

## BEHIND THE BRAND

The flagship My Place Hotel in Aberdeen, SD



“...My Place became a unique offering for both the franchisee and the guest—for guests, a way to save more the longer they stay; and for owners, a reliable model for recession resistance...”

—Ryan Rivett  
My Place Hotels

## My Place is poised for growth with 120 hotels in the pipeline

By CJ Arlotta  
Senior Editor

ABERDEEN, SD—Known for their mark in lodging with Super 8, the Rivetts have been continuing their legacy in the industry with My Place Hotels Of America LLC, growing the brand from one property in North Dakota to nearly 45 properties in more than 20 states.

“I identified market conditions in 2010 that were similar to my observations in the 1970s when Super 8 was founded,” said Ron Rivett, co-founder and chairman of My Place. “With a small percentage of new economy supply in development, there existed a similar need for a clean, comfortable room at a modest price somewhere between the blur of upper-midscale product and the aging economy hotels of yesteryear.”

In 2010, Ron discussed his intentions of establishing a new brand with Ryan Rivett, his grandson, at Thanksgiving. “We’re the type of people to develop a concept, create a plan, execute it and learn

how to organize it,” said Ryan Rivett, who’s currently president and CEO of My Place. Delving a bit deeper, the Rivett family recognized there was an opportunity for the new hotel brand to become just as successful as Super 8.

“Some elements of the operating and sales and marketing platform designed for My Place were very intentional in considering the economy travelers of yesterday and today,” My Place’s top executive said. “Meanwhile, the quality of the product, standard for guest relations, and market location objectives are all designed to accommodate any traveler, any budget, any length of stay.”

About nine months after Ryan’s pivotal conversation with Ron, shovels hit the ground on the first My Place hotel. “As for the story behind the name, Ron is an exceptionally creative individual and has a mind for marketing and sales,” My Place’s president and CEO said. “His intentions were pure: Create something that’s simple, memorable and engaging—and people will love it. Determining the name,

however, was much more difficult.”

So, the Rivetts reached out to their employees, friends and family. “We asked them to contribute an idea for a name based on a very simple statement for the product and platform we intended to create,” My Place’s CEO said. “The list was very long, and the evaluation, laborious. A decision was difficult to come to but with the opening of our first hotel on the horizon, a decision was necessary.”

My Place’s name and logo were confirmed with about a month left before opening the first property. “We identified My Place as the simplest, most memorable and most engaging name we could come up with,” he said. “What unfolded after we confirmed the name was also neat. Ron told his wife, Sharon, that evening what we had selected. She was overjoyed, and he was blessed to find out that we chose the only name Sharon had contributed to the list. Can anyone say brownie points?”

A couple of years later, in February 2012, the first My Place property opened in Dickinson, ND. This opening marked the beginning of a two-year proof-of-concept period in which the founders would develop, build, supply, open and operate five My Place Hotels.

“The objective was to transform a concept into reality, proving that it works in

a variety of markets,” he said. “Locations included the energy development-driven North Dakota markets of Dickinson, Minot and Bismarck, the heavily traveled intersection of interstates 80 and 25 in Cheyenne, WY, and the dual-seasoned and demographically diverse vacation market of Bozeman, MT.”

During this period, the Rivetts learned the My Place brand worked. “This culminated in the launch of the My Place Hotels franchise system in 2014 and substantiated the My Place niche, a nascent space between the spotlighted upper-midscale brands and the aging economy properties,” My Place’s CEO said. “Tested and approved by guests in a range of markets, the concept’s reception was reflected in the impressive fundamental operating metrics and high guest satisfaction scores.”

Based on what the brand was hearing from guests and franchisees, the Rivetts’ assessment of the market years prior seemed accurate.

“Combining the determination for

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LEFT: My Place Hotel in Council Bluffs, IA

BELOW: My Place Hotel in St. George, UT



efficient new-builds with investments focused on the touch, feel and comfort of the guestroom also paid off," he said. "By providing guests with the comforts of home in every room in addition to a well-defined nightly, weekly and monthly rate structure, My Place became a unique offering for both the franchisee and the guest—for guests, a way to save more the longer they stay; and for owners, a reliable model for recession resistance in balance with bottom line maximization."

Over the course of its existence, My Place faced many of the same obstacles Super 8 once did. "Challenges in locating sites, construction, acquiring good people and scaling our franchise organization are all familiar; and so is the skepticism," Super 8's founder said. "The same skepticism experienced when starting Super 8 exists today in spite of my prior success."

My Place's franchising model hasn't changed much since it launched in 2014; the brand designed its model to take care of relationships with guests, franchisees and operators.

"With regard to franchise relationships, My Place prioritizes the physical presence of its corporate staff throughout the development process and into operations," My Place's top executive said. "From attending groundbreaking and grand openings to visits from national sales, training and quality assurance, My Place corporate staff are not only considered resources by owners and operators, but also counted among family and friends."

What also hasn't changed much are My Place franchisees' needs. "While booking paths, consumer behavior and brand saturation may have changed since Ron's previous venture, he founded My Place with the belief that the franchisees' needs have remained largely the same," said

Terry Kline, EVP of franchise development at My Place. "As such, My Place has developed a suite of supportive resources to navigate the changing retail landscape, while delivering on the same promise of maximizing returns to the franchisee with a roadmap capable of doing just that. My Place works for the same reason Super 8 worked for its franchisees. It's what we say we are: simple, efficient, straightforward, and far from complicated."

My Place's strategy seems to be paying off. Currently, with close to 30 properties projected to open across 17 states next year, My Place has 120 hotels in the pipeline. In Yakima, WA, this month, My Place opened its 44th property, a three-story, 64-room hotel. My Place has 44 hotels open across 21 states. While the highest concentration of properties can be found from the Midwest through the Pacific Northwest, new properties are expected to open across the country.

Last year, My Place's CEO confirmed the possibility of a new brand in the works,

but since then, there hasn't been much movement. "At the moment we remain focused on the core My Place brand—however, with every new location, franchisee and experience comes additional knowledge and resources," he said. "It all becomes part of a toolbox which will undoubtedly be opened when the time is right to create further diversification for the My Place franchise system."

Next year, though, My Place has its hands full. "All eyes are on loyalty, technology and growth," Rivett said. "In addition to launching our first-ever loyalty rewards program, next year will also see more technology integrations that enhance the guest experience while adding operational efficiencies. While the pace of openings picks up considerably next year, we're also excited to approach it with the considerable gains made by the rapidly growing social media, training, revenue management, design and marketing teams who continue to substantiate and differentiate our brand identity." **HB**



**2010:** The Rivetts return to franchising. Ron and Ryan Rivett have the fateful conversation over Thanksgiving dinner and initiate their partnership in founding My Place Hotels.

**2011:** Ground is broken on the first My Place hotel, about nine months after the initial conversation.

**2012:** The first My Place hotel opens in Dickinson, ND, initiating the two-year proof-of-concept period in which My Place founders would develop, build, supply and operate five locations within energy development-driven and leisure-based markets.

**2014:** Terry Kline, who was involved in more than 600 Super 8 developments, joins My Place as EVP of franchise development. My Place launches its franchise system and also breaks ground on its flagship property.

**2015:** My Place hosts its first annual owner's convention in Kailua-Kona, HI. My Place opens its flagship property in Aberdeen, SD, up 12 locations since the franchise system launched.

**2016:** My Place doubles in size and celebrates with double the attendance at its second annual owner's conference in Las Vegas.

**2017:** America's 30th My Place hotel opens in Salt Lake City/West Jordan, UT. My Place begins a new convention platform uniting owners and operators for the first time in San Antonio, TX.

**2018:** Currently, 120 My Place Hotels are in the pipeline with 44 locations open across 21 states. Nearly 30 are projected to open across 17 states over the next year.