

Ironwood Resort Development: Piece of the West

Contributed by Hanna Aronovich
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In less than 20 years, Ironwood Resort Development has become a leader in the premier luxury residential development market.

By Hanna Aronovich

Americans are going West, which is good news for Ironwood Resort Development. Jack Koson, president of the luxury development firm, says that more Americans are purchasing seasonal homes in the mountains, as opposed to — or sometimes in addition to — a beach house.

“In the past, people weren’t familiar with the mountains and how great it is here, especially with all the outdoor activities,” Koson notes. “But, we know the mountains — it’s our niche — and we think it’s a place that more and more Americans are going to want a piece of.”

Founded in 1988, Ironwood is the developer behind high-end residential projects in ski towns in Colorado and Utah. About 95 percent of its buyers maintain a primary home elsewhere, although Koson says, residents are spending more time in the mountains than ever before.

“Some of our buyers have a primary home and a beach house, but they’re beginning to spend more time at the ski house,” he explains. “It used to be that they would only spend three weeks a year here. Now, it’s more like three to five months. With e-mail and cell phones, it’s just as easy to conduct business in the mountains as it is in New York or Los Angeles.

Although Ironwood is a developer, Koson and his staff are heavily involved in the real estate and marketing side of the operations. “We’re very hands-on,” he stresses. “We don’t take on too many projects at a time, so we can be fully involved in each development.”

Ironwood determines what type of property — town home, single-family home or condo — to build, the number and size of the units, and the price range. The firm then works closely with the architect and general contractor through the design and build stages.

“We work with a real estate company on the marketing side, but we’re intimately involved in those efforts as well,” Koson adds. “We get to know our buyers on a first-name basis and work with them through the closing process. In fact, out of the hundreds of buyers we’ve had over the years, there are very few that I’ve never met.”

Ironwood’s personal touch extends throughout the family. Koson notes that his stepson and stepdaughter, Matt and Katy Mullin, are involved. “Matt is my partner and Katy is working her way into an equity position,” he says.

Best of the Best

Working with skilled contractors and construction management firms is key, which is why Ironwood selects leaders in the field. Jacobson Construction Co., for example, is one of Ironwood’s project partners.

Founded in 1922 in Salt Lake City, Jacobsen Construction is a third-generation construction management firm with expertise in hospitality, medical, commercial, institutional, residential, manufacturing and industrial projects. Its services include constructability, cost estimating, scheduling, value-engineering and claims resolution, as well as self-performing capabilities such as earthwork, concrete work, structural steel erection and carpentry.

Based in Utah, Jacobson is a leader in the intermountain region. The firm worked with Ironwood on the Silver Strike Lodge. Located in Empire Pass, Utah, “Silver Strike will offer amenities not yet seen in Empire Pass,” Jacobson says.

Scheduled for occupancy by the end of 2007, the Silver Strike Lodge will consist of 39 ski-in/ski-out luxury condominium units with a variety of floor plans for clients to choose from.

Environmental Awareness

Ironwood strives to incorporate green building techniques in all of its current projects. The company says it strives “to build responsibly and take every effort to build energy efficient, sustainable developments that minimize long-term environmental impact.”

Current building practices include insulation in all interior and exterior walls, ceilings and roofs, as well as low-E glass

windows to reduce heat transmission. "We're implementing green design in any way we can," Koson says, adding that Ironwood has received recognition for its environmental efforts, as well as in a plethora of other areas.