

Keith Comiso

From the 20 Under 40 series

38, general manager of The LARK

Feb 29, 2016 (0)



Adrian Sanchez-Gonzalez/Chronicle

Keith Comiso, 38, general manager of The LARK hotel in downtown Bozeman.

As the voice of Bozeman's boutique hotel The LARK, Comiso shares his views on tourism and the continued growth of downtown.

You used to work at the Gallatin River Lodge (between Belgrade and Four Corners), what's the transition from a more rural property to downtown been like?

It's been fun. It's been unique. With the amount of time I was out there, the need for change was a positive thing. I've lived in Bozeman for a long time, so being here for 12 years and seeing downtown be this thriving area, it was the right time for something like (The LARK) to happen for the community. You hear it from everyone that walks in that's local who has walked on Main Street for years — "Why didn't this happen years ago?"

It was a pretty easy transition for me, since I've appreciated downtown since I've lived here. A local feel is what everyone wants in a downtown.

Has it given you a newfound appreciation of the downtown?

It really has. Just meeting some of the other business owners and being able to frequent the establishments a little bit more. We talk to our guests about their experiences on Main Street and we hear so many positive things. To hear that creates (positivity) within you. Businesses did such a good job for a particular guest, you just have to respect them.

We're all here for the same reason: to bring people to downtown. Everyone has that same appreciation for what we're trying to create. The whole idea for the property was to not take anything away from downtown, but to inject people into the Bozeman culture. You're going to stay here and all of these other things that you want or need will be within walking distance.

What have you learned about the area from your experience in the lodging industry?

Bozeman is definitely this transitional town, a lot more than I thought. I thought with the amount of publicity that it has been receiving over the years that it was more of a destination. But what's happening is that Yellowstone National Park is the destination or Big Sky is the destination and Bozeman is a town you have to see when you come visit those places. And at the end of the day, (visitors) want to come back because they didn't do enough or see enough.