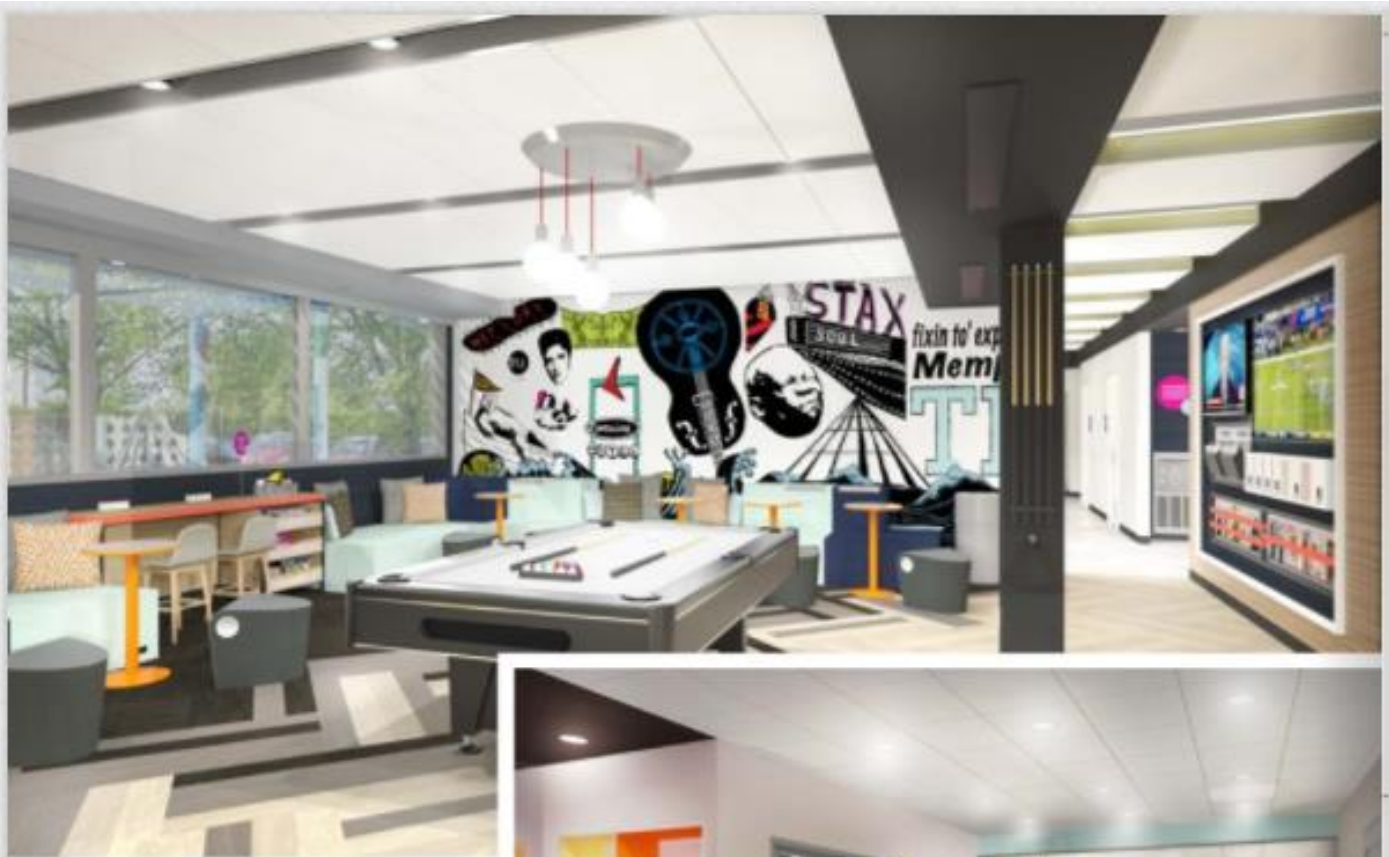
The 2,800 square foot lobby is divided into four "zones." The Work Zone features built-in alcoves, including work booths with sound absorption, and a place for self-service printing. The Game Zone has, yes, games designed to play with others. Owners can choose from options that include table games or a variety of board games, all surrounded by low-maintenance tiered seating. The Lounge offers flexible seating arrangements

Breaking ground on the first ever Tru by Hilton in Oklahoma City.



Tru offers:

- The 98 key prototype is scalable from 82-129 keys.
- The Lobby features 2,770 square feet of open spaces.
- Construction time is 9-12 months.
- Site plan is 1.58 acres.
- Overall building footprint is 43,134 square feet.
- Plan includes king (231 square feet) and double queen (280 square feet) rooms; 56% King, 44% Queen.
- There are guest room packages that fit every market.
- The minimum cash required for a Tru franchise is \$7,719,242.



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including lounge chairs, ottomans, couches with high backs, side tables, and hammock-style seats near full glass storefront walls. And the Eat/Drink Zone allows guests to enjoy complimentary breakfast, coffee, or tea, or purchase treats, drinks, and light meals from the market.

“We really thought about how we put the power of experience back into the

customer’s hand,” Jaritz says. “You can use the space however you want.” A lot of early press painted Tru as a Millennial brand. “That’s one thing we’ve been trying to dispel,” she explains. “While this brand is partially trying to target Millennials, it’s more about the mindset that they share than an age. It’s all about being young at heart. My mom would stay here!” **HT**