



www.chulavistaresort.com **Headquarters:** Wisconsin Dells, Wis.

Specialty: Resort **Employees:** 550+

Making A Splash

CHULA VISTA RESORT IS UNDERGOING A MAJOR EXPANSION TO ACCOMMODATE ITS GROWING CLIENTELE.

It has a wild side and a mild side. Its 200,000-square-foot waterpark with splash pads and water slides is designed to thrill while the lazy river, world-class spa and romantic dining options seek to seduce.

Welcome to Chula Vista Resort, where things are about to get even wilder. “We’re getting ready to do some really big stuff,” owner and CEO Mike Kaminski says. The family-owned resort, located in the heart of Wisconsin Dells, Wis., is undergoing a major multi-phase expansion that will cost more than \$40 million.

Once complete, the resort’s enhancements will include 200 additional guest rooms, 60,000 square feet of conference space and a new action-packed family entertainment center. The final phase, targeted for completion in 2021, will be a new 100,000-square-foot expo center for trade shows and other large events.

“Fifty percent of our customers are business groups and conference-related events,” Kaminski says. “We want to keep that loyalty.” The other 50 percent

is made up largely of families. “Wisconsin Dells is very family-centric,” he adds. Only minutes away from Wisconsin Dells’ famous attractions, the resort is a multi-purpose playground that is celebrating its 67th anniversary this year.

SPLASHING AROUND

It’s a match made in paradise. The marriage of the swimming pool and bar is not a groundbreaking idea, but it’s a lucrative pairing that is growing in popularity. Chula Vista knows this. “A lot of indoor waterparks are adding them because the revenue is very strong,” Kaminski says.

Guests at Chula Vista’s Lost Rios indoor waterpark will soon be able to lounge around in a new swim-up bar – complete with submerged bar stools and booths. The bar-and-pool hybrid will likely be complete next year. “That will be a major attraction,” Kaminski says. “It will be all warm water, about 100F, but with no jets.”

The resort’s existing indoor waterpark is already a major attraction. It claims “the world’s fastest and longest uphill indoor water roller coaster.” It also features a giant rain forest, a Matador Mat Racers waterslide racecourse and Mount Montezuma’s Mayan Temple waterslide with a tipping bucket that spills more than 500



Mike Kaminski

CEO and owner

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CHULA VISTA RESORT

gallons of water onto a 50-foot deck. In addition, there's a mega arcade and a Crash Landings snack bar that sells pizza, burgers and wraps.

Chula Vista has an outdoor waterpark as well. It features 80-foot drops, eight-story-high reverses and switchbacks, curves, loops, dips and several pools.

'APOCALYPTIC' ENTERTAINMENT

With its focus on families, Chula Vista is planning to build a new 50,000-square-foot family entertainment center. It will feature go-karts, video games, climbing walls, zip lining and an adventure park. The project will break ground in fall 2021. "It's going to be apocalyptic," Kaminski says.

For its corporate clients and group events, the resort offers 80,000 square feet of conference space with the additional 60,000-square-foot addition scheduled for late 2020 or early 2021. Chula Vista also has a 100,000-square-foot sports dome. "We are a sports destination for many club and youth sporting events," Kaminski says.

To accommodate more guests, the resort is adding 200 additional guest rooms to its existing 640 guest rooms, suites and condos. The addition, set to be complete 2020, will be a hotel franchise owned by Chula Vista.

A year-round destination spot, the resort also features an 18-hole golf course and five restaurants. Featuring sweeping views of the Wisconsin River, Kaminski's Chop House is considered one of America's top 10 chophouses. The restaurant offers hand-cut, dry-aged steaks and a variety of seafood dishes along with over 200 domestic well-paired wines. All the meat and produce is sourced locally whenever possible.

Chula Vista's capital improvements also include a new employee dormitory and a laundry facility. The employee village can house roughly 200 seasonal employees and will have space for another 100 when the addition is complete later this year.

"It's for our internship program for those that want to work in the hospitality industry," Kaminski says. "We get college students from all over the world, anywhere between 500 to 600 annually."

'BEAUTIFUL VIEW'

Chula Vista, which means "beautiful view" in Spanish, was once just a summer home nestled in the north woods that overlooked the scenic Wisconsin River.

Melvale Liquor Company, based out of Baltimore County, Md., owned the summer home in the mid-1800s. It was a place to relax and escape the grind of city life. During the Prohibition era, the J.P. Cummings family who owned the Melvale Distillery turned Chula Vista into a summer resort, catering to local families that wanted a summer getaway.



Mike Kaminski's grandparents, Joe & Vera Kaminski, started managing Chula Vista Resort in 1951 and purchased it in 1953. It has been a family-run and -operated resort since then. Mike's wife, Ann, runs the limited hotels division. His son, Jeff Kaminski, is the resort's business manager and his daughter, Krissy Sigmund, is the director of revenue.

Kaminski credits the resort's success to customer service. "What's important for the Chula Vista culture is that the guests feel that this is their home away from home," Kaminski says. "There are a lot of hotels around here. But what sets us apart is how we treat people." 🌐