

Haunted Tales and Mysterious Happenings at Historic Hotels of the Rockies - rooms with a Boo!

By Historic Hotels of the Rockies

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What's a historic hotel without a resident ghost or two? While some properties like to keep legends about spirit sightings or paranormal activity under wraps, others consider their friendly ghostly residents just part of the hotel's charm.

RESIDENT GHOSTS

Castle Marne - Denver, CO

In the spring of 1989, with the renovation of the Castle Marne in full swing, four construction workers were relaxing in the sun during their lunch break in the front yard. The large front door was standing open, offering a view through the foyer, up the main staircase. They were amazed to see a beautiful young girl dressed in her finest turn-of-the-century party attire coming down the staircase of the empty house. She stopped to admire herself in the mantel mirror, then skipped down the front porch stairs, swirling past the stunned workers. They watched dumbstruck as she got into a horse-drawn carriage that was waiting for her at the curb.

The construction workers turned to look at each other with astonishment, and then back to the curb. The carriage and the little girl had disappeared into thin air. Could she be the same little girl whom guests have said knocks lightly on their door late at night, then enters through the door itself, disappearing into a mist?

Irma Hotel - Cody, WY

In room 35, guests have reported hearing people in the room above them—however, there's no guest room one floor up, just the roof! Also, when making his nightly rounds, a hotel staffer has heard people inside room 35. Once, he opened the door to look inside, and no one was there. He walked down the hallway only to hear noises again. He went back, opened the door and the music and noise stopped. Housekeeping staff have made the bed, moved elsewhere in the room, and when they looked at the bed again, the covers were turned down.

In room 16, a guest took a picture of his wife sitting on the bed. In the image, you can see a woman is floating in the air above her.

In the main dining area, waitresses have reported seeing a stranger walk in and sit at a certain booth. By the time the servers walk over to the booth, the stranger is gone. Several different waitresses through the years have told this same story; some have been at the Irma for 30 years.

Hotel Alex Johnson - Rapid City, SD

The spookiest sleeping floor at the Hotel Alex Johnson is the 8th level. One guest in room 803 claimed that while he was in the bathroom, the ice bucket somehow got from the table to bed. Incidentally he claimed he hadn't used or touched the ice bucket. Then during the night he could hear piano music and feel the presence of a woman. Another guest likes to stay in room 804 as he has come to know a little girl named Brittany. The hotel does allow pets, but they generally put any dogs on eighth floor, since the dogs tend to bark through the night.

The third floor also sees some paranormal activity: The elevator doors occasionally open there for no reason just before 5 p.m.

A banquet server once went to a narrow closet to get some linen off the shelf when she noticed a light on

under the door. This closet didn't have an interior light. When she opened the door, it was dark.

A housekeeper repeatedly saw a woman watching her work. After looking at some old hotel photos, she realized the woman she saw was dressed in the same maid's uniform that was used decades ago.

A number of paranormal groups have studied the Hotel Alex Johnson, and all claim they have found proof of orbs, shadow people, and anomalies. Some have reported the presence of a little girl (perhaps Brittany from room 804!), who was giggling, humming and skipping around. Others have captured shadowy spirits on camera. All of the ghost-hunting groups have assured hotel management that the spirits are friendly!

Plaza Hotel - Las Vegas, NM

The spirit of Byron T. Mills, an eccentric owner of the Plaza Hotel in Las Vegas, New Mexico in the 1940s, is a frequent visitor to room 310. Mills planned to demolish the property but died before that happened. Numerous guests and staff have encountered strange incidents on the third floor. Byron reportedly sits on the edge of the bed and also paces the floor. A traveling salesman checked into 310 and distinctly remembers placing his cash underneath a folded stack of clothing before showering. When he returned to dress, the money was laying on top of the clothes. Lauren Addario, a waitress at the Plaza's Landmark Grill, also feels Byron's presence and regularly smells cigar smoke and hears heavy footsteps on the barroom floor when no one is in sight. Nevertheless, this ghost is so endearing the bar is named in his honor, Byron T's Saloon.

THE RESURRECTION

Many historic hotels deny having ghosts onsite. Jim Osterfoss, owner of Nagle Warren Mansion in Cheyenne, WY quips, "We don't have any ghosts but for \$25, one can be arranged, complete with chains and moaning." However many travelers seek out destinations with positive spiritual vibes. Some feel that Bishop's Lodge Ranch Resort and Spa in Santa Fe, NM is sacred because the remains of founder Bishop Lamy are actually buried under the altar inside the original chapel that overlooks the 450-acre property.

Other properties pay homage to deceased guests and oftentimes resurrect them. Impersonators bearing an amazing likeness of non-living characters frequent the lobbies and ballrooms. Teddy Roosevelt performs speeches regularly at the Hotel Colorado in Glenwood Springs, CO. The Cody Gunfighters' re-enactment outside the Irma Hotel in Cody, WY portrays wild west folk the likes of Buffalo Bill and Wild Bill Hickok. Or step back in time at the Strater Hotel's Diamond Belle Saloon in Durango, CO where the waitstaff dress up like saloon girls and the piano player dons vintage duds. For those individuals who long to have their own fashion styles of yesteryear, the Delaware Hotel retail shop sells authentic Victorian and frontier clothing made by well-known designers.

MURDERS, MYSTERIES, RITUALS and SPIRITS (the other kind)

Historic Hotels of the Rockies most bewitching happenings:

Halloween Masquerade Ball

Grand Union Hotel - Fort Benton, MT

October 31, 2008

Grand finale of their 125th anniversary. Prizes for the best mask and costume. Identities revealed at midnight. Packages start at \$190. grandunionhotel.com, info@grandunionhotel.com, 888-838-1882 or 406-622-1882

Murder Mystery Dinners

Nagle Warren Mansion Bed & Breakfast - Cheyenne, WY

The Chicago Caper on October 4, 2008

An Affair To Dismember on November 1, 2008

Archeologically Speaking on December 31, 2008

Guests are assigned a character prior to arrival and arrive dressed in costume. The plot thickens throughout the four dinner courses in the elegant dining room. The mystery is solved over dessert. \$59 per person for dinner only; \$218 per couple for dinner and accommodations. naglewarrenmansion.com, jim@nwmbb.com, 800-811-2610 or 307-637-3333

Halloween Murder Mystery Weekend

Izaak Walton - Essex, MT

October 31 - November 2, 2008

Each person is a participant with their own tailor-made murder mystery script. This weekend includes two nights lodging, cocktail party on Friday night, breakfast Saturday morning with time off to enjoy the area, dinner Saturday evening, and Sunday breakfast concludes this murderous "whodunit" weekend.

Prices start at \$475 per couple. izaakwaltoninn.com, stay@izaakwaltoninn.com, 406-888-5700

Tom Horn Murder Mystery

Historic Plains Hotel - Cheyenne, WY

October 31, 2008

In 1901, an epidemic of cattle rustling brought a notorious stock detective named Tom Horn on the scene to eliminate the bovine bandits in unscrupulous ways. But something went awry. This reenactment of the suspicious murder of 14-year old Willie Nickel is performed by the High Plains Players, a cast of a dozen shady characters. After hearing several accounts, audience participants will have a night to sleep on it and deliver their verdict the next morning. \$249 per couple. \$89 for dinner, show and breakfast only. theplainshotel.com, info@theplainshotel.com, 866-275-2467 or 307-638-3311

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An eclectic collection of 19 vintage properties, the Historic Hotels of the Rockies resurrects the glory days of the late 1800's and early 1900's. www.historic-hotels.com

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