

= Waldorf Astoria New York =

The Waldorf Astoria New York is a luxury hotel in Manhattan , New York City . The hotel has been housed in two historic landmark buildings in New York . The first , bearing the same name , was built in two stages , which accounts for its dual name . The original hotel , situated on Astor properties along Fifth Avenue , was completed in 1893 and designed by Henry J. Hardenbergh . It was demolished in 1929 to make way for the construction of the Empire State Building . The present building , at 301 Park Avenue between 49th and 50th Streets in Midtown Manhattan , is a 47 @-@ story 190 @.@ 5 m ( 625 ft ) Art Deco landmark designed by architects Schultze and Weaver , which was completed in 1931 . The current hotel was the world 's tallest hotel from 1931 until 1963 , when it was surpassed by Moscow 's Hotel Ukraina by 7 metres ( 23 ft ) . An icon of glamour and luxury , the current Waldorf Astoria is one of the world 's most prestigious and best known hotels .

From its inception , the Waldorf Astoria gained international renown for its lavish dinner parties and galas , often at the center of political and business conferences and fundraising schemes involving the rich and famous . Particularly after World War II it played a significant role in world politics and the Cold War , culminating in the controversial World Peace Conference of March 1949 at the hotel , in which Stalinism was widely denounced . Conrad Hilton acquired management rights to the hotel on October 12 , 1949 , and the Hilton Hotels Corporation finally bought the hotel outright in 1972 . It underwent a \$ 150 million renovation by Lee Jablin in the 1980s and early 1990s , and in October 2014 it was announced that the Anbang Insurance Group of China had purchased the Waldorf Astoria New York for US \$ 1 @.@ 95 billion , making it the most expensive hotel ever sold .

The Waldorf Astoria and Towers has a total of 1 @,@ 413 hotel rooms as of 2014 . In 2009 , when it had 1 @,@ 416 rooms , the main hotel had 1 @,@ 235 single and double rooms and 208 mini suites , while the Waldorf Towers , from the 28th floor up to the 42nd , had 181 rooms , of which 115 were suites , with one to four bedrooms . Several of the luxury suites are named after celebrities who lived or stayed in them such as The Cole Porter Suite , The Royal Suite , named after the Duke and Duchess of Windsor , the MacArthur Suite and the Churchill Suite . The most expensive room , the Presidential Suite , is designed with Georgian @-@ style furniture to emulate that of the White House . It was the residence of Herbert Hoover from his retirement for over 30 years , and Frank Sinatra kept a suite at the Waldorf from 1979 until 1988 . The hotel has three main restaurants , Peacock Alley , The Bull and Bear Steak House , and La Chine , a new Chinese restaurant that replaced Oscar 's Brasserie in late 2015 . Sir Harry 's Bar , named after British explorer Sir Harry Johnston , is the home of the Rob Roy and the Bobbie Burns cocktails .

On July 1 , 2016 , Anbang Insurance Group , the owner of the hotel , announced that it would convert most of the Waldorf 's hotel rooms into condominiums . Beginning in the spring of 2017 , the hotel will be closed for three years while renovations are performed on the structure . During this time , the restaurants of the Waldorf Astoria will also be closed during the remodeling and will reopen in three years along with the hotel .

= = Name = =

The name of the hotel is ultimately derived from the town of Walldorf in Germany , the ancestral home of the prominent German @-@ American Astor family that originated there . The hotel was originally known as The Waldorf @-@ Astoria with a single hyphen , as recalled by a popular expression and song , " Meet Me at the Hyphen . " The sign was changed to a double hyphen , looking similar to an equals sign , by Conrad Hilton when he purchased the hotel in 1949 . The double hyphen visually represents " Peacock Alley " , the hallway between the two hotels that once stood where the Empire State building now stands today . The use of the double hyphen was discontinued by parent company Hilton in 2009 , shortly after the introduction of the Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts chain . The hotel has since been known as the Waldorf Astoria New York , without any hyphen , though this is sometimes shortened to the Waldorf Astoria .

= = History = =

= = = Original buildings = = =

The original hotel started as two hotels on Fifth Avenue built by feuding relatives . The first hotel , the 13 @-@ story , 450 @-@ room Waldorf Hotel , designed by Henry Janeway Hardenbergh in the German Renaissance style , was opened on March 13 , 1893 at the corner of Fifth Avenue and 33rd Street , on the site where millionaire developer William Waldorf Astor had his mansion . The original hotel stood 225 feet ( 69 m ) high , with a frontage of about 100 feet ( 30 m ) on Fifth Avenue , with an area of 69 @,@ 475 square feet ( 6 @,@ 454 @.@ 4 m2 ) . The original hotel was described as having a " lofty stone and brick exterior " , which was " animated by an effusion of balconies , alcoves , arcades , and loggias beneath a tile roof bedecked with gables and turrets " . William Astor , motivated in part by a dispute with his aunt Caroline Webster Schermerhorn Astor , had built the Waldorf Hotel next door to her house , on the site of his father 's mansion . The hotel was built to the specifications of founding proprietor George Boldt , who owned and operated the Bellevue @-@ Stratford Hotel , a fashionable hotel on Broad Street in Philadelphia , Pennsylvania , with his wife Louise . Boldt was described as " Mild mannered , undignified , unassuming " , resembling " a typical German professor with his close @-@ cropped beard which he kept fastidiously trimmed ... and his pince @-@ nez glasses on a black silk cord " . Boldt continued to own the Bellevue even after his relationship with the Astors blossomed .

At first , the Waldorf appeared destined for failure . It was originally a laughing stock with its high number of bathrooms and was known briefly as " Boldt 's Folly " or " Astor 's Folly " , with the general perception of the palatial hotel being that it had no place in New York City . Wealthy New Yorkers were angry because they viewed the construction of the hotel as the ruination of a good neighborhood . Business travelers found it too expensive and too far uptown for their needs . In the face of all of this , George Boldt decided that the hotel would host a benefit concert for St. Mary 's Hospital for Children on its opening day . The hospital was the favorite charity of those on the Social Register . The ballroom filled with many of New York 's First Families , who had paid five dollars for the concert and dinner at the Waldorf . It soon became a major success , earning \$ 4 @.@ 5 million in its first year , exorbitant for that period .

William Astor 's construction of a hotel next to his aunt 's house worsened his feud with her , but , with Boldt 's assistance , Waldorf 's cousin , John Jacob Astor IV persuaded his mother to move uptown . On November 1 , 1897 , John Jacob Astor IV opened the 17 @-@ story Astoria Hotel on an adjacent site , and leased it to Boldt . The hotels were initially built as two separate structures , but Boldt planned the Astoria so it could be connected to the Waldorf by an alley . Peacock Alley was constructed to connect the two buildings , and the hotel subsequently became known as the " Waldorf @-@ Astoria " , the largest hotel in the world at the time .

With a telephone in every room and first @-@ class room service , the hotel was designed specifically to cater to the needs of socially prominent " wealthy upper crust " of New York and distinguished foreign visitors to the city . The hotel became , according to author Sean Dennis Cashman , " a successful symbol of the opulence and achievement of the Astor family " . It was the first hotel to offer complete electricity and private bathrooms . Founding proprietor Boldt , whose motto was " the guest is always right " , became wealthy and prominent internationally , if not so much a popular celebrity as his famous employee , Oscar Tschirky , known as " Oscar of the Waldorf " , maître d 'hôtel from the hotel 's inauguration in 1893 until his retirement in 1943 . Tschirky had arrived in the United States from Switzerland ten years prior to applying for the position at the new Waldorf and over the years grew to possess a great knowledge of cuisine . He authored The Cookbook by Oscar of The Waldorf ( 1896 ) , a 900 @-@ page book featuring all of the popular recipes of the day , including his own , for which he garnered great acclaim , such as Waldorf salad , Eggs Benedict and Thousand Island dressing , which remain popular worldwide today . James Remington McCarthy wrote in his book Peacock Alley that Oscar gained renown among the general public as an artist who " composed sonatas in soups , symphonies in salads , minuets in sauces , lyrics in entrees " . In 1902 Tschirky published Serving a Course Dinner by Oscar of the Waldorf

@-@ Astoria , a booklet that explains the intricacies of being a cater to the American and international elite . Tschirky had an excellent memory and an encyclopedic memory of the culinary preferences of many of the guests , which further added to his popularity . In 1937 , for instance , he recalled the opening night and notable people present at the old Waldorf , a guest at the old building known to the public as Buffalo Bill , and spoke at length about the planning for the Panama Canal that took place at the Waldorf @-@ Astoria .

The Waldorf gained significant renown internationally for its fundraising dinners and balls , regularly attracting notables of the day such as Andrew Carnegie , who became a fixture . Banquets were often held in the ballroom for esteemed figures and international royalty . The Waldorf Astoria was influential in advancing the status of women , who were admitted singly without escorts . George Boldt 's wife , Louise Kehrner Boldt , was influential in evolving the idea of the grand urban hotel as a social center , particularly in making it appealing to women as a venue for social events . On February 11 , 1899 , Oscar hosted a lavish dinner reception that the New York Herald Tribune cited as the city 's costliest dinner at the time . Some \$ 250 was spent per guest , with bluepoint oysters , green turtle soup , lobster , ruddy duck and blue raspberries . One article that year claimed that at any one time the hotel had \$ 7 million worth of valuables locked in the safe , testament to the wealth of its guests . In 1902 a lavish dinner was organized for Prince Henry of Prussia , and in 1909 banquets , attended by hundreds , were organized for Arctic explorer Frederick Cook in September and Elbert Henry Gary , a founder of US Steel , the following month .

The United States Senate inquiry into the sinking of the RMS Titanic was opened at the hotel on April 19 , 1912 and continued there for some time in the Myrtle Room , before moving on to Washington , D.C . John Jacob Astor IV was one of the people who perished on its ill @-@ fated journey . Seven senators were present on the subcommittee , including William Alden Smith ( Republican , Michigan ) as chair , Jonathan Bourne ( Republican , Oregon ) , Theodore E. Burton ( Republican , Ohio ) , Duncan U. Fletcher ( Democrat , Florida ) , Francis G. Newlands ( Democrat , Nevada ) , George Clement Perkins ( Republican , California ) , and Furnifold McLendel Simmons ( Democrat , North Carolina ) . The composition of the subcommittee was carefully chosen to represent the conservative , moderate and liberal wings of the two parties .

In 1919 , restaurateur Louis Sherry announced an " alliance " with the Waldorf @-@ Astoria that involved both his candies and catering services . Although it was not disclosed at that time , at some point ownership of Louis Sherry Inc. was significantly vested in " Boomer @-@ duPont interests " , a reference to Lucius M. Boomer , then chairman of the Waldorf @-@ Astoria , and T. Coleman du Pont . Upon his death that year , William Waldorf Astor was reputed to have been worth £ 200 million , which he left in trust for his two sons Waldorf and John Jacob . His half share of the Waldorf Astoria and the Astor Hotel at the time were reported to have been worth £ 10 million . On the evening of November 15 , 1926 , the National Broadcasting Company broadcast its inaugural program from the grand ballroom of the old Waldorf @-@ Astoria . Among the entertainers heard by radio listeners was Will Rogers . The network became the Red Network on January 1 , 1927 when NBC launched its second network , designated the Blue Network . An antitrust suit forced the sale of the Blue Network in 1942 ; it became the American Broadcasting Company .

The hotel faced stiff competition from the early 20th century , with a range of new hotels springing up in New York City such the Hotel Astor ( 1904 ) , The St. Regis ( 1904 ) , The Knickerbocker ( 1906 ) , and the Savoy @-@ Plaza Hotel ( 1927 ) . By the 1920s , the hotel was becoming dated , and the elegant social life of New York had moved much farther north than 34th Street . The Astor family finally sold the hotel to the developers of the Empire State Building and closed the hotel on May 3 , 1929 . It was demolished soon after .

= = = Current building = = =

= = = = Early years and international politics = = = =

The idea of a new Waldorf @-@ Astoria hotel was based on the concept that there should be a

large opulent hotel in New York for distinguished visitors . Financial backing was not difficult to get in the summer of 1929 as times were prosperous ; the stock market had not yet crashed nor had the Depression arrived . However , before ground was broken for the new building , some of the investors became dubious about whether this was the right time to be investing in a luxury hotel . The land for the new hotel was formerly owned by the New York Central Railroad , who had promised \$ 10 million toward the building of the new Waldorf @-@ Astoria . The railroad and all the other investors decided to honor their commitments and take their chances with the uncertain financial climate .

The new building opened on Park Avenue , between East 49th and East 50th streets , on October 1 , 1931 . It was the tallest and largest hotel in the world at the time , covering the entire block . The slender central tower became known as the Waldorf Towers , with its own private entrance on 50th Street , and consisted of 100 suites , about one third of which were leased as private residences . President Herbert Hoover said on the radio , broadcast from the White House : " The opening of the new Waldorf Astoria is an event in the advancement of hotels , even in New York City . It carries great tradition in national hospitality ... marks the measure of nation 's growth in power , in comfort and in artistry ... an exhibition of courage and confidence to the whole nation " . There were 2 @,@ 000 people in the ballroom listening to this speech , but by the end of the business day , the 2 @,@ 200 @-@ room hotel had only 500 occupancies . It was not until 1939 that the Waldorf @-@ Astoria began operating at a profit . Lucius Boomer continued to manage the hotel in the 1930s and 1940s , a commanding figure who Tony Rey referred to as " the greatest hotelman of his era " . Boomer was elected chairman of the board of the Waldorf @-@ Astoria Corporation on February 20 , 1945 , a position he held until his death in July 1947 .

Like the original hotel , from its inception , the Waldorf Astoria gained worldwide renown for its glamorous dinner parties and galas , often at the center of political and business conferences and fundraising schemes . Author Ward Morehouse III has referred to the Waldorf Astoria as " comparable to great national institutions " and a " living symbol deep within our collective consciousness " . It had the " greatest banquet department in the world " at the time according to restaurateur Tom Margittai , with the centre of activity being the Grand Ballroom . On August 3 , 1932 , some 200 people representing the " cream of New York 's literary world " attended the Waldorf Astoria to honor Pearl S. Buck , the author of *The Good Earth* , which was the best @-@ selling novel in the United States in 1931 and 1932 . One dinner alone , a relatively " small dinner " attended by some 50 people in June 1946 , raised over \$ 250 @,@ 000 .

The hotel played a considerable role in the emerging Cold War and international relations during the post @-@ war years , staging numerous events and conferences . On March 15 , 1946 , Winston Churchill attended a welcoming dinner at the hotel given by Governor Thomas E. Dewey , ten days after making his famous Iron Curtain speech , and from November 4 to December 12 , 1946 , the Big Four Conference was held in Jørgine Boomer 's apartment on the 37th floor of the Towers between the United States , Britain , France and the Soviet Union to discuss the future of Eastern Europe . On November 24 , 1947 , 48 prominent figures of the Hollywood film industry , including various film executives such as Louis B. Mayer of Metro @-@ Goldwyn @-@ Mayer , Harry Cohn of Columbia Pictures , Spyros Skouras of 20th Century Fox and Albert Warner of Warner Bros. and Eric Johnston , the head of the Association of Motion Picture Producers , met at the Waldorf Astoria and discussed what would become the Waldorf Statement , banning people with Communist beliefs or tendencies from the Hollywood film industry . The Statement was a response to the contempt of Congress charges against the so @-@ called " Hollywood Ten " .

On June 21 , 1948 a press conference at the hotel introduced the LP record . From March 27 to 29 , 1949 , the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace , also known as the Waldorf World Peace Conference , was held at the hotel to discuss the emerging Cold War and the growing divide between the US and the Soviet Union . The conference came at time when there was deep anti @-@ Communist sentiment and suspicion of the Soviet Union in the United States , following the Berlin Blockade and the Czechoslovak coup d'état the previous year . The event was organized by the struggling American Communist Party , but was sponsored by many individuals who were not Stalinists such as Leonard Bernstein , Marlon Brando , Albert Einstein and Aaron Copland , with the

intention of promoting peace . The conference was attended by the likes of Soviet Foreign Minister Andrey Vyshinsky , composer and pianist Dmitri Shostakovich and writer Aleksander Fadeyev . Tension mounted during the controversial event , and culminated when Shostakovich , in front of a crowd of some 800 people , launched a scathing attack on western civilization , remarking that " a small clique of hatemongers was preparing world public opinion for the transition from cold war to outright aggression " . The event was picketed in a counter @-@ attack by anti @-@ Stalinists running under the banner of " America for Intellectual Freedom " ( AIF ) , and prominent individuals such as Irving Howe , Dwight Macdonald , Mary McCarthy , Robert Lowell and Norman Mailer publicly denounced Stalinism at the hotel . In 1954 , Israeli statesman and archaeologist Yigael Yadin met secretly with the Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Mar Samuel in the basement of the Waldorf @-@ Astoria Hotel to negotiate the purchase of four Dead Sea Scrolls for Israel . The scrolls were kept in a vault at the Waldorf @-@ Astoria branch of New York 's Chemical Bank . At the request of the Israeli government , respected biblical scholar Dr. Harry Orlinsky examined the scrolls and verified their authenticity ; Yadin paid \$ 250 @,@ 000 for all four . Restaurateur George Lang began working at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in 1955 , and on December 13 , 1955 he helped organize the American Theatre Wing 's First Night Ball to celebrate Helen Hayes 's 50th year in show business . He did much to organize dinners at the Waldorf to assist Hungarian issues and relief . On one occasion an event was attended by the likes of Edward G. Robinson and pianist Doklady and some \$ 60 @,@ 000 was raised .

= = = April in Paris Ball = = =

The April in Paris Ball was an annual gala event whose mission was to improve Franco ? American relations , to share cultures , and to help provide assistance to US and French charities , aside from commemorating the 2000th anniversary of the founding of Paris . It was established by Claude Philippe , the hotel banquet manager , in 1952 . While the hotel 's management handled invitations and publicity , other details were coordinated by socialites . Elsa Maxwell was given the primary responsibility in organizing it . It was initially held annually in April , but according to Ann Vaccaro , former executive director of the ball , it was changed to October because " Mr. Philippe decided that because there are so many balls in the spring he would make it in October " . After being changed to October , it often marked the start of the US fall social season . It was staged in the Grand Ballroom at the Waldorf for eight years before moving to the Hotel Astor in 1960 , the Seventh Regiment Armory in 1961 , and other venues .

The ball was designed to cater for " very , very high @-@ class people " according to Vaccaro . Raffle tickets cost US \$ 100 per person and offered opulent prizes such as a US \$ 5000 bracelet and other jewels , expensive furs , perfumes and even cars . In the 1960 event , prizes given included a Ford Thunderbird car , a Chinchilla coat , a Renault Dauphine , a TV Hi @-@ Fi system , an electric typewriter , 25 cases of expensive French wines , original paintings and porcelains , jewels , clocks , evening bags and a pedigree poodle ; guests were given gift boxes containing gold key rings and jewelry , champagne and brandy , Maxim ashtrays , pipes , silver bottle openers , hats and scarves , and flowers . Every guest was said to have gone home with at least one gift in return . In the 1979 event , some US \$ 106 @,@ 000 worth of prizes were given out . Over its history , the ball , which was exempt from tax , earned millions of dollars , which went primarily to over 20 American charities such as the American Cancer Society , with 15 to 20 % going towards French charities . A staff of three people were paid full @-@ time throughout the year to organize it . Of the expenses of the ball , founder Philippe stated " We charge the most , give the most , and make the most ? it 's a success formula " . Bernard F. Gimbel served as chief treasurer .

The Paris Ball became a notable event in the annual calendar during the 1950s , with one early show featuring a " three @-@ hour spectacular of five tableaux , directed by Stuart Chaney " , [ depicting ] a twelfth century scene of troubadours at the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine , Henry VIII 's meeting at the Field of the Cloth of Gold , Louis XIV at Versailles , and a fashion show of forty creations by Dior , Fath , Balmain , Desses and Givenchy " . French stars Juliette Greco , Jean Sablon , Beatrice Lillie , John Loder and many others were flown over for the ball . The 1957 event

was attended by some 1300 guests , including the Duke and Duchess of Windsor , Senator John F. Kennedy , his wife , Jackie , and Marilyn Monroe , who paid \$ 100 each and donated \$ 130 @,@ 000 to charities . The following year , the ballroom was decorated with 30 feet ( 9 @.@ 1 m ) high chestnut trees , earning US \$ 170 @,@ 000 for charities . The final ball to be hosted in the hotel was held on April 10 , 1959 , with the main theme being the Parisian circus of the 18th century . Genuine circus costumes from the period were flown over from France , and the ball was attended by Marlene Dietrich , who performed two Maurice Chevalier songs , wearing a top hat , trousers , a waistcoat and white gloves .

= = = Later history = = =

On May 6 , 1963 , Time magazine celebrated its 40th anniversary at the hotel . The event was attended by some 1500 celebrities , including General Douglas MacArthur , Jean Monnet , Henry Cabot Lodge , Bob Hope , Joe Louis , David O. Selznick , Secretary of State Dean Rusk , Edward Kennedy , Henry Ford II , and many others . In 1968 , British rock band The Who checked into the hotel , where they encountered difficulties with the staff of the Waldorf Astoria . Due to the band 's reputation for trashing their hotel rooms and rowdy behavior , the Waldorf demanded that they pay cash up front . However , following their gig , the band members were refused access to their hotel rooms , where their luggage was being kept . Tony Fletcher , in his biography on Keith Moon , claims that Moon challenged the staff and blew the door to their room off the hinges with his cherry bombs and retrieved their luggage , which prompted The Who to be shown the door and banned from the hotel for life . However , clearly the ban was later revoked as they performed at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction at Waldorf on January 17 , 1990 .

Soon after the opening of the hotel in 1931 , hotelier Conrad Hilton , almost bankrupt at the time , reportedly cut out a photograph of the hotel from a magazine and wrote across it , " The Greatest of Them All " . He acquired management rights to the hotel on October 12 , 1949 . The Hilton Hotels Corporation finally bought the hotel outright in 1972 .

In the 1970s , the Waldorf Astoria continued to play an important role in international politics , particularly between the US and the Middle East . In November 1974 , a " 20 @-@ car motorcade , with eight shotgun @-@ toting police marksmen aboard in bullet @-@ proof vests " brought Palestinian Fatah party leader Farouk Kaddoumi to the Waldorf from John F. Kennedy International Airport . The Waldorf was on red alert , and German Shepherd sniffer dogs were brought in prior to his arrival to look for possible bombs . 15 suites of the hotel were reserved for the Palestine Liberation Organization ( PLO ) Arab delegation . The following month , President Ford met with Nelson Rockefeller after he was voted Vice President , and a 90 @-@ minute press conference was held in a suite in the hotel . In November 1975 , the US government insisted that PLO leader Yasser Arafat stay at the Waldorf during his visit to America , against the wishes of the hotel staff ; security was stepped up severely . On August 12 , 1981 , IBM unveiled its Personal Computer in a press conference at the Waldorf Astoria , and in 1985 , the NBA held its first @-@ ever draft lottery between non @-@ playoff teams at the Starlight Room . The lottery was for the 1985 NBA Draft in which Patrick Ewing was the consensus number one pick .

Lee Jablin , of Harman Jablin Architects , fully renovated and upgraded the historical property to its original grandeur during the mid @-@ 1980s through the mid @-@ 1990s in a \$ 150 million renovation . The hotel was named an official New York City Landmark in 1993 . On May 27 , 2001 , the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America had a grand banquet at the hotel to celebrate the 1700th anniversary of Armenia 's conversion to Christianity , with Ambassador Edward Djerejian as guest speaker . On May 7 , 2004 , a press conference was held by MGM , discussing Steve Martin 's The Pink Panther of The Pink Panther . The 5th Annual DGA Honors Gala was held at the Waldorf on September 29 .

In 2006 , Hilton launched Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts , a global luxury brand named for the iconic hotel . There are now branches of the Waldorf Astoria in Arizona , California , Florida , Hawaii , Louisiana in the United States , and abroad in France , Israel , Italy and Saudi Arabia . In 2006 it was reported that Hilton were considering opening a new Waldorf Astoria hotel on the Las Vegas

Strip . In 2008 the Waldorf Astoria opened the Guerlain and Spa Chakra , Inc. spa at the hotel , as part of the Waldorf Astoria Collection , which offers a " body massage and facial using Guerlain 's age @-@ defying Orchidee Imperiale skincare " .

The Waldorf Astoria New York is a member of Historic Hotels of America , the official program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation . " The Towers of the Waldorf Astoria " continues to operate as a boutique " hotel within a hotel " . In October 2014 , it was announced that the Anbang Insurance Group , based in China , had purchased the Waldorf Astoria New York for US \$ 1 @.@ 95 billion , making it the most expensive hotel ever sold .

On July 1 , 2016 , Anbang Insurance Group , the owner of the hotel , announced plans to convert most of the Waldorf into condominiums . Over 1 @,@ 000 of the hotel 's rooms will be turned into apartments , with the remainder of the rooms continuing as hotel suites . The hotel will be closed in the spring of 2017 and remain so for three years , while extensive renovations are done on the property . The hotel 's restaurants , including Peacock Alley , The Bull and Bear Steak House and the recently opened La Chine , will close along with the hotel and reopen when the renovation is completed .

= = Architecture = =

= = = Old buildings = = =

The old Waldorf Hotel , built at a reported cost of about US \$ 5million , opened on March 13 , 1893 at the corner of Fifth Avenue and 33rd Street , on the site where millionaire developer William Waldorf Astor had previously built his mansion . The hotel stood 225 feet ( 69 m ) high , about 50 feet ( 15 m ) lower than the Astoria , with a frontage of about 100 feet ( 30 m ) on Fifth Avenue , and a total area of 69 @,@ 475 square feet ( 6 @,@ 454 @.@ 4 m2 ) . It was a German Renaissance structure , designed by Henry Janeway Hardenbergh , with 15 public rooms and 450 guest rooms , and a further 100 rooms allocated to servants , with laundry facilities on the upper floors . The New York Times proclaimed the hotel a palace after it opened in 1893 .

The exterior featured loggias , balconies , gables , groups of chimneys , and tiled roofs . One of the chief features was the interior garden court , with fountains and flowers , walls of white terracotta , frescoes and stained glass . The entrance hall was built in Sienna marble , with a mosaic tile floor and a coffered ceiling . The original reception desk of the Waldorf Hotel became a registration desk when it merged with the Astoria Hotel in 1897 . Beyond the lobby was the main corridor leading to the Empire Room , with an alcove off it containing the elevators and grand staircase . Near this was the Marie Antoinette parlor , which was used as a reception room for women . It contained 18th century antiques brought back by Boldt and his wife from an 1892 visit to Europe , including a bust of Marie Antoinette , and an antique clock which was once owned by her . The Empire Room was the largest and most lavishly adorned room in the Waldorf , and soon after opening , it became one of the best restaurants in New York City , rivaling Delmonico 's and Sherry 's . It was modeled after the grand salon in King Ludwig 's palace at Munich , with satin hangings , upholstery and marble pillars , all of pale green , and Crowninshield 's frescoes . Empire in style , the Waldorf 's restaurant feathered columns of dark @-@ green marble , and the pilasters that came opposite them were of mahogany , with ormolu work in the panels . The Waldorf State Apartments , consisting of nine suites , were located on the second floor . The apartments , including the Henry IV Drawing Room , the Francois V Bedroom , which was a reproduction of the room at the Palais de Fontainebleau , had their own music room and a banquet hall to seat 20 , with a handsome china collection including 48 Sevres plates with European portraits .

The old Astoria Hotel , opened in 1897 , was situated on the southeast corner of Fifth Avenue and 34th Street . It was also designed in the German Renaissance style by Henry J. Hardenbergh . With dimensions of 99 by 350 feet ( 30 m × 107 m ) , its height , from the floor of the sub @-@ basement , which was 33 feet ( 10 m ) below the street level , to the roof @-@ line , was about 270 feet ( 82 m ) , or about 240 feet ( 73 m ) above the street @-@ level . It was 16 stories in height , including the

four stories in the roof . The building was constructed of stone , marble and brick , with a steel skeleton frame and modern fireproof interior construction , and was embellished with " French Second Empire Mansard @-@ roofed towers with iron @-@ work cresting as well as Austrian Baroque onion @-@ domes over corners turrets " . There were 25 public rooms and 550 guest rooms , with miles of corridors , vestibules and balls .

The main corridor ran the entire length of the building from east to west . To the left of it was the Astor Dining Room , fronting on Fifth Avenue , which measured 50 by 92 feet ( 15 m x 28 m ) . Great care was taken with it to faithfully reproduce the original dining room of the mansion , three floors above where it had stood , with all of the original paneling , carpeting , drapery and fireplace mantel and Italian Renaissance pilasters and columns , carved of marble from northern Russia . On the right of the main corridor was the Garden Court of Palms , decorated in the Italian style , 88 by 57 feet ( 27 m x 17 m ) . On the first floor , at the head @-@ of the east main staircase , was the Astor Gallery , 87 by 102 feet ( 27 m x 31 m ) , looking out on 34th Street , finished in the style of the Hôtel de Soubise , with a blue , gray and gold color scheme . The second floor contained a private suite of apartments at the northeast corner , with large drawing rooms , dining room , butler 's pantry , hallway , three bedrooms , three maids ' bedrooms and five bathrooms , all finished in old English oak . All the floors above the third were given up to suites and bedrooms up to the 14th floor . The ballroom , in the Louis XIV style , has been described as the " pièce de résistance " of the hotel , measuring 65 feet ( 20 m ) by 95 feet ( 29 m ) and 40 feet ( 12 m ) ( three stories ) in height . It had a capacity to seat 700 at banquets and 1 @, @ 200 at concerts , and featured tints of ivory @-@ gray and cream in its design . On the hotel 's top floor was the roof @-@ garden , enclosed on all sides by glass , with a glass roof over . It was furnished with rattan chairs and lounges in pale @-@ green and pink , hung across with gauzy fabric .

= = = Current building = = =

= = = Exterior = = =

Travel America stated : " To linger in the sumptuous salons of the Waldorf @-@ Astoria is to step back in time . Your trip down memory lane is a flashback to the glamor days of the 1930s , when this Art Deco masterpiece was the tallest hotel in the world and the epicenter of elite society . A legendary limestone landmark occupying a whole block of prime real estate in midtown Manhattan , it 's still a prestige address that embodies luxury and power in the richest city on earth . " The hotel was designed by architects Schultze and Weaver and constructed at 301 Park Avenue , just north of Grand Central Terminal . That area was developed by building atop the existing railroad tracks leading to the station , with buildings like the Waldorf Astoria utilizing " air rights " to the space above the tracks . The new building opened on October 1 , 1931 . The 47 @-@ story 190 @. @ 5 m ( 625 ft ) hotel was the tallest and largest hotel in the world , and remained so for a number of years . 1 @, @ 585 cubic feet ( 44 @. @ 9 m3 ) of black marble was imported from Belgium , 600 cubic feet ( 17 m3 ) of Brech Montalto and 260 cubic feet ( 7 @. @ 4 m3 ) of Alps Green arrived from Italy , and some 300 antique mantles were brought in to furnish it . 200 railroad cars brought some 800 @, @ 000 cubic feet ( 23 @, @ 000 m3 ) of limestone for the building 's facing , 27 @, @ 100 tons of steel for the skeleton superstructure , and 2 @, @ 595 @, @ 000 square feet ( 241 @, @ 100 m2 ) of terra cotta and gypsum block . The towers are brick @-@ faced , which led many to believe that the builders ran out of money .

Peacock Alley , a 300 feet ( 91 m ) long corridor lined with amber marble connects the two hotel buildings . Gilded , women of the times would enjoy walking along it and admiring themselves in the mirrors . In 1931 it was reported that as many as 36 @, @ 000 people were walking down it on any given day . The Peacock Alley restaurant of the Waldorf took its name from the alley .

The hotel had its own railway platform , Track 61 , that was part of the New York City Subway and was connected to the Grand Central Terminal complex . The platform was used by Franklin D. Roosevelt , James Farley , Adlai Stevenson , and Douglas MacArthur , among others . The platform



was also used for the exhibition of American Locomotive Company 's new diesel locomotive in 1946 . In 1948 , Filene 's and the New York , New Haven and Hartford Railroad also staged a fashion show on the platform . An elevator large enough for Franklin D. Roosevelt 's automobile provides access to the platform . However , it is rarely opened to the public .

= = = Interior = = =

Such is the architectural and cultural heritage of the hotel that tours are conducted of the hotel for guests . Frommer 's has cited the hotel as an " icon of luxury " , and highlights the " wide stately corridors , the vintage Deco door fixtures , the white @-@ gloved bellmen , the luxe shopping arcade " , the " stunning round mosaic under an immense crystal chandelier " and the " free @-@ standing Waldorf clock , covered with bronze relief figures " in the main lobby . They compare the decor of the rooms to those of an English country house , and describe the corridors as being wide and plush @-@ carpeted which " seem to go on forever " .

The lobby floor contains the room registration and cashier desks , the Empire Room and Hilton Room , the private Marco Polo Club , the Wedding Salon , Kenneth 's Salon , the Peacock Alley lounge and restaurant , and Sir Harry 's Bar . From 1992 to 2013 , Kenneth , sometimes called the world 's first celebrity hairdresser , famed for creating Jacqueline Kennedy 's bouffant in 1961 , moved his hairdressing and beauty salon to the Waldorf after a 1990 fire destroyed his East 54th Street shop . In the main foyer is a chandelier measuring 10 feet ( 3 @. 0 m ) by 10 feet ( 3 @. 0 m ) . The elevator is furnished with paneled pollard oak and Carpathian elm . Special desks in the lobby are allocated to transportation and theatre , where exclusive tickets to many of the city 's prominent theatres can be purchased . The lobby is furnished with polished nickel @-@ bronze cornices and rockwood stone . The grand clock , a 4 @, 000 pounds ( 1 @, 800 kg ) bronze was built by the Goldsmith 's Company of London originally for the 1893 World Columbia Exposition in Chicago , but was purchased by the Waldorf owners . Its base is octagonal , with eight commemorative plaques of presidents George Washington , Abraham Lincoln , Ulysses S. Grant , Andrew Jackson , Benjamin Harrison and Grover Cleveland , and Queen Victoria and Benjamin Franklin . A shield once belonging to the Waldorf was moved to the Alexis restaurant on W. Franklin Street in 1984 . Several boutiques surround the lobby , which contains Cole Porter 's Steinway & Sons floral print decorated grand piano on the Cocktail Terrace , which the hotel had once given him as a gift . Porter was a resident at the hotel for 30 years and composed many of his songs here . The Empire Room is where many of the musical and dance performances were put on , from Count Basie , to Victor Borge , Gordon MacRae , George M. Cohan and Lena Horne , the first black performer at the hotel .

The third floor contains the Grand Ballroom , the Silver Corridor , the Basildon Room , the Jade Room and the Astor Gallery . Numerous organizations hold their annual dinners in the grand ballroom of the Waldorf , including St. John 's University President 's Dinner , the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York 's annual gala , during which the Deus Caritas Est Award for philanthropy is presented , and the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner . The NASCAR Sprint Cup end @-@ of @-@ season awards banquet was held at the Waldorf @-@ Astoria every year between 1981 and 2008 before moving to the Wynn in Las Vegas . It was held initially in the Starlight Room , but from 1985 , it was staged in the Grand Ballroom , except in 2001 and 2002 . On May 1 , 2004 , the Waldorf @-@ Astoria was the venue for the Manhattan Hungarian Network Grand Europe Ball , a historic black @-@ tie charitable affair co @-@ chaired by Archduke Georg of Austria @-@ Hungary which celebrated the Enlargement of the European Union . Bob Hope was such a regular performer at the Ballroom that he said , " I 've played so many dinners in the Grand Ballroom , I always make a crack when I get up to speak that I leave my dinner jacket in the lobby so that I don 't have to ship it to the Coast all the time " . Of note in the Astor Gallery are 12 allegorical females , painted by Edward Emerson Simmons . Every October the Paris Ball was held in the Grand Ballroom , before moving to the Americana ( now the Sheraton Center ) . It hosted a memorable New Year 's Eve party with Guy Lombardo and the Royal Canadians , and Lombardo used to broadcast live on the radio there from the " Starlight Roof " . Maurice Chevalier performed at

the ballroom in 1965 in his last appearance . The Silver Corridor outside the ballroom bears a resemblance to the Peacock Alley , but is shorter and wider . The fourth floor has the banquet and sales offices , and many of the suites including Barron , Vanderbilt , Windsor , Conrad , Vertès , Louis XVI and Cole Porter , named after the celebrities who stayed in them . The fourth floor was where the notorious Sunday night card games were played . There is also a re @-@ creation of one of the living rooms of Hoover 's Waldorf @-@ Astoria suite in the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum .

= = = = Rooms and suites = = = =

The Waldorf Astoria and Towers has a total of 1 @, @ 413 hotel rooms as of 2014 . In 2009 , when it had 1 @, @ 416 rooms , the main hotel had 1 @, @ 235 single and double rooms and 208 mini suites , 17 of which were classified as " Astoria Level " , which are upgraded rooms with deluxe amenities and complimentary access to the Astoria Lounge . The Waldorf Towers , from the 28th floor up to the 42nd , had 181 rooms , of which 115 were suites , with one to four bedrooms . As of the late 1990s , the hotel had a housekeeping staff of nearly 400 , with 150 @-@ day maids and two dozen night maids . The rooms retain the original Art Deco motifs , although each room is decorated differently . The guests rooms , classified as Deluxe , Superior , and Luxury , feature " Waldorf Serenity " beds and have a marble bath or shower with amenities designed by Salvatore Ferragamo . The suites featured King or Double beds and start in size at 450 square feet ( 42 m2 ) . The smallest are the One Bedroom suites , which range from 450 square feet ( 42 m2 ) to 600 square feet ( 56 m2 ) , then there are the Signature suites , with a separate living room and one or two bedrooms , which range from 750 square feet ( 70 m2 ) to 900 square feet ( 84 m2 ) , and finally the suites of The Towers which are generally larger and costlier still , and have a twice @-@ daily maid service .

The Tower suites are divided into standard ones , The Towers Luxury Series , which have their own sitting room , the Towers Penthouse Series , the Towers Presidential @-@ Style Suites , and finally the most expensive Presidential Suite on the 35th floor . The Penthouse Series contains three suites , The Penthouse , The Cole Porter Suite , and The Royal Suite , named after the Duke and Duchess of Windsor . They start at 1 @, @ 800 square feet ( 170 m2 ) in size , with two or more bedrooms , and are fitted with a kitchen and dining room which can accommodate for 8 @-@ 12 guests . The Towers Presidential @-@ Style Suites are divided into the MacArthur Suite and the Churchill Suite , and have their own grand entry foyer . Like the Penthouse Series , they have their own kitchen and dining room . The 2 @, @ 250 square feet ( 209 m2 ) Presidential Suite is designed with Georgian @-@ style furniture to emulate that of the White House . It has three large bedrooms and three bathrooms , and boasts numerous treasures , including the desk of General MacArthur and rocking chair of John F. Kennedy .

= = = = Other facilities = = = =

A 2 @, @ 500 square feet ( 230 m2 ) fitness center is on the 5th floor . The \$ 21 @. @ 5 million Waldorf Astoria Guerlain Spa was inaugurated on September 1 , 2008 on the 19th floor . It features 16 treatment rooms and two relaxation lounges . The hotel has its own Business Center , a 1 @, @ 150 square feet ( 107 m2 ) digital facility , where guests can access the Internet and photocopy . In 2004 the hotel launched a line of products in keeping with the Art Deco style of the hotel , reportedly becoming the first individual hotel in the world to have its own merchandise collection .

= = Restaurants and cuisine = =

The Waldorf Astoria was the first hotel to offer room service and was the first major hotel in the world to hire women as chefs , beginning in 1931 . An extensive menu is available for guests , with special menus for children and for dieters . The executive chef of the Waldorf for many years was John Doherty , following the Austrian Arno Schmidt who held the position for ten years from 1969 to

1979 . Restaurateur George Lang was awarded the Hotelman of the Year Award in 1975 . As of the early 1990s , the hotel served over three million dishes a year , and got through 27 @, @ 000 pounds of lobster , 100 pounds of beluga caviar , 380 @, @ 000 pints of strawberries annually . The hotel has gained significant renown for its lavish feasts . During one grand feast for Francis Cardinal Spellman , over 200 VIP guests , according to Arno Schmidt , devoured some 3 @, @ 600 pounds of fillet , 600 pounds of fresh halibut , 1 @, @ 500 pounds of potatoes , and 260 pounds of petit fours , eating on gold china plates . One 1973 feast by the Explorer 's Club devoured hippo meat , a 4 @- @ foot ( 1 @. @ 2 m ) alligator , a baby shark , an amberjack tuna , a boa , wild boar hams , 480 pieces of breaded @- @ fried cod tongues and cheeks , antelope steaks , two boxes of Chinese rabbit , and 20 pounds of rattlesnake .

The hotel has three main restaurants , Peacock Alley , The Bull and Bear Steak House , and Oscar 's Brasserie , as well as a secondary restaurant , the Japanese Inagiku . At its peak in the late 1940s , the hotel once had nine restaurants . Peacock Alley , situated in the heart of the lobby , features an Art Deco design with gilded ceilings and includes a main restaurant , a bar and lounge , and three private dining salons . It is known primarily for its fish and seafood dishes . Sunday Brunch is particularly popular with locals and features over 180 gourmet dishes divided into 12 themed displays , with cuisine ranging from lobster and oysters to Belgian waffles , Eggs Benedict , and omelettes to hollandaise sauces . The Bull and Bear Steak House is furnished in richly polished mahogany in the English Regency style , and has a " den @- @ like " atmosphere , and is reportedly the only restaurant on the East Coast which serves 28 days prime grade USDA Certified Angus Beef . It has won awards from the National Restaurant Association and Holiday magazine . Between 2007 and 2010 , the restaurant was the filming location for Fox Business Happy Hour , presented live between 5 and 6 pm . The Bull and Bear Bar is based on the original Waldorf Astoria Bar , which was a favorite haunt of many of the financial elite of the city from the hotel 's inception in 1893 , such as Diamond Jim Brady , Buffalo Bill Cody and Bat Masterson . Behind the bar are bronze statues of a bull and a bear , which represent the successful men of Wall Street . The Inagiku , meaning the " rice chrysanthemum " , serves contemporary Japanese cuisine . The restaurant opens for lunch on weekdays and cocktails and dinner in the evenings . Designed by Henry Look of San Francisco , the restaurant has four " distinctly different " rooms , including one which represents an old Japanese farmhouse , and the Kinagu Room , resembling a Japanese temple . Guests have the option to reserve private orthodox tatami rooms .

Oscar 's Brasserie , overlooking Lexington Avenue in what was once a Savarin restaurant , is designed by Adam Tihany . The restaurant takes its name from Oscar Tschirky ( Oscar of the Waldorf ) and serves traditional American cuisine , with many dishes based upon his cookbook which have gained world renown , including the Waldorf salad , Eggs Benedict , Thousand Island dressing , and Veal Oscar . The Waldorf salad ? a salad made with apples , walnuts , celery , grapes , and mayonnaise or a mayonnaise @- @ based dressing ? was first created in 1896 at the Waldorf by Oscar . The original recipe , however did not contain nuts , but they had been added by the time the recipe appeared in The Rector Cook Book in 1928 . Tschirky was also noted for his " Oscar 's Sauce " , which became so popular that it was sold at the hotel . Another of the hotel 's specialties was red velvet cake , which became one of its most popular desserts .

Sir Harry 's Bar is one of the principal bars of the hotel , situated just off the main lobby . It is named after British Sir Harry Johnston ( 1858 ? 1927 ) . In the 1970s the bar was renovated in a " plush African safari " design to honor Johnston , a notable explorer of Africa , with " zebra @- @ striped wall coverings and carpeting , with bent @- @ cane furnishings " . It has since been redecorated back to a more conservative design , with walnut paneling and leather banquettes , and featured a 23 feet ( 7 @. @ 0 m ) by 8 feet ( 2 @. @ 4 m ) ebony bar as of the early 1990s . A number of cocktails were invented at the bar , including the Rob Roy ( 1894 ) and the Bobbie Burns . Frank Sinatra frequented Sir Harry 's Bar for many years . In 1991 , while drinking at Sir Harry 's with Jilly Rizzo and Steve Lawrence , he was approached by a fan asking for an autograph . Sinatra responded , " Don 't you see I 'm on my own time here ? You asshole . What 's wrong with you ? " The fan said something which angered Sinatra , who lunged at the fan , and Sinatra had to be restrained .

= = Notable residents and tenants = =

= = = Leaders and businesspeople = = =

On the 100th anniversary of the hotel in 1993 , one publication wrote : " It isn 't the biggest hotel in New York , nor the most expensive . But when it comes to prestige , the Waldorf @-@ Astoria has no peer . When presidents come to New York , they stay at the Waldorf @-@ Astoria . Kings and queens make it their home away from home , as have people as diverse as Cary Grant , the Dalai Lama and Chris Evert . Some of them liked the hotel so well , they made their home there . " From its inception , the Waldorf was always a " must stay " hotel for foreign dignitaries . The viceroy of China , Li Hung Chang stayed at the hotel in 1896 and feasted on hundred @-@ year @-@ old eggs which he brought with him . Over the years many royals from around the world stayed at the Waldorf Astoria including Shahanshah of Iran and Empress Farah , King Frederick IX and Queen Ingrid of Denmark , Princess Astrid of Norway , Crown Prince Olav and Crown Princess Martha of Norway , King Baudouin I of Belgium and Queen Fabiola , Prince Albert and Princess Paola of Belgium , King Hussein I of Jordan , Prince Rainier III and Princess Grace of Monaco , Queen Juliana of the Netherlands , King Michael of Romania , Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth realms , Mohammed Zahir Shah and Homaira Shah of Afghanistan , King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit of Thailand , and Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko of Japan and many others . Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip stayed at the hotel during their first visit to America on October 21 , 1957 , and a banquet was held for them in the Grand Ballroom . In the Bicentennial year in 1976 , most of the heads of state from around the world and all of the Kings and Queens of Europe were invited to the hotel , and it also served the presidential candidates in the run up to the elections of that year .

In modern times , the clientele of the Waldorf is more typically wealthy politicians and businessmen than playboys and royalty . An entire floor was often rented out to wealthy Saudi Arabians with their own staff , and it was kept out of bounds to others due to the fact that they reportedly often walked around naked and had some bizarre eating habits and practices such as roasting monkeys and snakes . Wealthy Japanese businessmen during their stay would sometimes remove the furniture and replace it with their own floors mats . One early wealthy resident was Chicago businessman J. W. Gates who would gamble on stocks on Wall Street and play poker at the hotel . He paid up to \$ 50 @,@ 000 a year to hire suites at the hotel . Princess Victoria Melita of Saxe @-@ Coburg and Gotha was invited by Waldorf president Lucius Bloomer to stay at the hotel in the 1920s . Demands by people of prominence could often be exorbitant or bizarre , and Fidel Castro once walked into the hotel with a flock of live chickens , insisting that they be killed and freshly cooked on the premises to his satisfaction , only to be turned away . While serving as Secretary of State , Henry Kissinger ordered all of the antiques to be removed from one suite and replaced them with 36 desks for his staff . An unnamed First Lady also once demanded that all of the bulbs in her suite be changed to 100 watt ones and kept on all day and night to simulate daylight ; she further insisted that there be an abundance of chewing gum available .

Postmaster General James Farley occupied two adjoining suites in the current Waldorf Astoria during his tenure as the chairman of the board of Coca @-@ Cola 's International division from 1940 until his death in 1976 , arguably one of the landmark 's longest housed tenants . The Presidential Suite at the hotel come from when , during the 1950s and early 1960s , former U.S. president Herbert Hoover and retired U.S. General Douglas MacArthur lived in suites on different floors of the hotel . Hoover lived at the Waldorf Astoria for over 30 years from after the end of his presidency until he died in 1964 ; former President Dwight D. Eisenhower lived there until he died in 1969 . MacArthur 's widow , Jean MacArthur , lived there from 1952 until her death in 2000 . A plaque affixed to the wall on the 50th Street side commemorates this . John F. Kennedy was fond of the Waldorf Astoria and had a number of private meetings at the hotel , including one with Israeli Prime Minister David Ben @-@ Gurion . Since Hoover , every President of the United States has either

stayed over or lived in the Waldorf Astoria , although Jimmy Carter claimed to have never stayed overnight at the hotel . Nancy Reagan was reputedly not fond of the Presidential Suite .

The official residence of the United States ' Permanent Representative to the United Nations , an unnamed 42nd @-@ floor apartment , has been located in the Waldorf Towers for many years . On June 17 , 2015 , however , the US Department of State announced that it was moving its headquarters during meetings of the UN General Assembly to The New York Palace Hotel . Although State Department officials did not give an official reason for the change affecting both the President and hundreds of American diplomats and support staff who travel to New York for the General Assembly each September and usually stay and hold meetings on two secured floors at the Waldorf , they pointed to Hilton Worldwide 's sale of the Waldorf @-@ Astoria to China 's Beijing @-@ based Anbang Insurance Group for \$ 1 @. @ 95 billion in 2014 , a deal that prompted security concerns . While the terms of the sale allow Hilton to run the hotel for the next 100 years , they also call for " a major renovation " that the officials say has raised eyebrows in the US Government because of concerns about Chinese eavesdropping and cyber espionage .

Carlos P. Romulo , Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines and member of the UN had suite 3600 , below Hoover 's , for some 45 years from 1935 onwards , and fellow Filipino Imelda Marcos also spent much time and money at the hotel . Another connection with the Philippines is that many meetings were held here between President Manuel L. Quezon and high ranking American politicians and senators . Through the meetings , Quezon encouraged investment into the country and convinced General MacArthur to accompany him back to the Philippines as his military adviser .

= = = Celebrities = = =

The hotel has had many well @-@ known under its roof throughout its history , including Charlie Chaplin , Ava Gardner , Liv Ullmann , Edward G. Robinson , Gregory Peck , Ray Bolger , John Wayne , Tony Bennett , Jack Benny , Katharine Hepburn , Spencer Tracy , Muhammad Ali , Vince Lombardi , Judy Garland , Sonny Werblin , Greer Garson , Harold Lloyd , Liberace , Burt Reynolds , Robert Montgomery , Cesar Romero , and many others . Due to the number of high @-@ profile guests staying at the hotel at any one time , author Ward Morehouse III has referred to the Towers as a " kind of vertical Beverly Hills . On any one given night you might find Dinah Shore , Gregory Peck , Frank Sinatra [ or ] Zsa Zsa Gabor staying there " . Gabor married Conrad Hilton in 1941 .

During the 1930s , gangster Benjamin " Bugsy " Siegel owned an apartment at the Waldorf , and Frank Costello was said to have got his haircut and nails done in the Barber 's Shop at the Waldorf . Around the time of World War I , inventor Nikola Tesla lived in the earlier Waldorf @-@ Astoria .

In 1955 , Marilyn Monroe stayed at the hotel for several months , but due to costs of trying to finance her production company " Marilyn Monroe Productions " , only being paid \$ 1 @, @ 500 a week for her role in The Seven Year Itch and being suspended from 20th Century Fox for walking out on Fox after creative differences , living at the hotel became too costly and Monroe had to move into a different hotel in New York City . Around the same time that Monroe lived in the hotel , Cole Porter and Linda Lee Thomas had an apartment in the Waldorf Towers , where Thomas died in 1954 . Porter 's 1934 song " You 're the Top " , contains the lyric , " You 're the top , you 're a Waldorf salad " . The Cole Porter Suite , Suite 33A , was the place where Porter lived and entertained for a period . Frank Sinatra paid nearly \$ 1 million a year to keep it as his personal suite at the hotel between 1979 and 1988 , which he called " home " when out of Los Angeles . Sinatra took over part of the hotel during the filming of The First Deadly Sin in 1980 .

Grace Kelly and Rainier III were regular guests at the hotel . At one time Kelly was reputed to be in love with the hotel banquet manager of the Waldorf , Claudius Charles Philippe . Elizabeth Taylor frequented the hotel , and would often attend galas at the hotel to talk about her various causes . Her visits were excitedly awaited by the hotel staff , who would prepare long in advance . Taylor was honored at the 1983 Friars Club dinner at the hotel .

In 1980 , John Travolta 's brother Joey Travolta and Wendy Shawn , the daughter of comedian Dick Shawn , had their wedding reception at the hotel . Brooke Shields has stated that her very first

encounter with the paparazzi was in the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf at the age of 12 , stating that she " stood like a statue wondering why they were all hired to photograph me " , and that she " debuted at the Waldorf " . During her childhood in the 1980s and 1990s , Paris Hilton lived with her family in the hotel .

= = In popular culture = =

The Waldorf Astoria has been a filming location for numerous films and TV series . Ginger Rogers headlined an all star ensemble cast in the 1945 film *Week-End at the Waldorf* , set at the hotel and filmed partially on location there . Other films shot at the hotel include *The Outing of Mr. Towner* ( 1970 ) , *Broadway Danny Rose* ( 1984 ) , *Coming to America* ( 1988 ) , *Scent of a Woman* ( 1992 ) , *The Cowboy Way* ( 1994 ) , *Random Hearts* ( 1999 ) , *Analyze This* ( 1999 ) , *For Love of the Game* ( 1999 ) , *Serendipity* ( 2001 ) , *The Royal Tenenbaums* ( 2001 ) , *Maid in Manhattan* ( 2002 ) , *Two Weeks Notice* ( 2002 ) , *End of the Century* ( 2005 ) , *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* ( 2005 ) , *The Pink Panther* ( 2006 ) , and *The Hoax* ( 2006 ) . Television series that have filmed at the Waldorf include *Law and Order* , *Rescue Me* , *Sex and the City* , *The Sopranos* and *Will and Grace* .

Several biographies have been written about the Waldorf , including Edward Hungerford 's *Story of the Waldorf* ( New York : G. P. Putnam 's Sons , 1925 ) and Horace Sutton 's *Confessions of a Grand Hotel : The Waldorf-Astoria* ( New York : Henry Holt , 1953 ) . Langston Hughes wrote a poem entitled " Advertisement for the Waldorf-Astoria " , criticizing the hotel and inviting the jobless and homeless to take over the space of the hotel . Wallace Stevens wrote a poem entitled " Arrival at the Waldorf " , in which he contrasts the wild country of the jungles of Guatemala to being " back at the Waldorf " . In Meg Cabot 's novel *Jinx* , the Chapman School Spring Formal takes place in the Waldorf-Astoria . It is at this point that Tory ( the main antagonist ) reveals Jean 's first attempt at a love spell , which served as a catalyst for the novel 's events .