



50
YEARS
NEW YORK HILTON
MIDTOWN



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
OF HOSPITALITY
& DEDICATED SERVICE



New York Hilton Midtown opened its doors on June 26, 1963 as “The New York Hilton at Rockefeller Center,” immediately generating awe and gathering accolades that continue to this day.

New York Hilton is what Conrad N. Hilton believed a hotel should be—a city, in which anything could be found.



1961: Conrad Hilton (right), Laurance Rockefeller (center), and Percy Uris (left) review hotel concept.

This inspired, new staple of the city was the result of the Rock-Hil-Uris Corporation partnership formed in 1961—50% owned by the Uris Brothers—25% by the Rockefeller Group—and 25% by Hilton Hotel Corporation.



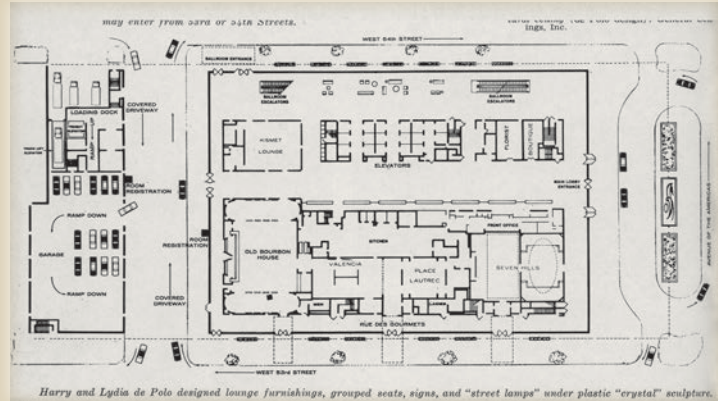
Conrad N. Hilton presides over the inaugural opening ceremony.



Reception line at the hotel's opening—Laurance Rockefeller, Percy Uris, and Harold D. Uris.



Architects included in the design of the 45 stories high hotel, 10 banquet halls, 15 private dining rooms, 4 restaurants and entertainment of all kinds.



Harry and Lydin de Polo designed lounge furnishings, grouped seats, signs, and "street lamps" under plastic "crystal" sculpture.

At its opening, New York Hilton was one of the first hotel in the United States to feature original art in its guest rooms, restaurants and public areas.

In 1963, the hotel featured 2,153 rooms with a possible combination of 574 suites, exclusive of 54 executive tower suites for year-round occupancy and two penthouse suites, two stories high.





In “Rue des Gourmets,” the fascinating street of restaurants in a glass-walled promenade on the 53rd Street side of the hotel, lived four restaurants and an exotic cocktail lounge.

Each restaurant served in anticipation of its liquor license that had not come through in time for the opening, as they engaged in dry runs.

- The Old Bourbon House—A plush red and gold room of the Gay 90’s. It opened with the house rule of “men only” after 3:00 pm, Monday to Thursday.
- The Valencia—Authentic Spanish restaurant offering casual entertainment and serious Spanish cuisine.
- Place Lautrec—French-style cafe.
- The Seven Hills—Restaurant designed by René Bouché who brought Rome’s famous hills to the interior of the Italian-themed dining room.
- The Kismet Lounge—Oriental atmosphere with harem-clad waitress.



*Indoor Street, “Rue des Gourmets,”
and its restaurants.*



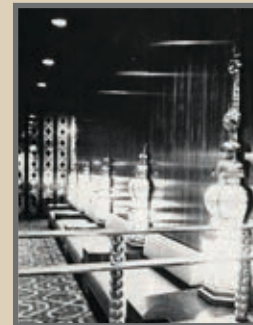
The Seven Hills



*Place
Lautrec*



*Right—The
Valencia Room
Bottom Left—
Kismet lounge
Bottom Right—
Second floor
Rendezvous Bar*





To create New York Hilton, the talents of internationally known designers were selected. The hotel featured at its opening nearly \$500,000 worth of paintings, sculpture by famous artists and original art, both outside and inside the hotel.

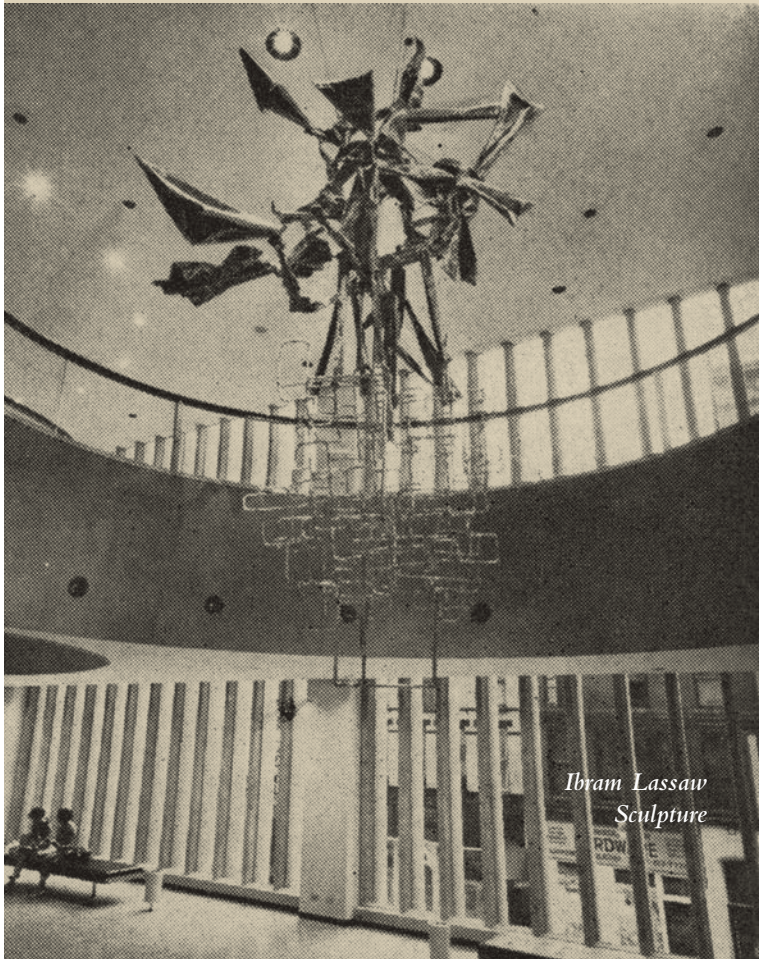


*The de Polo's
"street lamps"*

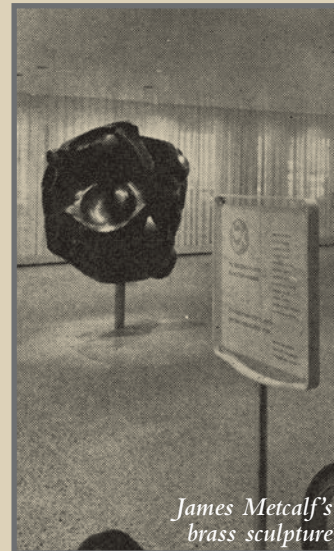


Lobby Lounge

Throughout public areas, sculptures, signs, display cases and lamps were mounted on steel tubes in an attempt to attenuate the horizontal sweep of the space. They were referred to as the "lollypops."



*Ibram Lassaw
Sculpture*



*James Metcalf's
brass sculpture*



House Phone on stem



The Mercury and Trianon Ballrooms are second only to the Grand Ballroom in size and importance, and high on the tremendous list of ballroom, social and exhibition spaces in the city.

The Rococo-inspired Trianon Ballroom is reminiscent of a classic, 18th-century French ballroom; the design program for the Mercury Ballroom called perfectly to both festive functions and industrial exhibitions.



*Left—The Trianon
Below—Second and third
floor Promenades; they
were designed to give
visitors the sensation of
being on outdoor decks.*



*The Mercury
Ballroom with
its streamlined
appearance,
reflective of the
post-Modernist
period.*



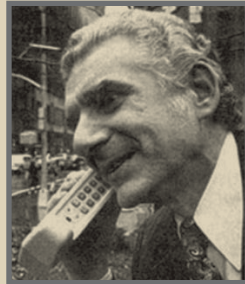
The Grand Ballroom is one of New York's most iconic venues, having hosted hundreds of celebrities, royalty, and other notable individuals.





1964—New York City hosted the World's Fair and officially introduced to the world "The New York Hilton at Rockefeller Center."

April 3, 1973—Dr. Martin Cooper makes the world's first public cellular phone call from a sidewalk outside the hotel where he subsequently held a press conference.



December 11, 1996—Princess Diana is named "Humanitarian of the Year" by United Cerebral Palsy of New York during an awards ceremony.



October 21, 2011—Scandinavian royalty mark the 100th Anniversary of The American-Scandinavian Foundation during the black-tie Centennial Ball.

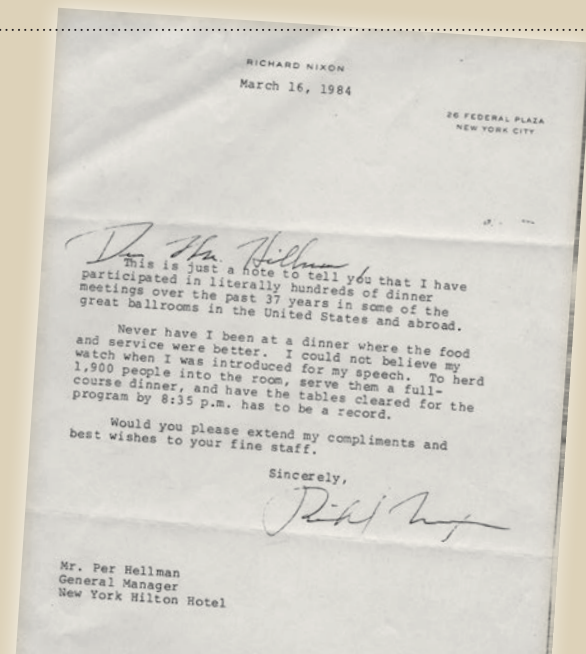


November 14, 1979—Former Governor of California Ronald Reagan announces his candidacy for President of the United States.

November 07, 2000—First Lady of the United States, Hillary Rodham Clinton, on US Senate election night 2000.



The New York Hilton has hosted every president since John F. Kennedy. The hotel played host to the Democratic National Convention in 1976, 1980, and 1992, and the first Republican National Convention in New York City in 2004.





February 11, 1964
 —The Beatles, who made New York Hilton their home, huddle in back of limousine, en route to their first American television appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show.



1967—Frank Sinatra and Duke Ellington promote their Francis A. & Edward K. studio album.

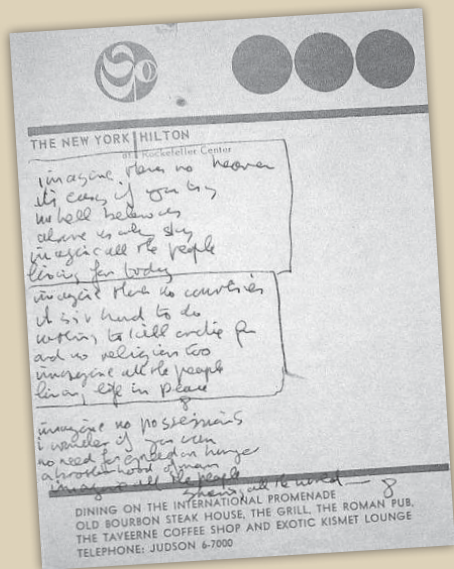
October 28, 1965
 —Mick Jagger and Keith Richards in the Penthouse during the Rolling Stones' North American tour.



June 9, 1972—Elvis Presley and Manager Vernon Presley hold a press conference in the Mercury Ballroom before his famous Madison Square Garden concert.



King of Rock and Roll with Norwegian fans following the press conference.



1971—John Lennon and Yoko Ono move to New York and stay at the New York Hilton where Lennon pens the lyrics to his most celebrated song, "Imagine," on hotel stationary.



May 13, 1982, at 1:00 pm, Stevie Wonder stops by the hotel's Mirage Lounge to celebrate his own birthday.



Winter 1987—The Rockettes are offered complimentary office space and able to perform on the ballroom stage when Radio City Music Hall faces closing its doors.

“It’s blue, big and has the longest name of any other hotel in the city - the New York Hilton at Rockefeller Center. Visitors to the newcomer considered it quite impossible for the management to clear the decks in time for the opening, but wiser heads on the scene explained: ‘The miracle will happen; these people are used to opening hotels.’”



The original logo was used until 1988 before being replaced with the stylized signature Hilton logo. Created by Lester Beall, the mark for the New York Hilton at Rockefeller Center was considered one of the most celebrated graphic designs of its time. It was round, to suggest our world, and the swirling, pennant-like image at the left suggests flags as they appear at Rockefeller Center. To the right is a stylized globe, its meridians emphasizing once again the international setting of the hotel and the hospitality offered by Hilton Hotels around the world.

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