

# Upmarket chain takes over at troubled top-class hotel

## THE COTSWOLDS Caroline Fisher



A BELEAGUERED top-class hotel forced to close under a cloud of controversy is set to re-open its doors.

Wyck Hill House, near Stow-on-the-Wold, has been taken over by upmarket chain Bespoke Hotels.

The new operators aim to re-launch the luxury four-star, 60-bedroom country house hotel and spa in February 2010.

Legacy Hotels and Resorts have handed over the business, after stepping in for the freeholder, when it was suddenly closed down last May.

Staff were reportedly left

unpaid and guests stranded when administrators MCR took the shock action.

They said then-operators Robinsons on the Hill Ltd, run by sole director John Carnell, and managed by Peter and Louise Robinson from the Old Butchers restaurant at Stow, had let the lease fall into arrears.

Following the collapse, trouble-shooters Legacy changed the hotel's name back to Wyck Hill House.

They were aiming to restore its reputation and they started a major refurbishment.

However, Legacy chief executive officer Andy Townsend now says Bespoke is taking over the challenge, adding: "The hotel's had quite a chequered history.

"We're pleased to have been



Wyck Hill House Hotel

able to assist the property's owner in resetting the business which has been closed since we became involved.

"Refurbishment works have been ongoing for some months now in order to re-establish the hotel and spa as one of the

region's premier destinations. Our team has worked hard to put the hotel on the road to recovery.

"However, following a strategic review of our ever increasing portfolio across the UK and Jersey, I decided the next stage

in the hotel's journey would be best served with the support of others and our client Bespoke has grand plans."

Robin Sheppard, managing director of Bespoke Hotels, said: "We feel we're in a position to take the hotel forward from this point and re-establish it as one of the premier venues in the Cotswolds."

The refurbishment has already included all of the ground floor and public areas, the main house bedrooms and some in the orangery.

The gardens and grounds are also being upgraded.

The ill-fated 18th century hotel had previously gone into administration under Niche Hotels last December and had been rescued by Robinsons on the Hill.