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**FROM AT**  
 1972, the 1990s downturn in the real estate and aerospace industries and the opening of newer hotels along the freeway all hurt the Desert Inn, which changed hands several times in recent years.

The Shens said the property looked like it had been vacant for years when they purchased it in late October.

A magnet for vandals during the months it was closed, the hotel had smashed windows and rooms looted of televisions, mattresses and whatever else could be carried off.

"It was terrible; the whole place was a mess," Alan Shen said of his first look at the hotel.

The Shens, who immigrated from Taiwan 25 years ago, spent more than \$300,000 to renovate the rooms, replacing everything inside and repainting the outside.

"It's very safe here now, the beds are new; everything is new," Shen said. "We hope people will come back to this hotel."

With 144 rooms, Shadow Park has about 50 suite-style rooms equipped with kitchenettes for guests. The Shens said they will also offer weekly rates for those who want to stay more than just a few days, but they will cap each visit at 28 days and will not make rooms available for people as permanent or long-term residences.

Instead, the couple hopes the rooms will be filled with out-of-town visitors such as business travelers to Edwards Air Force Base and families who come to the Valley for soccer and softball tournaments throughout the year.

When it comes to the coffee shop, the Shens want local residents to again fill the seats each morning, turning to it as a welcoming stop each day.

The restaurant and bar could return in the future, as Alan Shen said they are taking a wait-and-see approach. While not open yet, the Granada Room and karaoke bar could return if the demand exists.

"We spent time, money and effort to turn it over, and hopefully not only will the people in town come back and visit this hotel, but we'll welcome the tourists who come to Lancaster," Shen said. "We will open step-by-step."

In a difficult economy, the Shens said they acted quickly when presented with the opportunity to buy the hotel at a reduced price in the fall.

They knew the property needed work, but they also believed it had potential to return on the investment.

As owners of approximately 30 other hotels and apartment complexes in Los Angeles and Orange counties, the Shens know what challenges they face.

The key to establishing Shadow Park as a successful business, the Shens said, is bringing back the customer-friendly atmosphere Desert Inn visitors came to expect.

"We wanted to get this property back to its original look," Robin Shen said.

Because the Shens have dozens of properties to oversee during the week, they brought two long-time employees to manage the hotel in Lancaster.

Marco Echeverria and his wife, Nancy Jimenez, worked at an apartment complex owned by the Shens in Hawthorne until about five months ago, when they relocated to Lancaster and the Shadow Park renovations began.

Bringing with them their 8-year-old daughter, Echeverria and Jimenez say the Valley suits them well and they hope to be here for years to come.

"It's a nice life here; there's less pressure than when you're in the city," Jimenez said.

Echeverria is in charge of all maintenance work at the hotel, while Jimenez runs day-to-day operations.

City Manager Mark Bozigan said city officials worked closely with the Shens and are checking to see the facility meets code as each phase is completed.

That way, Bozigan said, the new owners can start generating revenue sooner.

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