



WATER PARKS & RESORTS

▶ Universal Orlando Resort adding another gate in 2017, Volcano Bay water park — Page 17

Aquatopia indoor water park, hotel arrive at Camelback Resort

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TANNERSVILLE, Pa. — “Life is either a great adventure or nothing at all.” Helen Keller once said those words and Camelback Resort is proof that a tremendous new adventure just got underway May 1. That is when the new 453 suite Camelback Lodge & Aquatopia Indoor Waterpark opened to the public.

This is the biggest indoor waterpark in the Northeast, at 125,000 square feet. The adjoining eight story, \$163 million water park hotel is the largest one ever built in a single phase. The complex sits in the lush mountainside, in the heart of the Poconos, complimenting the rest of the Camelback Resort — a resort that has entertained many of the 22 million leisure travelers who annually flock to northeast Pennsylvania.

“With the opening of Camelback Lodge & Aquatopia Indoor Waterpark, we now offer more year-round adventure in one mountain location than anywhere else in the country,” said Arthur Berry III, co-owner of the resort.

Theming is central to the entire Aquatopia/Camelback Lodge experience. Kartrite Van Der Berris, a fictitious, yet legendary world explorer brings his global journeys to life in both the hotel and water park. Actually the name plays homage to resort co-owners Arthur Berry and Ken Ellis. Ellis likens the character to a young Indiana Jones and “the most interesting man in the world.” “We wanted more sophistication in the theme, real — not whimsical.” When asked about how the name Aquatopia was chosen, Ellis

replied, “About a year ago in a marketing/branding meeting we were discussing what to name what we feel is the world’s finest indoor water park and based on the Kartrite world adventure theme, we thought Aquatopia would fit. It encompasses everything that an indoor water park could be...kind of like utopia but Aquatopia.”

This multi-story ultimate indoor water park features 13 slides and seven pools, with a few first time attractions. Here’s a brief run-down:

•**Bombora FlowRider** — guests ride the waves in this Australian surf themed Boogie Board experience.

•**The Great Ka-Na-Ga-Wa Wavepool** — features an icy arctic expedition motif.

•**Venus Slyde Trap** — this first of its kind, 600 foot long, enclosed family rafting tube features three water experiences in one: family raft, sphere and Manta wall.

•**Storm Chaser** — this uphill Master Blaster water coaster tube slide can accommodate one or two riders. At 756 feet long it is North America’s longest indoor uphill water coaster.

•**The Himalayan** — this head first mat slide racer features multiple high speed drops.

•**Outa Space Race** — a high speed (feet first) aqua tube body slide.

•**Mountain Mayhem** — a serpentine giant aqua tube two-person slide with splash-down landing pool.

•**Constrictor** — this two-person tube slide is a first of its kind in the Northeastern United States.

•**Paradise Plunge** — this high-speed, free fall body slide

features the popular AquaLaunch start capsule.

•**Skydive Plummet** — High G looping, flattened figure eight water slide also with AquaLaunch start capsule.

•**Kartrite’s Quest** — this multi-level AquaPlay/educational station features five deck zones of activity and six interactive water slide tracks. Another first only at Aquatopia.

•**Penguin Play Bay** — Antarctic themed children’s shallow pool area with sprays, geysers and sprinklers.

•**The Lost River** — This 500-foot long quick current underground river experience is enhanced with lighting, sounds and water effects ending beside a 60 foot waterfall.

•**Ally-Oop Lagoon** — a general swim area with water basketball.

•**Croc-O-Nile Crossing** — allows kids to walk on the heads of crocodiles while trying to balance and cross the pools using an overhead cargo net.

•**Mystic Springs** — an indoor/outdoor family warm-water spa with hydrotherapy jets.

Other amenities in the water park include cabana rentals, various food and drink concessions, including one swim up version (Flyboy’s Lagoon), along with retail opportunities.

The entire water park complex was planned, engineered and built by Aquatic Development Group (ADG) Cohoes, New York. ADG’s creative design team worked with The Weber Group and WhiteWater West, builders and suppliers in the waterpark industry. Couple this with the theming and interesting story



Aquatopia's unique theming (above) welcomes guests upon entering under the 1.5-acre Texlon transparent roof (right), where a bevy of slides (below) and attractions await. COURTESY AQUATOPIA



line of Kartrite’s Expeditions, created by ADG and you have the makings of a very credible water park experience.

The water park sits underneath a 1.5-acre Texlon transparent roof also supplied by ADG — the largest install overall in any water park in North America. The roof’s

unique design offers a great deal of natural light — whether day or night. It is sound transparent making for quieter space. Also 75 percent of the ultra violet rays pass through allowing healthy plant growth and tan capabilities as well. Depending on the time of

▶ See AQUATOPIA, page 14

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Continued from page 11

day the area takes on a different feel — day or night — thanks to the special features of the Texlon roof materials. The temperature throughout Aquatopia is set to 84 degrees year round.

Aquatopia offers some of the most unique play experiences ever developed, including Kartrite's Continent Quest, a next-generation interactive play structure created by WhiteWater West, offering an unparalleled number of activities with five ride experiences from the toddler-friendly Kid-Lantis to the dizzying heights of the Out-N-Back Trek and Silk Road Runner body slides. Also by WhiteWater is America's longest indoor uphill

water coaster, the Storm Chaser, that propels riders up and down twists and turns akin to a cyclone; and the signature Venus SlydeTrap, a thrilling 6-person raft ride that thrusts teams of "expedition members" through light shows, twists and turns, culminating in a zero gravity plunge.

Indoor water parks can be very tricky, according to Clay Chamberlin, senior attractions install advisor with WhiteWater West (Richmond, British Columbia, Canada) who oversaw the slide installation portion of the project. "Building an indoor park is always a challenge due to the limited space. This install was no different as many of the other trades were trying to get their work done in this tight space," said Chamberlin. "To

help keep the area looking neat, clean and efficient, towers were constructed with extensive staircases that lead to various slides.

"The effort put into the development of Aquatopia from both WhiteWater and ADG was extremely collaborative," says Geoff Chutter, President and CEO of WhiteWater West. "As we brought innovative and exciting products to the table, ADG introduced theming and narrative to further elevate the play experience. Every step of the way, ADG challenged us to take our products to the next level with unique colors and theming, adding to the many layers of an intricate story that will blow guests away. Aquatopia truly redefines the indoor water park experience and we are proud to be a part of it."

The dream has been in the works since 2005 when Barry and Ellis bought the resort from the previous owner. The two go way back. They were roommates at Skidmore College, Saratoga, New York in the early 1980s. They always thought that having attractions that could operate throughout the year would add to the overall appeal of the property. As Ken Ellis co-owner and also CEO of ADG (Aquatic Development Group) said, "Being on both sides of the business I wanted to create something truly unique and special."

Permits for the water park and hotel were actually secured in 2008, however with the economy, the "timing was not right", said Ellis. The next five years were spent on tweaking the design.

Camelback Lodge & Aquatopia Indoor Waterpark employs 200 part-time and 400 full-time staff along with 80 management people to insure a seamless operation.

Also part of the complex is the Arcadia Family Indoor Adventure Center. This two level 45,000 square foot facility, offers more than 100 video, interactive and ticket redemption games, ropes courses and rock climbing for kids and adults, mini-golf, black light laser tag, bowling and even an arts and crafts center. The property also features a true ski-in/ski-out access to trails and taverns.

"I'm pleased with the size of the water park," said Ellis. He continued, "We oversized it to the number of rooms we



This developer's rendering shows Aquatopia's clever use of space in its master design. COURTESY AQUATOPIA

have." The extra 40,000 square feet of space was created for two reasons. Camelback Resort strives to offer a guest experience second to none. Also, other Camelbeach Resort guests can buy a ticket to enjoy all that Aquatopia has to offer.

The management of the Camelback Lodge and Aquatopia Indoor Waterpark is a partnership between Stand Rock Hospitality and Camelback Resort. Stand Rock Hospitality is comprised of four partners with a long history in the indoor and outdoor water park industry. They include Pete Helland Jr., Pat Helland, Tim Lucke and Tim Gantz, all from the Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin area, the "Waterpark Capital of the World." Gantz was former owner of Noah's Ark water park. Stand Rock Hospitality also operates the Wilderness Lodge, Pigeon Forge, Tenn. along with other projects to its credit. The hotel side of the complex features 16 different style suites, three sit-down restaurants and 20,000 feet of meeting, entertainment and conference space.

With three major players in the Poconos (Great Wolf Lodge, Kalahari and Aquatopia), how does Aquatopia stand out from the competition? AT asked Ellis that question, "Quite honestly, it's the entire Camelback Resort that stands out. Camelback Lodge and Aquatopia Indoor Waterpark is situated at the base of Camelback Ski Area, a true ski in/ski out facility. There's an existing 20-acre outdoor waterpark, Camelbeach, as well as CBK Mountain Adventures adventure park along with 40 lanes of snow tubing, which is the largest snow tubing park in the U.S. There are 900,000 folks already coming to the Camelback Resort so we feel our location and our statement: "Countless Adventures, One Resort" truly is the differ-

entiator between our property and the other two."

Ellis continued, "As far as Aquatopia itself, it's not just the size of the water park, but the attention to detail in the design that ADG created that really brings the theme to the forefront. The attractions are second to none and when you're inside the facility, you don't know if you're indoors or out. The whole experience from the rides to enjoying the natural lighting to the authentic theming, really sets Aquatopia above the rest."

Co-owner, Arthur Berry III also had this to say, "Camelback Resort has been a place for friends and family to gather, near and far, for 50 years." Berry continued, "Countless adults and children have learned to ski here and even more have experienced the thrill at Camelbeach Waterpark during the summer season. With the addition of Camelback Lodge and the new Aquatopia Indoor Waterpark, the best is yet to come."

The completion of the hotel and water park positions Camelback as a year round venue for all types of adventures — both indoor and out. Camelback Lodge & Aquatopia Indoor Waterpark facility is stunning and breathtaking in its grandeur. Even those words fall short to describe this magnificent place that has been created in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. Finally some words from the mythical host, Kartrite Van Der Berris, as seen in the hotel lobby, "I (Sir) Kartrite welcome you to a place of wonder, a place of history and of endless opportunities for adventure, relaxation and dining. A magnificent gem of a land where we can ski, sled, slide, splash, float, surf, tube, board, coast, climb, zip and soar while building life long memories together."

FAST FACTS

Name/Location

Camelback Lodge & Aquatopia Indoor Waterpark/
Tannersville, Pa.

Project Cost/Opening

\$163 million/ May 1, 2015

Complex:

Hotel: 453 suites with 13 different room options, three restaurants and numerous other amenities

Water Park: 13 water slides and seven pools in a 125,000-square-foot area underneath a 1.5 acre Texlon transparent roof

Other: 45,000-square-foot, two-level Arcadia Family Indoor Adventure Center, offering over 100 video, interactive and ticket redemption games, ropes courses and rock climbing for kids and adults, mini-golf, black light laser tag, bowling and more

Ownership/Management Company

Co-Owners: Arthur Berry III and Aquatic Development Group CEO Ken Ellis, and Stand Rock Hospitality partners Pete Helland Jr., Pat Helland, Tim Lucke and Tim Gantz

Management: Stand Rock Hospitality

Key Suppliers

Design: Aquatic Development Group (ADG)

Architect: Architectural Design Consultants (ADCI)

Construction: Hotel/Horizon Construction;

Water Park/Aquatic Development Group (ADG)

Theme Design and Build: Weber Group Inc

Waterslides/Play Structure: WhiteWater West Industries

Wave Pool/Wave Generator/Flow Rider/Filtration

Equipment: Aquatic Development Group (ADG)

Rafts/Tubes/Mats: Zebec, Inc.

Family Entertainment Center (FEC) Equipment:

Family Entertainment Group; Ropes Course Intl.

Children's Equipment: Weber Group Inc.;

Vortex International; Playtime; Bomar

Furniture: Telescope Casual Furniture

Lockers: Best Locker

Pool and/or Deck Coatings: Concrete Coverings

Pumps: Grundfos CBS (Paco Pumps)

Chemical: Sure Water Technologies; Stenner

Chemical Controllers: Chemtrol

Transparent Roof System: Aquatic Dev. Group (ADG)

Food/Equipment: Landmark

Safety Consultants: Jeff Ellis & Associates

Uniforms: TrueVision