

# BUSINESS

## BEACH-STYLE MAKEOVER

Irvine Co.'s Island Hotel receives a thorough facelift in keeping with its coastal setting.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ISLAND HOTEL



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## Broadcom couldn't keep up

Chipmaker is just the latest tech company to be absorbed by a larger rival.

When science could not pump up Broadcom, the financial engineers were brought in.

The harsh reality of today's business world, particularly in technology industries, is that ever-pressing question: "What have you done for me lately?"

Sure, the Irvine-based chipmaker had carved out a high-profile niche in the communication technology world, worth \$8 billion in annual sales. But that wasn't enough for Broadcom - Orange County's most valuable electronics firm - to keep its independence.

Broadcom confirmed Thursday that it will be bought by Avago Technologies of Singapore in a stock and cash deal worth \$37 billion at today's stock prices. That's no small sum for a company started 24 years ago in a Santa Monica apartment by "the two Henrys" - Henry Samueli and Henry Nicholas.

Despite Broadcom's undeniable success, however, its leaders decided they had to seek a partner for future growth. If the deal goes through, Broadcom-Avago - to go by the name "Broadcom Ltd." - will be the world's third-largest semiconductor company.

Today's technology consumer - corporate or individual - is a demanding shopper. For technology companies that can't keep up, deal-making can create size or savings in the highly competitive communications business that touches everyone's everyday lives.

It's not that Broadcom wasn't trying to grow on its own.

In recent years, the company made a bold bet it could compete with larger rival Qualcomm for sales of the communication brains inside smartphones.

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Samueli

**MORE ON DEAL**  
What Broadcom buy means for O.C. News 1

The Island Hotel, owned and managed by the Irvine Co., was built in 1986 by Four Seasons.



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How do you put a new spin on a four-star hotel with ocean views and swanky neighbors like Fashion Island and Pimco?

Irvine Co.'s resort division has done just that, completing an 18-month renovation that touched almost every aspect of its Island Hotel in Newport Beach. The nearly 30-year-old property got a facelift that included newer technology, more

personalized touches for visitors and an upscale coastal design.

The hotel was built in 1986 by Four Seasons, which managed it until the Irvine Co. took it over 10 years ago.

"We continue to do renovations because we are always reinvesting in our properties and seek to be the best and make sure we are relevant to what our customers needs are," said Ralph Grippo, president of Irvine Co.'s resort division.

Grippo said the hotel now has occupancy rates of more than 80 percent and has had positive customer feedback since the renovations.

Island Hotel is not the only Irvine Co. resort property to

get a facelift. Late last year, Hotel Irvine underwent a complete overhaul to become a trendy lifestyle hotel.

The renovations mark a trend in the hospitality industry, which is concentrating on renovating aging properties rather than building new ones. In 2014, 30 hotels were purchased in Orange County, more than double the 14 transactions registered the year before, according to Atlas Hospitality Group, an Irvine-based real estate firm that specializes in hotels.

Another hotel undergoing significant change is the Anaheim Majestic Garden Hotel,

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Oak Grill is the hotel's all-day restaurant. It opened almost a year ago with Marc Johnson as executive chef.



As part of its renovation, the Island Hotel's pool received modern furniture, private cabanas and a poolside bar that serves food and drinks.



This king guest room is done in marigold, one of many new color schemes meant to reflect Newport Beach's coastal lifestyle.

### MORE INSIDE



# FACELIFT

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which shed its parent, Sheraton, last week amid a \$6 million renovation. The upgrades include enchanted forest backdrops, new carpeting and fantasy bunk beds.

Hotel proprietors, including Irvine Co., are striving to keep rooms full and visitors happy by renovating their properties in the hope of enhancing their customers' experience.

Island Hotel's general manager, Gerard Widder, said his staff "works hard to know more about our guests."

Their quest for customer satisfaction starts with reservations. Guests can choose the items they want in their rooms and mini bars before arriving. The hotel also asks guests the reason for their visit, names and ages of children, and does things like write kids' names on mirrors, which "they get a kick out of," Widder said.

The hotel also keeps an eye on social media. If a patron tweets that he is going to #IslandHotel for his birthday, the staff can do something to help him celebrate it.

Widder said the renovations have led to staff increases at Oak Grill, the hotel's restaurant, and its Aqua Lounge, a bar area.

Grippo said Hotel Irvine, which is located among towering office complexes near John Wayne Airport, was transformed to appeal to a broader customer base. Island Hotel, on the same circle drive as Fashion Island, added more social events and made the hotel a



COURTESY OF ISLAND HOTEL

## Island Hotel features poolside fire pits.

### Renovations at the hotel

**Rooms:** All 292 guestrooms and suites were designed in lilac, marigold, coral, lime, aqua and meadow green color schemes. Room prices range from \$259 to \$3,800 per night.

**Island Club:** The presidential suite was turned into a 2,000-square-foot lounge on the hotel's 20th floor. For \$35 a day guests can access the room and have breakfast, snacks, coffee, a happy hour, complimentary dry cleaning and more.

**Ballroom:** This 8,710-square-foot space can seat up to 600 guests. The doors were enlarged to allow cars to drive through them for events. It can be divided into four smaller rooms.

**Pool:** The pool area has private cabanas and a poolside bar that serves food and drinks.

**Oak Grill:** The hotel's restaurant opened almost a year ago under executive chef Marc Johnson. A 2,100-square-foot deck has dining and entertainment every Tuesday and Wednesday.

destination spot that encompasses both the luxurious and the casual.

"A lot of chains don't adjust to where they are. This is a very Newport Beach hotel," Grippo said. "There is a luxury element, but there is still a casual

environment. Luxury for us is doing the details better than anybody."

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