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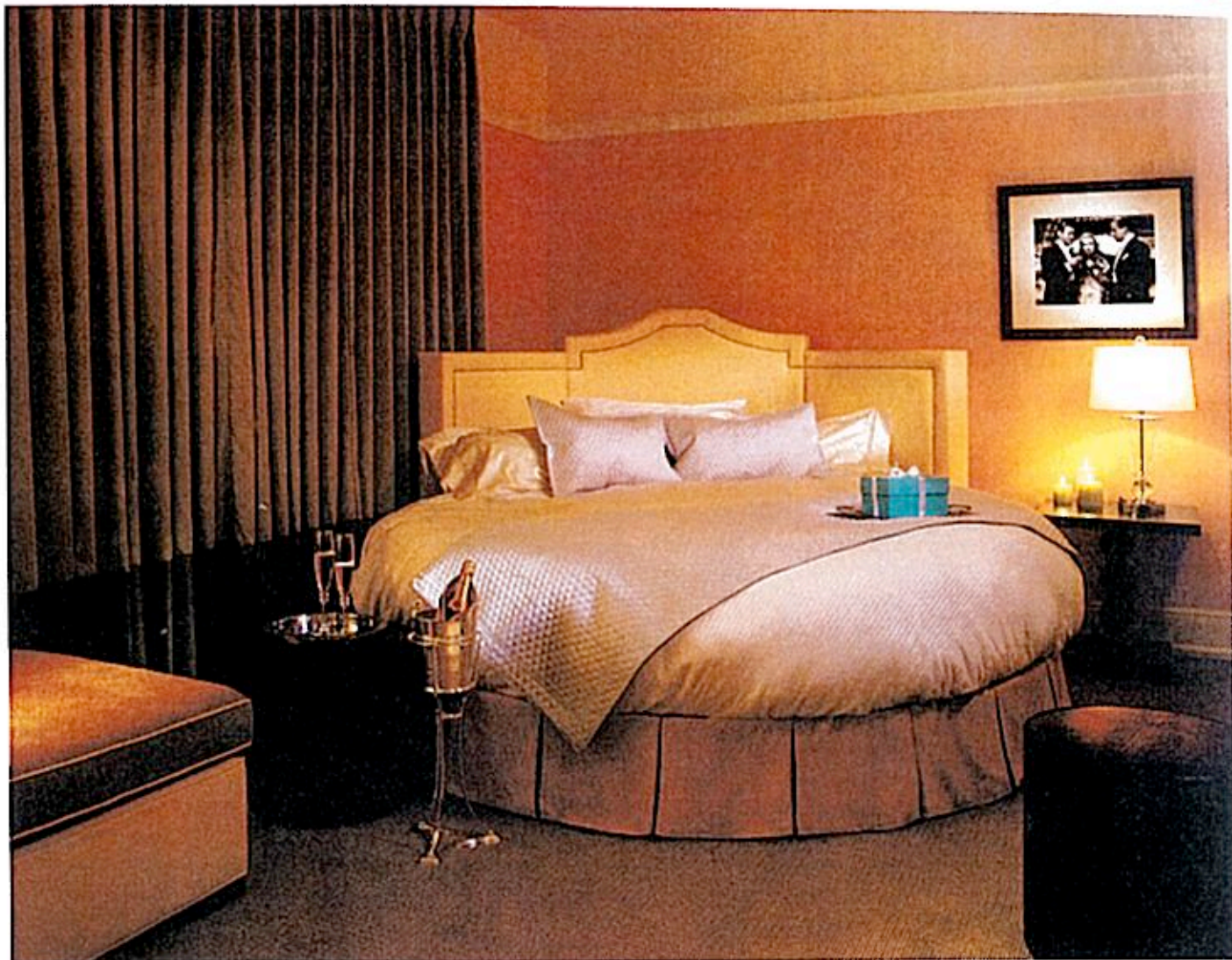
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The Marlene Dietrich room

Historic Hotel Renovation Pays Homage to Hollywood Glamour

By Jamee Rae

What thrills me most about historic buildings in downtown Portland is that their outsides don't tell that much about their insides, except perhaps their approximate age. As someone who appreciates architecture and design, I get curious when I pass an older structure that I'm sure has stories to tell. If possible, I'll look through an open door to get a glimpse of what's inside, and then wonder what it is I'm not able to see in the distance or behind walls.

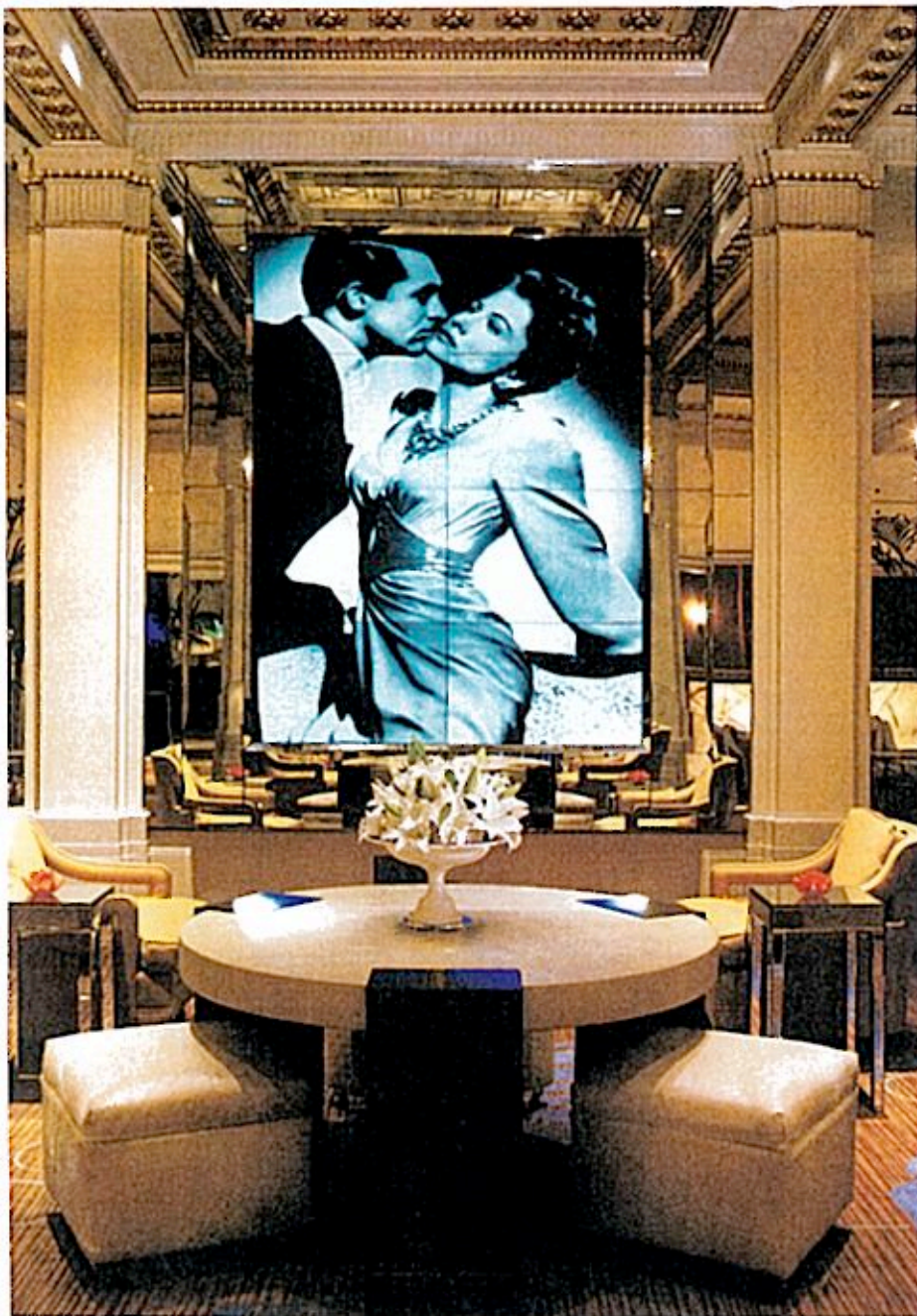
Truthfully, if I had to choose between a day of shopping and

taking an eight-hour tour of pre-1940 structures in Portland's historic district, I would absolutely take the tour. And I would hope to see what I believe exists, which is a contrast between the old and new and a blend of the mature and the modern.

Rolling up to Hotel deLuxe on 15th Street, I noticed the tell-tale brick building with the business name beautifully displayed on the awning. Prior to my arrival, I learned that the Hotel Mallory had spent 60 years greeting guests in this location, and that the newest refurbished

downtown Portland hotel made its debut only a year earlier. I couldn't wait to get inside to see what all the fuss was about, and what prompted Hospitality Design magazine to award Hotel deLuxe with Best Historic Renovation of 2007, and why the 130-room boutique was chosen for Condé Naste Traveler's May 2007 Hot List of new hotels.

Since I'm totally into before and afters, I was slightly disappointed that I hadn't visited the Mallory in recent years or viewed pictures of the place in its heyday.



Larger-than-life video wall is the focal point of Hotel deLuxe.

It would have been cool to make an intelligent comparison. But none of that mattered once I stepped inside Hotel deLuxe, rightly referred to as 'swanky' by multiple reviewers and magazine writers. I was simply content to enter into European grandeur that infused Art Deco Noir-style décor and Hollywood glamour, which had permeated American culture in the first half of the 20th century.

It's hard to say what touched me most and held me so quickly, although I'm reasonably sure that the \$8 million renovation by Provenance

Hotels, along with the design intellects of Portland's Hennebery Eddy Architects and San Francisco Designer David Hill had everything to do with it. Hill didn't go reno crazy, although I'd heard he was on the edge with the Hollywood theme. To me, the hospitality and residential designer, known as a skilled colorist and for his use of exotic finishes, gave just enough without giving too much. He respected the Mallory and retained its architectural bones then elegantly dressed them up for a more modern presentation of a Portland boutique hotel. The 30-foot

gilded ceilings in the lobby are an example of his considerate design. Whoever originally applied the gold metal leaf understood the ancient art of gilding once meant to enhance the ceilings of temples and palaces. Hill's appreciation for the effect had his workers preserving the art rather than replacing it.

No doubt the focal point in the hotel's lobby is the larger-than-life video wall with 24 rotating vintage film stills surrounded by floor-to-ceiling glass on both sides. The well-planned placement of velour settees, side tables and tuffets provide enough lobby seating for several groups or for private, thoughtful moments alone. Overhead, eight of the Mallory's original Czechoslovakian chandeliers continue to light the large room where both business and leisure travelers check in for an average stay of two days.

According to Dina Nishioka, director of public relations for the Provenance Hotel Group, Curator Tessa Papas spent nearly seven months researching and constructing the 400-plus framed film stills and celebrity portraits placed strategically throughout the hotel. I loved when the elevator opened and my movement caused mirrored panels across the way to light up and offer snippets regarding the directors whose works were featured in the halls. I really did stop on all eight floors to find out which directors got the glory, and to see if I could name the movies and the stars that Papas personally selected for the hotel.

Inside Hotel deLuxe is Gracie's restaurant where kidney-shaped banquet seating is not only savvy but comfortable and sets the stage for a nice Northwestern meal with piano jazz in the background. A few feet away, the Driftwood Lounge looks like it did before the hotel changed hands, except for a major cleansing of its cedar walls and a new granite bar with alligator trim. The owners were smart to keep the place as deco-hip and dimly lit as it always was. The locals insisted on it and hotels guests appear to have no trouble getting in the groove. The main floor of Hotel



Rest assured of a luxurious night's sleep.

deLuxe also provides meeting space through three theme-titled doors, including the Green Room, Editing Room and Screening Room, which doubles as a movie theater featuring films and shorts created by local and regional filmmakers.

Each guest room features a flat-panel HDTV, MP3 docking station, "Make It So" button on the room phone and special menu for pillows, bedding and spiritual reading. For some, the best reason to stay at Hotel deLuxe is because of its super-friendly pet policy. While there, I noticed a German Shepherd checking in, but I never saw or heard another animal, though I knew they were there. Obviously, the dog friendliness isn't a problem to those who are not in the dog lover's category.

I arrived at Hotel deLuxe for one purpose. I was seeking pleasure. Thankfully, I managed to get a room in the northwest corner of the hotel on the eighth floor, and I didn't need

much else. I watched the sun set from a perfectly placed window and enjoyed a fantastic view of the West Hills from one of the most comfortable beds I've ever slept in. As the pictures showed, the room was decorated in greens, soft browns and buttery yellow. The colors did what the designer wanted them to do, but more than that, I appreciated the simple elegance in every aspect of the décor, from the drapery to the Lucite lamps and the rounded stainless shower curtain bar.

I will return to the Hotel deLuxe on another Portland trek, but my one request is to stay in the Marlene Dietrich room where an eight-foot rounded bed will make me feel like the movie star that I might have been. I think I deserve at least one curtain call. ■

For more information, visit www.hoteldeluxeportland.com or call 866-895-2094.

Sunday Movie Night at Hotel deLuxe

The third Sunday of the month, the Screening Room at Hotel deLuxe provides cabaret-style seating for viewing feature films and shorts created by local and regional filmmakers. Admission is free with a no-host food and beverage menu provided by the hotel's Gracie's restaurant and Driftwood Room.

The Screening Room, located off the hotel lobby, opens at 6 p.m., the movie begins at 6:30 p.m. with free admission.

For more information, e-mail to movenight@hoteldeluxeportland.com or call 503-219-8627.