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A WALDORF ASTORIA® RESORT

The Landmark 'Jewel of the Desert'



The Original Arizona Resort: It's no wonder that the Arizona Biltmore has been an Arizona landmark since its opening on February 23, 1929, when it was crowned the "Jewel of the Desert." From the beginning, it was destined to become a legend. It was Phoenix's first resort, and would spark the development of the state's now all-important tourism industry. It was built in grand style and scope – and constructed to last for a long, long time – with the influence of America's premier architect of the era. And through the years, as it expanded, improved and renovated, it has remained true to the architectural legacy and grand style that made the resort a favorite playground of the powerful and famous and a storied landmark recognized around the world.

Frank Lloyd Wright and the Early Years: The Arizona Biltmore stands out in Arizona, and worldwide, for its signature design and ambiance. Renowned Frank Lloyd Wright was the consulting architect; he collaborated with a former student, Albert Chase McArthur, who was the architect of record and the elder brother of the resort's original owners, Charles and Warren McArthur. It was Wright's first hotel project and remains the only existing hotel in the world with a Wright design.

The spirit of the dramatic, organic Wright style, that favored indigenous materials and influences, is imbedded throughout the design of the hotel. It was erected entirely of "Biltmore Block," a variation on a textile block first used by Wright to construct private homes. The pre-cast blocks made from desert sand on-site and created in 34 different geometric patterns inspired by the trunk of a palm tree were designed by Emry Kopta, a prominent southwestern sculptor. Blocks of glass, built into the walls, brought natural lighting. A reminder that Arizona was known as the Copper State, the main building was adorned with a glittering copper roof. The lobby boasted a gold-leaf ceiling that was, when the hotel opened 84 years ago, the second largest in the world (after the Taj Mahal). Rather than just an opulent creation, the Arizona Biltmore has, and still retains, something of the mien of a temple where great art took shape.

The construction was exceptional, but costly. With the original construction estimate of \$1 million doubling, the McArthur brothers lost the hotel only a year after opening to the original investor in the project who had deeper pockets: Chicago chewing-gum magnate William Wrigley, Jr. Over 43 years under Wrigley family ownership, a grand era of extravagance and cachet swept through the Arizona Biltmore and it became world renowned as a luxury oasis for celebrities, heads of state, captains of industry and other famous travelers. The resort weathered the

Depression and WWII without a blip on the radar screen. A stock market board was complemented by a billiard room, soda fountain, barbershop, and branches of exclusive Phoenix shops, skeet shooting, and a stable for riding desert trails. A covey of quail was tended so guests could be assured fresh quail eggs. Prohibition was circumvented by the “mystery room,” a men-only smoking and drinking room up a back stairway, along with discreet service on the terrace.



A Celebrity Playground: The Arizona Biltmore has wined and dined generations of celebrities. Some of America’s most beloved stars made the resort their playground, and stories and anecdotes have flowed from their visits, imbuing the resort with a legendary status. Countless other notables have also enjoyed the famed ambiance and guest luxuries over more than eight decades.

Clark Gable and Carole Lombard honeymooned here as did Ronald and Nancy Reagan, Marilyn Monroe had her favorite swimming pool (Catalina Pool), every U.S. president since Herbert Hoover has stayed

here, and many current celebrities frequent the resort.

Among the many famous guests have been:

- Hollywood bigwigs such as Gracie Allen and George Burns, Fred Astaire, Jack Benny, Marlon Brando, Nicholas Cage, Johnny Carson, George Clooney, Bill Cosby, Tom Cruise, Michael Douglas, Whoopi Goldberg, Bob Hope, Jay Leno, Gregory Peck, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Frank Sinatra, Steven Spielberg, Sylvester Stallone, Sharon Stone and Elizabeth Taylor.
- Musical artists from Glen Campbell and Neil Diamond to Diana Ross, Steely Dan, Elton John Bruce Springsteen, Eric Clapton and U2.
- Broadcasters such as Tom Brokaw, Barbara Walters, Larry King and Peter Jennings.
- Politicians such as John McCain, Newt Gingrich, Dan Quayle and Al Gore, along with every U.S. President since Hoover.
- Sports stars from Magic Johnson to Joe Montana to Michael Jordan.