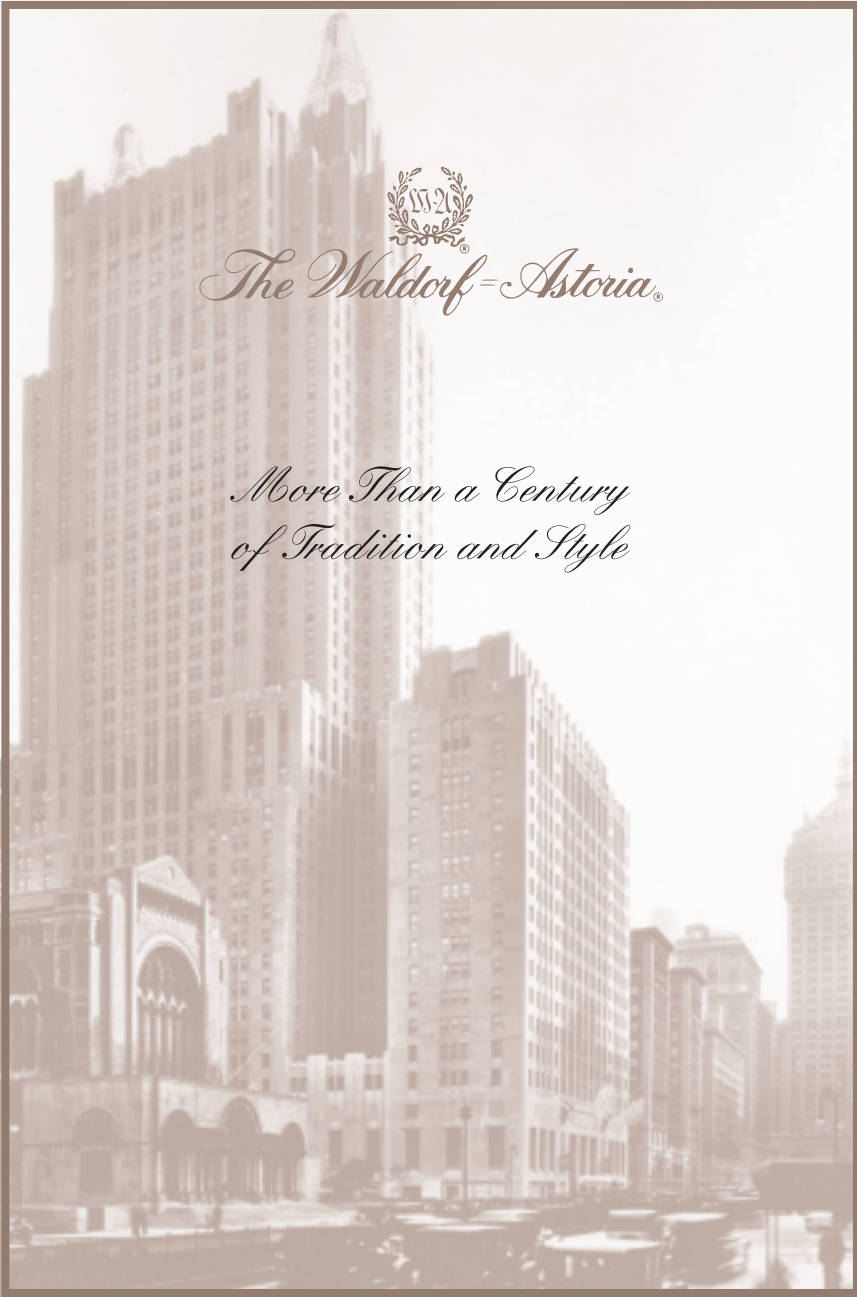




The Waldorf=Astoria.

*More Than a Century
of Tradition and Style*



IN A BYGONE ERA OF GRACIOUS ELEGANCE,
ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST CELEBRATED
HOSTESSES WAS BORN. ACCLAIMED AS A
MARVEL AT THE TIME OF HER OPENING,
THE WALDORF=ASTORIA CAPTURED
THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE THE WORLD OVER.
TODAY, SHE CONTINUES TO BECKON TO ALL
WHO ENTER, OFFERING THE GENTEEL GRANDEUR
THAT IS OFTEN MISPLACED IN OUR LIVES. HER
STORY IS A TAPESTRY OF AMERICA'S FONDEST
MEMORIES—WE INVITE YOU TO SHARE IT.



The Making of a Legend

*M*ore than a century has passed since The Waldorf=Astoria first opened its doors to Manhattan society and guests from around the world. The Waldorf=Astoria has gone from being a fixture of New York hospitality to an American landmark. Throughout the years, its peerless luxury, impeccable service and gracious style have remained constant, even as the hotel played host to some of the world's most memorable events and public figures. Like the wealthy industrialists who conceived and built her, The Waldorf=Astoria has truly become an American legend.

That legend began in March 1893, when William Waldorf Astor opened the original Waldorf Hotel at the corner of Fifth Avenue and 34th Street. Socialite Alva Vanderbilt sponsored the grand opening charity ball, engaging the New York Symphony Orchestra as the evening's entertainment. The performance would become the first of many orchestral appearances at the hotel, but the night would reign as a unique chapter in Manhattan history. Prominent families from the

Since its opening in October 1931, the present Waldorf=Astoria has been lauded as a beacon of style and grace. It is a favored locale for some of Manhattan's most noted celebrity events, ranging from the Opening Night Gala for Carnegie Hall and the Viennese Opera Ball to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame induction. But the hotel is equally the domain of the less prominent, as well. Each year, hundreds pass through these hallowed doors on their way to the Weddings, Mitzvahs, and Birthday Bashes that will become the defining moments of their lives.

Social Registers of Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Baltimore flocked to the lavishly staged event, initiating the custom—now favored by philanthropists and socialites—of holding grand charitable and social events at a hotel.

Four years later, The Astor family again made a triumphant debut as The Astoria opened adjacent to The Waldorf. The hotels' names were linked, creating The Waldorf=Astoria. The duo were physically joined, as well, by an elegant, 300-foot marble promenade that a *New York Herald* society editor dubbed "Peacock Alley" for the fashionable gents and ladies who strutted there.

For the next three decades, The Waldorf=Astoria wined and dined the crème de la crème of American society, but its most important chapter was yet to be written. In 1929, the original hotel was razed to make way for another striking New York landmark—The Empire State Building—and plans were drawn for an even grander Waldorf=Astoria at its present location on Park Avenue.

Despite the Great Depression, work proceeded on the showplace, with architects Schultze and Weaver securing the finest materials for even the smallest fixture. The design incorporated entire rooms from English manor homes,

After social leader Alva Vanderbilt staged her ball at the original Waldorf=Astoria, New York's first families began clamoring to host their private soirées in the hotel's glittering salons and ballrooms.



Famous "Firsts"

refashioned into masterful gentleman's clubs and private dining suites. Twelve allegorical murals adorned the hotel's public spaces, and extravagant Art Deco touches were everywhere. At its 1931 opening, President Herbert Hoover delivered the welcome address, and The Waldorf=Astoria's legacy began anew.

The hotel would launch the careers of famed entertainers, house Manhattan's most acclaimed nightclubs (The Empire Room and The Starlight Roof) and most opulent special event domain (The Grand Ballroom), and welcome more of the world's elite than perhaps any other hotel.

The Waldorf=Astoria continues its reign as an illustrious hostess with an unparalleled pedigree. It is an official New York City Landmark and has been named a Historic Hotel of America by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Visitors can immerse themselves in its history by taking a walk through the public rooms, pausing by the main lobby's Clock Tower (built for exhibition at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893), or gazing at the many extraordinary Art Deco details that appear at every turn.

The Waldorf=Astoria has garnered many "firsts." At its opening, the original Waldorf was a marvel of the modern age with electricity, a bath in most guestrooms, and opulent public spaces unlike anything New York had ever seen. The current Waldorf=Astoria, equally fashion-forward for its day, was the largest hotel in the world at its opening in 1931. It was also the first prominent expression of the Art Deco style in a hotel. Today, its design is acknowledged as a masterpiece of the genre. Other notable firsts include:

- ❁ Ginger Rogers appeared in "Weekend at The Waldorf," the first film shot on location at a hotel.
- ❁ The hotel was the first to be honored in the lyrics of a Broadway show—Cole Porter's *You're the Top* includes the line, "You're a Waldorf Salad."
- ❁ The hotel was the first to offer 24-hour room service. Today, the hotel's kitchens occupy a full city block and prepare approximately 5,000 meals per day.
- ❁ The Starlight Roof was the first supper club to have a retractable roof.
- ❁ The Empire Room helped launch the careers of many performers including Dinah Shore, Diana Ross and Frank Sinatra.
- ❁ The Grand Ballroom was the first—and is still the only—four-story, two-tiered ballroom in New York.
- ❁ The Waldorf Towers was the first to suggest people live permanently in luxurious, private hotel suites. It is also the only hotel in the world with an official ambassadorial residence.





The Queen's Dinner, 1957

One for the History Books

The Waldorf=Astoria and The Waldorf Towers have witnessed some of the world's most important events and cared for its most prominent political figures. On any given day, guests of The Waldorf=Astoria may sight at least one politician or diplomat. At certain times of the year, such as when the UN General Assembly is in session, the hotel becomes a kaleidoscope of foreign delegations, diplomats, and heads-of-state. The World Peace Accord was signed here, as was the Millennium Declaration—a document intended to guide the world during the next 100 years.

At The Waldorf Towers, world leaders repose in serene comfort, many choosing the privacy and security of a Towers suite for their most important agendas. In 1946, the U.S., Great Britain, France, and Russia hammered out the details of the WWII peace agreement in a Towers suite, where they also formed the nucleus of the United Nations. Only Buckingham Palace has hosted more heads-of-state, and both the New York residence of the U.S. President and the home of the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations are located here. Every U.S. President since Herbert Hoover has either stayed in or lived at The Waldorf Towers.



Winston Churchill, in the Grand Ballroom during a dinner in his honor, prepares to respond to critics days after his famed "Iron Curtain" speech.



President John F. Kennedy, New York Archbishop Francis Cardinal Spellman, and Vice President Richard Nixon at the Alfred E. Smith Dinner.



President Ronald Reagan meets with Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Celebrity Sightings



Top: Cole Porter with socialite Elsa Maxwell. Middle: Henry Kissinger with Gregory Peck. Bottom: President Jimmy Carter with New York Archbishop Terrence Cardinal Cooke.

For generations, The Waldorf=Astoria has been synonymous with celebration. One of America's most prominent society events, The International Debutante Ball, was launched in the Grand Ballroom in 1954, and Jacqueline Bouvier took her first bow to society here.

For years, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor hosted the April in Paris Ball (one of New York's most coveted tickets) at the hotel. In 1956, Prince Rainier III of Monaco and Grace Kelly held their engagement party here.

In fact, the hotel's list of celebrity guests is so long that it would fill the pages of this entire history. Perhaps a peek at one day's events says it all. On a single day in 1963:

- 🏰 President John F. Kennedy, former President Dwight Eisenhower, and Astronaut Gordon Cooper were all honored at separate events;
- 🏰 The Duke and Duchess of Windsor arrived home to The Waldorf Towers;
- 🏰 Former President Herbert Hoover received the Circumnavigator's Award;
- 🏰 Vice President Lyndon Johnson moved into The Waldorf Towers;
- 🏰 Former General Douglas MacArthur, Former Vice President Richard Nixon, and General Mark Clark were all in residence.



A World Apart

High above the streets of Manhattan on the 28th through 42nd floors of The Waldorf=Astoria resides The Waldorf Towers, the famed Hotel Within a Hotel. With its extravagant suites (many of more than 2,000 square feet), distinctive decor (each individually decorated suite features period antiques and fine reproductions) and peerless reputation for discretion, privacy, and service, The Waldorf Towers is the boutique hotel by which all others are measured.

Today, The Waldorf Towers welcomes visitors for stays ranging from a night to a decade and more. However, The Waldorf Towers was originally designed as the exclusive domain of the beau monde, with permanent residences that combined the space and grandeur of the finest Manhattan homes with the all-encompassing service of a luxury hotel.

From the moment it opened with The Waldorf=Astoria in 1931, celebrities, royals, and politicians flocked to the elegant enclave. Herbert Hoover was one of its first famous residents, becoming a beloved guest for 30 years after his presidency. For nearly three decades, The Duke and Duchess of Windsor were part-time guests, finally taking up half-year residence in The Royal Suite (a palatial domain

initially created for Queen Elizabeth II's 1957 visit). General MacArthur and his wife, Jean, were also long-time residents. Dwight Eisenhower and his wife, Mamie, would have been Towers residents, as would have been famed crooner Bing Crosby, but extreme fear of heights (Mamie and Crosby) forced them to take up residency on lower floors of The Waldorf=Astoria.

From diplomats to debutantes, sheiks to chanteuses, literally thousands of noted individuals have gifted The Waldorf Towers with its unique history. The hotel's policy of utter discretion and privacy prohibits mention of the many renowned individuals currently ensconced for short or long-term stays.

Guests and visitors who walk the corridors of The Waldorf Towers often remark that there is a tangible presence of history all around them. In the Presidential Suite one finds MacArthur's desk (with an eagle desk set from Jimmy Carter), one of JFK's rocking chairs, a mirror and eagle-base table from Ronald Reagan, and a pair of eagle wall sconces from Lyndon Johnson. (In the Cole Porter Suite, which was later the home of Frank and Barbara Sinatra, the couple's monograms remain etched on the glass shower doors.)

At The Waldorf Towers, the old adage, "If these walls could talk," takes on a very special meaning.



Two of The Waldorf Towers' most noted royal couples were the Duke and Duchess of Windsor (Wallis Simpson and Edward, top left) and Prince Rainier III and Princess Grace of Monaco (top right), shown here during their engagement party at The Waldorf=Astoria. Below is the Presidential Suite, the official New York residence of the President of the United States.



The Waldorf=Astoria presented long-time Waldorf Towers resident Cole Porter with a Steinway Grand Piano. It now resides in Cocktail Terrace, where it is played frequently.



Preserving a Treasure

In 1947, *The Saturday Evening Post* said, “The average American is inclined to view The Waldorf with a certain feeling of pride, as though it were a national monument.” Following a restoration of unparalleled scope and vision, The Waldorf=Astoria and The Waldorf Towers remain monuments of global stature.

The historic effort, which has continued in phases since the 1980s, uncovered a vast trove of magnificent Art Deco treasures, including the 150,000-piece Wheel of Life mosaic that graces the Park Avenue Lobby. During the restoration, hotel staff scrutinized original photographs and illustrations for architectural gems that had been hidden during modernization efforts. The results were astounding—rare mosaics and murals, ornately carved, gilded ceilings, and intricately detailed metal and wooden embellishments were discovered throughout the hotel.

Today, the restoration continues in guestrooms and suites such as The Royal Suite, recently renovated to more closely reflect the tastes of its most famous residents, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. This labor of love is an ongoing effort to safeguard one of the world’s most opulent expressions of Art Deco artistry and style.

FOR YEARS BEFORE HE ACQUIRED
THE WALDORF=ASTORIA AS THE
FLAGSHIP PROPERTY IN HIS COLLECTION,
HOTEL MAGNATE CONRAD HILTON KEPT
A PHOTOGRAPH OF IT UNDER GLASS
ON HIS DESK. ON IT, HE HAD PENNED,
“THE GREATEST OF THEM ALL.” TODAY,
THE WALDORF=ASTORIA CONTINUES TO
EARN THAT TITLE, CREATING THE
LEGENDARY EVENTS AND CHERISHED MEMORIES
THAT MAKE IT AMERICA’S HOTEL.

The Starlight Roof (circa 1945)



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