



DANIEL

**\$35 Million Grand Bohemian Hotel
Under Construction in Mountain Brook**
Renowned Boutique Hotel & Spa Underway

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by Michael Tomberlin

MOUNTAIN BROOK, Alabama – Construction has started on the \$35 million Grand Bohemian Mountain Brook boutique hotel, with the owner promising a project unlike anything the area has ever seen.

The Kessler Collection will make the 100-room Mountain Brook hotel – part of the \$120 million Lane Parke development – its 11th, joining others in Florida, Georgia, Colorado, New Mexico and North Carolina.

“The Grand Bohemian is going to be a very amazing place,” Richard Kessler, chief executive of the Kessler Collection, said in an interview. “We will add to the quality of life in beautiful Mountain Brook.”

While Kessler promised “luxury” in the rooms, the Grand Bohemian Mountain Brook’s amenities also promise to set it apart.

A rooftop restaurant and bar will have indoor and outdoor components, he said. A dining room will be decorated with a Porsche automotive theme and, as with other Grand Bohemian hotels, it will feature a gallery of local and regional works of art with paintings, sculpture and jewelry, including items for sale.

The hotel will have 12,630 square feet of meeting space, something the Mountain Brook community has said it needs.

The Poseidon Spa will offer the spa experience to both hotel guests and members of the community.

Likewise, an interactive cooking school, wine tasting, wine blending and other events will be offered to both the guests and the community.

An indoor pool and sculpture garden will also be among the amenities.

“It’s an experience in art, it’s an experience in music and hopefully it is an experience in culture,” Kessler said.

Charlie Tickle, chief executive of Daniel Corp., said the entire Lane Parke project – with the Grand Bohemian as a centerpiece – will be an important part of Mountain Brook’s future.

“It’s such a rare and valuable project for Mountain Brook and the surrounding area,” Tickle said. “It’s a legacy project that we are so fortunate to be a part of.”

Kessler said he was invited to Birmingham in 2004 by Charles McCrary, chief executive of Alabama Power Co., to see Birmingham and consider building a Grand Bohemian here. At the time, the focus was on the Birmingham Board of Education building downtown and Kessler made an effort to buy and develop there.

But during that visit, Kessler said he visited Mountain Brook and always felt that was the best location for a Grand Bohemian.

“There just wasn’t any land available here,” he said.

Fast forward to 2012 and the Lane Parke project gets final approvals for development. The 28 acres in the heart of Mountain Brook is now being redeveloped into apartments, retail, restaurants and was in need of a signature hotel.

“Our goal was not to bring in a fancy flag or a run-of-the-mill hotel,” said Doug Neil, vice president of development at Daniel. “We wanted something truly special.”

Kessler said he didn’t take much convincing when he realized he had a chance to bring a Grand Bohemian to Mountain Brook.

He said being hidden away a bit of the beaten path but surrounded by shops and restaurants for guests will create an attractive mix between the hotel and the surrounding development.

“I think Grand Bohemian is a perfect fit for Mountain Brook,” he said.