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Savannah, Ga.—This January, Lodgeworks will make a play for the boutique hotel market with the opening of AVIA Savannah, the first property of the AVIA brand, which puts a sense of place and uncompromising comfort at the heart of the guest experience. AVIA evolved from the realization that Lodgeworks had opportunities in several key urban and leisure destinations. It recruited a number of hospitality industry specialists to develop the concept, including Colum McCartan of San Francisco-based MCCARTAN.

There will be four properties to start, all opening in 2009: Savannah; Napa Valley, Calif.; Long Beach, Calif.; and The Woodlands (just outside of Houston). Additional AVIA sites are under review. All properties will be 70- to 160-room hotels that express the individual energy and spirit of the locale. Each will feature the AVIA kitchen concept, a relaxed chef's kitchen environment specializing in small dishes and tastings that showcase regional culinary traditions.

"We like to call it 'the art of living well on local time,'" says B. Anthony Isaac, president of Lodgeworks. "We believe that our guests should immediately feel as if they've been welcomed to the community. While living extremely well with us, in absolute comfort, we want them to discover the tastes and traditions that make Savannah unique, to be surprised by the unexpected pleasures of Long Beach, to be astonished by the beauty of Napa, or to be charmed by the Southern hospitality of The Woodlands."

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