

The 80-year-old Hotel Seville was renovated in 2008 and brought up to date with modern amenities, such as Internet access and air conditioning.

Ductless HVAC Cools An Arkansas Hotel

An 80-year-old landmark in an historic-preservation district is renovated with modern-day amenities.

Service technician Cash Curtis checks the R410A refrigerant charge. In the background, service manager David Conner and Philip Curtis, the owner of Curtis Heating & Cooling, check proper voltage and operation.



Philip Curtis of Curtis Heating & Cooling (on the ladder) and service manager David Conner install an air-intake grille and cover on a ceiling unit in the hotel's restaurant.



Construction of the 35,000-sq.-ft. Hotel Seville, Harrison, AR, was completed in 1929 at a cost of \$150,000. (The furniture budget was \$20,000.)

An article from the period noted, "On the first floor is a spacious lobby, its ceiling reaching in the center to the third floor, circled on the second floor with the balconies of the mezzanine lounge. Here are found the wonderful arches and pillars so characteristic of the architecture of Old Spain, with decorations of parallel lines of opposing colors . . . with Arabic inscriptions on wall decorations in gold and rich tints."

Notable guests over the years included President Harry S. Truman and Grand Ole Opry comedienne Minnie Pearl. The property was eventually neglected over the decades. When new owners renovated the hotel in 2008, they sought to return the building to its former grandeur.

"We knew that eventually we could overcome the many challenges of bringing the hotel back, even making many contemporary improvements," said Don Alberson, part owner of the hotel. "What we have now, after many months of renovation, is a

four-star hotel with one of the finest eateries in the state. It's become an oasis for business travelers, the community, and for special events."

The 56-room hotel has a presidential suite featuring a parlor, wet bar, balcony, dual-head glass shower, and whirlpool tub. Dining options include a restaurant and grill and a formal dining room that accommodates 100. The Hotel Seville is listed on the National Register of Historic Places of the National Park Service, Washington.


In addition to a polished entrance, LCD televisions, and high-speed Internet access, the new owners installed a new HVAC system. The 30 multi-zone heat pumps, with condensing units that serve from two to four evaporator units (including seven ceiling-mounted cassette units), provide comfort for all of the public spaces and the guestrooms.

A central HVAC system was too difficult and expensive to install, Alberson said. "The old structure had many spaces that just weren't suitable to duct runs and trunk lines. Then we looked at overall system efficiency, and at that point the mini-splits [from Fujitsu, Fairfield, NJ]—which offered not only super-high efficiency, but the greatest level

of control and zone-ability—sold themselves."

"The only challenge, if you could call it that, was the need to get all of the refrigerant lines between the air handlers and roof-mounted condensing units within the maximum allowable distance and rise," said Bobby Deaton, owner of Island Airco, Holiday Island, AR, who subbed out much of the installation work to Philip Curtis, Curtis Heating & Cooling, Harrison.

"But Chad Ellis and Cash Curtis, the key installers, could work with the 82-foot line-set allowance we had between units, and made all the connections successfully."

"The Halcyon multi-zone heat pump line gave us 110 component combinations to achieve mix-and-match flexibility," added Curtis. "We wanted the R410A inverter units, but also the highest efficiency systems we could get." The multi-zone units have efficiency ratings to 16.5 SEER and 9 HSPF. 

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