

# hospitality design

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## Amy Michaelson Kelly Hatteras Sky

As a busy Atlanta lawyer for more than a decade, Amy Michaelson Kelly had little time for hobbies. Travel, however, was something she relished, planning European adventures and U.S. roadtrips alike. Over the years, she invested in projects and, driven by a love of hotels, formed the commercial real estate development firm Hatteras Sky with fellow attorney Jason K. Cordon in 2019.

"When you're in a linear career like law, you're always looking ahead, thinking of what will put you in a good spot in five years, and we wanted to enjoy our days. Everything we are doing we are passionate about," says Michaelson Kelly.

That includes conceiving multifamily housing communities "through a hospitality lens," as she puts it, which are currently underway in Phoenix, Seattle, and Lynnwood, Washington. They bolster a petite collection of hotels intentionally situated in "irreplaceable buildings where you can feel the humanity inside of them," adds Michaelson Kelly.

Asheville, North Carolina—not far from the farm where Michaelson Kelly lives part time—is the city Hatteras Sky chose to unveil its inaugural hotels. The Radical and Zelda Dearest, both transformations of historic structures operated by Driftwood Hospitality Management, debuted in 2023 and capture different sides of the progressive, bohemian city long known for its mystical qualities. (Both properties were temporarily closed following damage from Hurricane Helene in September.)



Built in the 1920s, a former cereal factory is now the Radical hotel in Asheville, North Carolina

Photos and renderings courtesy of MATT KISIDAY, DAVID MITCHELL, and HATTERAS SKY





A rope light fixture suspends above a lobby seating area at the Radical



Soft, feminine hues define the guestrooms in Zelda Dearest in Asheville



A rendering of the bar at the Asher Adams in Salt Lake City, slated to open this fall

The Radical, a 70-room property in the River Arts District courtesy of New York-based Suomi Design Works “is tethered to Asheville,” says Michaelson Kelly. Its industrial origins (it was born as a cereal factory in 1923) are evident in materials like brick and exposed concrete, but the refurbishment also highlights its past as a Cold War-era bomb shelter with design details including nesting dolls and Ukrainian ration boxes. Graffiti was rampant during the building’s abandonment, and “as we walked around, we saw political statements and messages of heartbreak, and we didn’t want to destroy that,” recalls Michaelson Kelly. “So, we had artists come in overnight while construction was going on to layer in new works and give our guests a sense of discovery.”

By contrast, Zelda Dearest—an ode to the imprint F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald left on the city—comprises four buildings, three 19th-century mansions and a carriage house in the South Slope district. For this 20-key hotel handled by Nashville-based Anderson Design Studio, Hatteras Sky secured a license agreement allowing the firm to become the official hotelier of the Fitzgerald Estate in Asheville. “The Fitzgeralds never owned a home. They rented, lived in hotels, or stayed with friends, so hospitality is closely linked with them,” explains Michaelson Kelly.

Zelda’s story playfully begins to unfold at Zelda Dearest with curved forms and jolts of pink that celebrate her romantic, youthful side, but there are more chapters to reveal. At the 35-key Zelda Salon, slated to open in 2027 close to the Asheville art hub Woolworth Walk, Suomi Design Works will meld dark tones, Art Deco flourishes, and rich textures to conjure the literary couple’s glamorous 1920s Paris days hanging out with the likes of Gertrude Stein.

In collaboration with the Athens Group, Hatteras Sky’s latest venture is the 225-room Asher Adams, arriving in Salt Lake City this month as part of Marriott Bonvoy’s Autograph Collection. Set in the Union Pacific Depot dating from the early 1900s, “it’s opulent and has original frescoes in the lobby,” says Michaelson Kelly. Most of the guestrooms are housed in an adjacent new build, but throughout the property, Denver-based architecture and design practice JNS tapped into Salt Lake City’s connection to the Transcontinental Railroad.

Whatever is next for Hatteras Sky, one thing that’s for sure is that Michaelson Kelly will take a hands-on role in the design. When plans to buy a 14-foot-tall chandelier for the Radical fell through, for example, the firm simply had a replica made. “I strung it myself for 20 hours,” she recalls. “Jason and I did say we wanted to be creative.”