



My Place Hotels Founder and Chairman Ron Rivett with grandson, Ryan Rivett, now president/CEO of the economy extended-stay chain.

## Ryan Rivett named CEO, My Place eyes second brand

By Stefani C. O'Connor  
*Executive News Editor*

ABERDEEN, SD—My Place Hotels of America LLC has named President/COO Ryan Rivett as president/CEO, succeeding his grandfather and company founder Ron Rivett in the chief executive role.

Out of the gate, the new CEO told *Hotel Business*, “There’s a lot of strategic talk, both about franchise development and growth of the chain, as well as about brand-management growth and structuring the company to stay ahead.”

Toward this, Rivett indicated the company is working on “some new things that will come up in late 2017 and 2018 with respect to diversified

products within the My Place parent company as well...potentially a second brand.”

The CEO would not go into detail other than to say it would be “diversified from the current My Place extended-stay concept.”

Ron Rivett remains chairman of the franchise company, which focuses on economy extended-stay hotels. “It’s fantastic to have Ron here almost on a daily basis. He’s able to provide a lot of character and color to the things us young people are beginning to experience. He says very commonly: “There isn’t anything that you’re telling me here that I haven’t already done,” said the new CEO.

Rivett said his elevation to the post isn’t really changing his day-to-day.

What will change, however, is the focus on structuring the executive level of the company “and making room for us to scale the company up, as we’re doing right now.”

Rivett said one shift is moving members of its core management team into different positions and elevating some positions. “We are making room for new people to come in as well as making room for my time to shift and be a little less task-oriented and more strategic-partnership focused,” he said. Franchise relations and development also are on his agenda. Rivett expects to fill his former COO role by the first of next year and make some shifts in EVP roles as well.

While things may be in flux in the C-suite, Rivett was quick to point out the company’s culture is on a firm foundation and is one he expects to build on.

“I’m out on the road interacting

with franchisees more, as well as interacting with some of the strategic partners that we have that are doing development and management, or raising money for certain ventures that we’re working on,” he said.

Stylewise, Rivett said the focus will be on creativity. “That’s really the style I’m looking to incorporate: making sure we don’t stagnate the product that we have and we’ve been successful with. We continue to evolve the product as well as the operating platform. My role as CEO is to be able to see those things as they’re coming and to go out and really address opportunities face-to-face as opposed to having to maintain a task-management focus on what’s going on here in the office,” said Rivett.

It was less than four years ago that Ron Rivett, one of the pioneering hoteliers who gave the industry Super 8, saw the opportunity to launch My Place, creating the concept and lending his support either as a capital participant or an endorser on the note to get the new-construction brand up and running.

Starting with five hotels that formed the core of what the hospitality entrepreneur predicted would be a major franchise brand, the value-oriented chain at press time has 32 hotels open [both Rivetts have interests in just under half of those], 12 under construction, and 23 under development, spreading out from its concentration in the Midwest, with distribution both east and west of the Mississippi River.

“The My Place corporate team is going to attend four groundbreakings in four days, spanning from Las Vegas to Nashville and a couple of places in between. There’s lots going on,” said Ryan Rivett, anticipating opening the one hundredth hotel in 2018.

Within the My Place model, there is free high-speed internet access (WiFi and wired), guest laundry and

storage, and a convenience outlet called My Store that offers for purchase food, beverages and also the cookware and utensils needed to enjoy an in-room meal. Each My Place room features My Kitchen, complete with a refrigerator/freezer with automatic icemaker, a microwave, a two-burner stove and sink with disposal. Other amenities include a 37-in., flat-screen television. ADA rooms are included at the hotels, which also are pet friendly.

A fairly new product, the My Place prototype already is evolving, noted the CEO. “We’re excited about our new core guest experience, what we’re calling our Generation II lobby,” said Rivett. “That’s going to be rolled out with our project that’s under construction in Nashville (TN) right now. It’s really a great modernization to the simple and functional design that we’ve had.”

Even as small changes begin to occur, the executive stressed, “The core values and the fundamentals of both the prototype and the operating platform have really been maintained, and I expect them to continue to be maintained and just refined from here.”

When the brand launched, Ron Rivett was asked if there would be opportunities for conversions in the future and he flatly replied: “Absolutely not.” His grandson still agrees. “There’s a lot of interest and a lot of requests for conversions. We maintain our resolve in being an all-new-construction brand,” said the CEO.

For a start-up, the brand has been advancing at a steady pace. Rivett characterized the company right now as “really hitting our stride in franchise development. We’ve seen incremental growth in franchise locations where Ron and I, through various partnerships, have been building and developing a lot of the My Places that have opened up. Unrelated franchise development is far outpacing our

efforts now, even though we continue a fairly aggressive business plan to develop My Places for our own accounts. So, we’re really hitting our stride in 2017.”

The CEO went on to say, “The first quarter was fantastic. We’ve got six franchise sales that have gone from concept discussion to getting our disclosure document waiting period just this week. We’re looking toward a point of tangible critical mass by the end of this year.”

He added the company also would keep a focus on so-called master deals, wherein a single entity commits to doing multiple brand locations within a state. “We have a number of conversations in play right now with territorial developers. We’ve been very conscientious to make sure we don’t jump into a relationship like that before both sides have substantiated the ability—and the understanding—of what it takes to get it done. Yes, you’ll see much more territorial development before we’re finished here,” said Rivett. “It’s working out really well. The territorial developers, in addition to developing their own properties, have been a substantial benefit in terms of bringing in new system participants in their area. They’re acting as franchise development representatives for us. It’s very helpful to have people on the ground to send new franchise requests to.”

Speaking on his relationship with the elder Rivett, the CEO said they’ve both “definitely been open minded to each other’s ideas, certainly more than him, being the junior. But, it’s been a very collective effort.” Rivett noted he won’t make change for change’s sake. “This is positioning for what I know the future looks like and really sets me in a position to maintain all of the responsibility as opposed to having some responsibilities outside of my grasp,” he said.

On his watch, Rivett does expect

the brand to make greater inroads east of the Mississippi, where My Place currently only has a handful of properties. “We’ve taken some tangible steps in developing some markets in the East and putting together a ‘hot list’ for locations along the Eastern Seaboard, beginning in the Southeast. We’ve begun conversations with several people and we have two pending franchise sales: in North Carolina and South Carolina. Those are expected to go under construction in the third quarter of this year. We have two in New York [Montgomery and Newburgh] that are expected to go under construction probably early fourth quarter. We’ve got some activity in Michigan, Chicago and also in Georgia, Florida and Alabama. I expect to see no less than 10 to 12 locations sold in the Southeast before the end of the year,” said Rivett.

As to the future in his sights, Rivett said the brand would continue “to shoot for the original goal that was based upon history. Ron’s statement was: ‘It took us 20 years at Super 8 to get to 1,000 properties. I think we can do it in 10 [with My Place]. So, 2024 is at the far right end of our business plan for 1,000 franchises sold. It’s an aggressive goal but every day and every new system participant that comes along makes it just a bit more realistic.” **HB**



**“We’re really hitting our stride in 2017 in franchise development.”**

**—Ryan Rivett  
My Place Hotels**