



The 2024 Top 25 Historic Hotels Worldwide® Most Magnificent Ceilings and Domes List Is Announced

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 23, 2024 ----- Historic Hotels Worldwide®, a prestigious program that recognizes and celebrates authentic historic hotels around the world, is pleased to announce The 2024 Top 25 Historic Hotels Worldwide® Most Magnificent Ceilings and Domes list. Visitors to the hotels celebrated on this list can appreciate the creativity, craftsmanship, and extraordinary attention to detail of the hoteliers and preservationists that have worked to recover or restore these historic hotels. Some of the best examples are viewed by looking up at the magnificent ceilings and domes in the public areas of these hotels, including lobbies, spas, ballrooms, and restaurants. These ornate ceilings and domes include some of the finest surviving examples of historic stained glass, painted frescoes, hand-painted wallpaper, ornamental plaster, stenciled wood, and gold leaf. To experience the fine artistry of these architectural wonders, Historic Hotels Worldwide invites travelers to visit these historic treasures in person and to remember to look up.

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[Castlemartyr Resort](#) (1210) Cork, County Cork, Ireland

At the heart of Castlemartyr Resort's 18th-century manor house is the historic Knights Bar. It is aptly named, as the historic castle complex was built by the Knights Templar in 1210. The Knights Bar ceiling showcases a stunning Rococo-style design installed by the LaFranchini brothers in the 18th century. These Swiss decorators became famous in Ireland for their distinct Rococo-style stucco ceiling and wall designs that survive in grand mansions throughout Ireland to this day. Rococo style is an exceptionally ornamental and dramatic style of architecture, art, and decoration. It combines asymmetry, scrolling curves, gilding, white and pastel colors, sculpted molding, and trompe-l'œil frescoes to create surprise and drama. The Knights Bar offers guests a fantastic sampling of original LaFranchini design. It has welcomed many visitors over the years, first as a ballroom for the Boyle family in the 1800s, and later as a chapel used for

daily Mass by the Carmelite order, who owned the manor house in the early 1900s. Castlemartyr Resort was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2022.

[Gran Hotel Ciudad de México](#) (1526) *México City, México*

With historic features dating to the 16th century, the Art Nouveau-style Gran Hotel Ciudad de México rose within Mexico City's Zócalo (a historic public square) as a department store in 1899. The immense popularity of the modern and sophisticated shopping center led to a striking renovation in 1910. An ornate Tiffany-style glass ceiling was the most stunning feature added during the renovation and was installed over the building's lobby by European artisan Jacques Grüber. Once complete, the stained-glass ceiling contained 20,000 separate pieces of glass and was illuminated by sunlight and lighting fixtures. The rectangular ceiling spans the length of the main hall and contains three central domes. The sparkling blue, yellow, red, and green stained glass is supported by a metal frame, which is vaulted around the edges to create a shallow dome above the lobby. Around those edges, visitors can spot the "CM" glass medallion motifs, which harken back to the hotel's former life as "El Centro Mercantil." Today, it is one of the largest stained-glass installations of its kind in the world. Gran Hotel Ciudad de México was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2023.

[Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam](#) (1578) *Amsterdam, Netherlands*

Located between two historic canals in the heart of the Dutch capital city, Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam boasts a rich history and beautiful ceilings. One of the showstopping elements at this hotel is the Council Chamber, which opened in 1926 when Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam was still serving as the city hall of Amsterdam. The visionary behind the Council Chamber's design was Willem Penaat. He saw the Council Chamber as a joint work of art; all its parts were based on the same idea, executed by several artists under his direction. A highlight of the Council Chamber is the unique wooden ceiling with its matte glass bowl chandeliers, which were designed by the artist Frits Lensvelt. Upon leaving the Council Chamber, hotel guests experience the Marriage Chamber. Designed by Chris Lebeau (1878-1945), the painted walls and ceiling are decorated with images and motifs to symbolize the story of romantic love, told through unique color combinations of light green, olive green, turquoise, and purple, with touches of orange and gold. The ceiling, decorated in the same colors as the walls, is a part of the artwork and depicts zodiac signs. A scale on the ceiling, beneath which are placed two chairs for a bride and groom, represents balance in marriage. Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2018.

[Bernini Palace Hotel](#) (16th century) *Florence, Italy*

Historic Bernini Palace Hotel is in the historic center of Florence, Italy, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This historic hotel dates to the 16th century when it was built to serve as the regal palace of the influential Della Pera family. A new group of owners converted the building into an upscale hotel decades later. The hotel's prestigious reputation remained well intact, especially once Florence briefly assumed the role of national capital amid the Unification of Italy in the 19th century. Italian statesmen met within an ornately frescoed venue inside the hotel, which soon became known as the "Sala Parlamento," or "Parliament Hall." The hotel's proprietors then commissioned more artwork to appear throughout the space during this period, which focused on the major historical figures responsible for uniting the Italian Peninsula. Among the most prolific individuals to debut upon the walls of the Sala Parlamento were Giuseppe Montanelli, Vincent Salvagnoli, Manfredo Fanti, and of course, Giuseppe Garibaldi. The Sala Parlamento has since remained a central fixture of the Bernini Palace Hotel. Bernini Palace Hotel was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2015.

[Hôtel Golf Château de Chailly](#) (16th century) *Chailly-sur-Armançon, France*

Once a fortified castle during the Hundred Years' War, Château de Chailly in the Burgundy region of France primarily served as a regal palace for many centuries thereafter, passing through the ownership of various royal families and other private owners before it was transformed into a resort in 1990. Throughout Hôtel Golf Château de Chailly's public areas and guestrooms, exposed wood beams and high ceilings show the architectural heritage of this historic hotel. In two of the Castle Suites, n°1 and n°5, roughly hewn, lacquered wood beams form a canopy between the living space of the suite and the interior peaks of the château's iconic French Renaissance-style towers. In the dining rooms and sports bar, more refined wood beams support the ceiling above guests as they enjoy dinner and drinks. A more colorful ceiling can be experienced under the "Dôme du Cosmos" at Hôtel Golf Château de Chailly. Operating as a chapel, this space is also an art piece with magnificent mosaics made of 250,000 tiles of multicolored glass on the walls, floor, and ceiling. Beneath the lacquered wood ceiling of the chapel and above the central tiled altar, hangs a palette of golden orbs painted against a deep blue sky and pale-yellow swirls of light. Hôtel Golf Château de Chailly, inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2022, dates to the 16th century. The building was designated a National Monument by the French Ministry of Culture.

[Quinta Real Oaxaca](#) (1579) *Oaxaca, Mexico*

Built in 1579, Quinta Real Oaxaca was originally the Convent of Santa Catalina de Siena. In the 1970s, the building was carefully restored to its original appearance, including its famous frescoes and historic tiled floors, and reopened to the public as a hotel. The National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) supervised the interior decoration. Teams of experts restored the frescoes that adorned the ancient walls. One of the most historic features of the hotel is the

domed Los Lavaderos (The Washtubs) building, located on the northwestern corner of the grounds and surrounded by the hotel's breathtaking gardens. This ornate, free-standing, open-air Spanish Colonial-style gazebo was where the convent's nuns once did their laundry. Under the historic dome, water flows from the center of an octagonal fountain into twelve basins, never overflowing. It is one of the region's most ingenious hydraulic systems of the Colonial era. This destination hotel is located within the historic city center of Oaxaca de Juárez, which was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987. Quinta Real Oaxaca was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2012.

Waldorf Astoria Amsterdam (1650) *Amsterdam, Netherlands*

Situated next to the Herengracht canal—designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site—today's luxurious Waldorf Astoria Amsterdam occupies six monumental townhouses originally known as Herengracht 542-556. Dating to the Dutch Golden Age in the 17th century, these townhouses all display a blend of beautiful architectural styles and preserved ceiling features. In 2014, new owners acquired the six gorgeous edifices at Herengracht 542-556. A talented group of architects then worked to transform the structures into a spectacular 93-room hotel called the Waldorf Astoria Amsterdam. The team endeavored to protect the amazing architectural heritage that defined each of the historic homes, preserving their stunning marblework, ceiling frescoes, and Rococo-inspired wall carvings. One of the most magnificent ceiling features of the hotel is the painted wooden beams of the Brentano Suite. Originally a family home dating to 1753 occupied by the family of Josephus Brentano, the Brentano Suite features a hand-painted classical fresco with two panels depicting cherubs raising a sword, lifting a wine glass, bearing a laurel wreath, and blowing a trumpet. Gold and cream laurel wreaths and floral vine motifs, set against dark wood, surround the cherubs. Waldorf Astoria Amsterdam was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2018.

Hacienda de los Santos (1710) *Alamos, Sonora, México*

Famous for its artistic flair and celebration of religious iconography, Hacienda de los Santos is a family-owned and operated boutique hotel composed of three historic Colonial-style mansions, as well as one sugar mill, that dates to the 18th century. Located in Alamos, Mexico—a National Historic Monument of Mexico—the historic buildings were restored and transformed into a holiday destination in the late-20th century. One magnificent ceiling at the hotel is above the Felipe Almada Theatre, a meeting room and theater designed to pay homage to the “Catalan vault,” a form of 18th century architecture once popular in Spain. The theater's ceiling was designed using historic methods to feature two impressive concave domes that connect in the middle of the room. Originating in the Mediterranean, this style of vaulted ceiling requires buttresses to support the weight of the vaults and has been used in cathedral architecture for centuries. The construction is labor intensive, and Hacienda de los Santos hired a family of brick

masons from the State of Guanajuato to build the unique ceiling. Around 10,000 earthen bricks (called *Cuñas*) make up the ceiling, and these were handmade and hardened in mesquite-wood fires just a few miles from Hacienda de los Santos. The bricks were hand-laid, each carefully positioned to create the double-domed ceiling. The vaulted ceiling supports itself without any kind of pillar, beam, or other support from the underside. Also notable is the flat roof above the domes, hidden from those admiring the ceiling from below, which is an example of sustainable air conditioning. In Sonora, Mexico, where temperatures rise in the summer, this design is a blessing as well as an example of how historic architecture can offer modern buildings lessons in energy-efficient cooling and heating. The theater is one of five buildings at the hotel with this style of vaulted ceiling. Hacienda de los Santos was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2015.

[Hotel Maximilian's](#) (1722) *Augsburg, Germany*

With a history reaching back over 300 years, Hotel Maximilian's is located directly on the Maximilianstraße in the middle of Augsburg, Germany. While the historical record of Hotel Maximilian's dates to the 15th century, the current iteration of the building was constructed in the early 1700s. Architect Johann Baptist Gunetzhainer, the court mason for the Duchy of Bavaria, converted the entire space into a brilliant guesthouse and masterfully crafted the hotel's appearance in the regal style of Rococo architecture. Within the hotel, two magnificent modern ceiling features stand out: the glass dome in the Teehalle ballroom and the paper ceiling that hangs above the hotel's Sartory Restaurant. Constructed in 2012 and one of the most recent ceilings to make the list, the Teehalle's glass dome forms a pine nut, the emblem of Augsburg. The pine nut was once the emblem of the Roman legion that camped at the confluence of the Lech and Wertach rivers in Augsburg. The pine nut was considered to be a symbol of fertility by the Romans. This popular symbol can be found adorning historic buildings in many places in Augsburg, either painted, sculpted, or cast in metal. The mix of 21st-century glass dome architecture and the pine nut symbolism make this ceiling a tribute to the hotel's embrace of both modern sensibilities and tradition. At the hotel's Sartory Restaurant, guests not only can enjoy a meal worthy of a Michelin Star, but also bask in the beauty of the unique paper ceiling. This rare type of decoration makes guests feel as if they are floating on a cloud during their meal and conveys a sense of light and ethereal warmth. Hotel Maximilian's was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2019.

[Alsisar Mahal](#) (1737) *Jhunjhunu, India*

Overlooking the ancient city of Jhunjhunu is the charming Alsisar Mahal, a former palace with deep historical connections to the surrounding Shekhawati region. The estate was established by Samrath Singhji in the mid-18th century. Singhji hailed from a long lineage of prominent Rajput rulers known as the Alsisar family, and his new palace served as the main seat of power for his

own domain, as the Thakur of Alsisar. The Alsisar family had also constructed an extensive variety of rich Indo-Islamic architectural details throughout the palace, where the ceilings reflect the occupants' artistic values and impressive heritage. Now a hotel, Alsisar Mahal continues to showcase those fantastic design elements, even after the Alsisar family imaginatively converted the entire structure into a stunning hotel in the early-21st century. Upon arriving at the magnificent hotel, a massive arched gateway guides guests into the stunning interior. The ceiling displays an amazing array of beautiful frescoes, intricate wall carvings, and ornate gold-leaf detailing. On top of the hotel, the Badal Mahal Restaurant offers elevated dining—literally. “Badal Mahal” means “Palace in the Clouds” and the walls and ceiling of the interior dining room are painted to make it appear that the dining hall is among monsoon clouds. Few other vacation destinations in India embody such an impressive architectural heritage as Alsisar Mahal. Alsisar Mahal was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2012 and dates to 1737.

Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar (1780) *Bagac, Philippines*

Casa Byzantina, a *bahay na Bato* or “house of stone,” at the historic Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar resort in Bagac, Philippines, was originally built in 1890 in Binondo, Manila by Don Lorenzo Del Rosario. The mosaic inside the “house of stone” boasts replicas of paintings by Filipino artists such as Botong Francisco (“Pista sa Nayon”), Fernando Amorsolo (“Mango Harvest”), Vicente Manansala (“At the Market”), and Anita Magsaysay-Ho. This “house of stone” was preserved and transferred to Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar in Bagac, Bataan, where it can now be visited—alongside other Filipino architectural marvels—by curious guests. A peek into the artisan workshops at Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar shows guests the source of all the resort's unique furnishings and details. Everything seen within the spacious resort was made in-house, from the tiles, bricks, sculptures, murals, artworks, and even its furniture pieces. Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar prides itself on housing the most skilled and talented group of artists and craftspeople hailing from different regions across the Philippines, each bringing their own distinct style and technique to this special resort. Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar's most historic casa dates to 1780, and the historic resort was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2017.

Oscarsborg Castle (1848) *Oscarsborg, Norway*

Nestled on a small island in the Drøbak Sound south of Oslo, historic Oscarsborg Castle was an essential part of Oslo's defenses in the 19th and early-20th centuries before it was transformed into Oscarsborg Castle Hotel & Resort. Within the historic castle-like, horseshoe-shaped main fortification, visitors can find beautiful brick archways and barrel-vaulted ceilings throughout meeting halls and dining rooms. In several places in the ceiling, arched openings have been bricked up by soldiers, its former “guests.” Dating to 1853, the fort was frequently updated over the centuries to modernize its capabilities and respond to new naval technology. Notably, the fortifications defended Oslo against a flotilla of six German ships during World War II and

bought the city's residents time to prepare or escape in April 1940, before German forces ultimately occupied the city until the end of the European conflict. The island was decommissioned in the early-21st century and quickly became a popular historic destination, leading to the establishment of the Oscarsborg Castle Hotel & Resort in this adaptive reuse success story. In 2014, the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage registered the fortifications as a protected heritage landmark. Guided tours at the hotel can offer more information about the main fort and its construction. Oscarsborg Castle was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2019.

Citadel Inn Hotel & Resort (1850) *Lviv, Ukraine*

The historic Citadel Inn Hotel & Resort in Lviv, Ukraine, opened its doors as a hotel in 2009. The hotel is housed in the circular Maximilian Tower No. 2, which was part of a fortification complex known as the Citadel. The former military structure was built in the 1850s and was intended to both control the city of Lviv and protect it from its enemies. Surviving the European wars of the 19th and 20th centuries, private owners leased Maximilian Tower No. 2 in 2004 with the goal of transforming this military building into a destination for relaxation and beauty, not war. One of the brilliant examples of this idea is the paintings on the walls of cannons, which depict the cannons shooting seeds from which flowers sprout instead of bombs. The architect of the reconstruction project was Semen Tsimbalyuk, and the painter was Oleksandr Trofimyuk. They transformed an open courtyard at the center of the tower into an enclosed guest space in an incredible 394-sq ft hall, capped by a massive 492-ft transparent dome. Guests can see sunlight, stars, and the sky through the ceiling. The walls beneath the dome are covered with artistic paintings of maps of Lviv obtained from the Austrian archives. When the hotel reopens to the public, a historical exhibition will be available in the library, as will a guide who will acquaint guests with the uniqueness of this place and talk about the style of architecture and historical events. Citadel Inn Hotel & Resort was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2013.

Fairmont Le Château Frontenac (1892) Québec City, Québec, Canada

While several ceilings should be considered magnificent in Québec City, Canada's famous Fairmont Le Château Frontenac and its Verchères room stands out. Originally called the Palm Room, this space is ideal for cocktail receptions and was once the hotel's formal tearoom. The golden ceiling of the Verchères was painted by the Parisian artist Raoul Barbin, based on a design by architect William Sutherland Maxwell. Barbin taught decorative arts in Quebec at the time he worked on the hotel's ceiling, which dates to 1924. The design is a sumptuous blend of Art Nouveau and Neoclassical influences, showing off a leaf-and-flowering-vine design embellished with cartouches and monochrome motifs. The palette includes shades of blue, pink, and green against a yellow-gold background. Palm designs are visible at the top of each column. Verchères is located between the Grand Ballroom and the Frontenac Room, with windows

providing natural light and a view of the Place d'Armes park. Situated in the historic district of Old Québec, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this stately luxury hotel stands above historic Old Québec. Fairmont Le Château Frontenac was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2012.

[Hilton Paris Opera](#) (1889) *Paris, France*

Hilton Paris Opera opened on May 7, 1889, during the 1889 World's Fair in Paris, France. Initially named the Hotel Terminus, it was built by architect Juste Lisch and designed to accommodate transatlantic travelers arriving from Normandy via the Saint-Lazare station. Upon entering the historic hotel through its grand lobby today, visitors marvel at the Second Empire-style décor and opulent gold, cream, and burgundy ceiling. The ceiling was designed with Neoclassical and Second Empire influences: geometric perfection interspersed with the lavish floral and ribbon motifs popular during the 19th century. The ceiling's warmth is complemented by soft green accents. The letters "H" and "T" are overlaid in a logo that appears throughout the design, harkening back to the days when the hotel was known as the Hotel Terminus. Paintings and sculptures by the artist Charles Joseph Lameire (1832-1910) adorn the ground level and walls. Further into the hotel, Le Grand Salon's magnificent glass ceiling and chandeliers continue to give visitors reasons to look up. Several French movies were filmed with this magnificent backdrop over the years since the hotel debuted. Hilton Paris Opera was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2018.

[Mystery Hotel Budapest](#) (1896) *Budapest, Hungary*

The magnificent Egyptian Revival-style vaulted ceiling in The Great Hall Restaurant & Lounge of Mystery Hotel Budapest in Budapest, Hungary, is another playful part of this luxurious and mysterious hotel. It brings the Nile to Budapest, with its leafy greens, watery blues, rich ochre, and sunny yellow in classical Egyptian motifs of reeds and fans, as well as other ancient Greek motifs. Full of optical illusions and mysterious aesthetics, this boutique hotel embraces its history as the official meeting space for the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary, a merger of The Freemasonry of the Order of John in Hungary and the Nagyoriens of Scottish Rite. In 1896, they opened their new club building to host Freemasons, who enjoyed the space until the rise of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. This beautiful historic building underwent a masterful transformation into an upscale boutique hotel known as the Mystery Hotel Budapest in 2019. Zoltán Varró spearheaded the subsequent design work, which endeavored to highlight as much of the building's historic architecture as possible. In fact, the renovations instituted Corinthian, Ionic, and Doric-inspired motifs as a way to draw upon the former masonic lodge's preexisting Neoclassical character. Mystery Hotel Budapest was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2021.

Omni King Edward (1903) *Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

Located in downtown Toronto, the Omni King Edward has been a cherished local landmark since it opened in 1903. Local entrepreneur George Gooderham hired two talented architects to design the hotel's distinctive appearance: Henry Ives Cobb and E.J. Lennox. Their distinct designs were particularly noticeable inside the hotel, especially within its stunning Sovereign Ballroom and Vanity Fair Ballroom. Featuring brilliant wall decorations, floor-to-ceiling windows, and 24-ft-high ornate ceilings, the Sovereign Ballroom immediately became one of the area's most sought-after venues for special events. Indeed, the amazing architectural character helped the hotel establish a venerable reputation that soon reached an international audience. The Vanity Fair Ballroom was originally known as the Grand Ballroom (or the American Dining Room) and no expenses were spared for its creation, which was complete with Tiffany & Co. glass windows within its arch. In Vanity Fair, the strong presence of *color* is perhaps the most striking feature: Massive ionic columns supporting a colonnaded mezzanine, walls, pilasters, reception desk were all made of amber, red-and-green-veined scagliola, a material made from colored plasters and polished to look like marble. The hotel's immense popularity even led the hotel to undergo a massive expansion during the early 1920s, which resulted in the creation of a towering, 18-story wing. The construction nearly doubled the number of available guestrooms, while also installing several new outstanding facilities. Omni King Edward was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2013.

Hotel Bristol Palace (1905) *Genova, Italy*

When Hotel Bristol Palace opened in 1905 on one of Genova, Italy's finest thoroughfares, it mesmerized its first visitors with its brilliant take on Art Nouveau-style architecture. Beautiful marble awaited guests as they stepped inside, as did outstanding woodwork and ornate moldings. Perhaps the most memorable feature is the breathtaking elliptical staircase that ascends every floor of the hotel. This famous staircase does not have a single ceiling, but a layered maze of stairs extends far above anyone who dares to look up. The elliptical and white Art Nouveau-style staircase gives viewers a mesmerizing optical perspective. Those who dare to gaze up from the bottom are treated to the impression that the colorful stained-glass dome at the very top floor is a blue and violet iris looking down on them from within the white oval atrium. One of the most influential people to travel to the Hotel Bristol Palace was famed British filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock. Some film historians speculate that this grand staircase helped contribute to the theme set in his 1958 psychological thriller, *Vertigo*. Hotel Bristol Palace was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2022.

Raffles London at The OWO (1906) *London, England, UK*

Entering Raffles London at The OWO evokes the same feeling as entering a grand opera house, or a spacious palace. The marble staircase draws guests in to explore the unique space, with

beams of light beckoning one to look up at the magnificent glass ceiling dome. Completed in 1906, the Old War Office (OWO) is one of the great London landmarks of the Edwardian Era. At the time of its construction, it served as an architectural expression of British power, confidence, and wealth in the early-20th century. This is principally reflected in its monumental scale and the sculptural detailing of the historic ceiling dome, with its ornamental plaster work. During a recent restoration, extensive surveys of the building's elaborate ceilings were conducted, and “new-to-match” moldings were installed where necessary. As one of Europe’s largest renovation projects, it marks a revelatory transition from war to peace, as a once-secret government building opened its doors to the public for the first time as a luxury hotel, Raffles London at The OWO. The public enters through its magnificent two-story entrance hall, with a groin-vaulted ceiling and Portland stone columns. At the center, the iconic triple-height ceiling dome features moldings of the Tudor crown, which was a royal cypher used widely between 1901–1953. The design, too, features King Edward VII’s own royal cypher, “ER” (Edward Rex). Raffles London at The OWO was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2023.

[Fairmont Empress](#) (1908) *Victoria, British Columbia, Canada*

The magnificent Tiffany-style stained-glass domed ceiling in the Fairmont Empress’s Palm Court was designed to be a stylish ceiling beneath which guests would enjoy Afternoon Tea. Opening in 1908, this gorgeous hotel was designed by Francis Rattenbury and overlooks the Victoria Harbour in British Columbia, Canada. However, soon after completion, it was discovered that the acoustics under the Palm Court’s dome were so sensitive, that if someone whispers on one side of the room, the conversation can be heard on the other side. Tea was relocated to the hotel lobby (now the Lobby Lounge), but the beautiful dome remained. In 1967, a severe snowstorm shattered the stained-glass dome beyond repair, and the entire ceiling was covered over with a false ceiling and forgotten about for more than 20 years. Between 1988–1989, an extensive \$45 million restoration was undertaken to improve the hotel’s original craftsmanship. The original glass dome was discovered, and the Palm Court’s ceiling was restored. Some portions of the dome were reconstructed using historic photographs and an original piece of glass found in a nearby shop. A second outer dome was added to protect the stained glass below it from future harm. The dome at the Fairmont Empress is an awe-inspiring piece of delicate craftsmanship and is admired by guests who enjoy Afternoon Tea in the nearby Lobby Lounge. The glass dome never has the same colors; the colors of the dome change depending on the weather. The Palm Court provides an air of elegance to events, showcasing the magnificent history of the Empress. Fairmont Empress was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2017.

[Grand Hotel Tremezzo](#) (1910) *Tremezzina, Italy*

Immersed in the beauty of Lake Como, the historic Grand Hotel Tremezzo is a treasured example of the finest authentic Italian palaces, and dates to 1910. When Enea Gandola and his wife, Maria Orsolini Bolla, decided to establish one of the Grande Dames of Europe in the early-20th century, they hired architect Constantino Ferrario to head the project. The Gandolas also added many distinctive architectural features into the villa's interior. Perhaps the greatest of these architectural elements were the many frescoes that still cover the hotel's grand ceiling. Painted by Francesco Congeliani, the frescoes depict scenes from Virgil's *Aeneid*, as well as scenes of heaven. Congeliani himself was the pupil of Giambattista Tiepolo, who was well-known across the continent for his work throughout the Mediterranean and Germany. Grand Hotel Tremezzo was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2012.

[Fairmont Hotel Macdonald](#) (1915) *Edmonton, Alberta, Canada*

Located in downtown Edmonton, on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River, Fairmont Hotel Macdonald opened in 1915 as one of Canada's grand railway hotels. A fine example of chateau-style architecture, this historic hotel features the Empire Ballroom, which boasts one of the most magnificent ceilings in the country. The Empire Ballroom's ceiling is an artistic marvel, featuring intricate bas-relief carvings. The architect crafted this pillar-free masterpiece to depict a hunting scene from a bygone era, encapsulating the elegance and grandeur of early-20th century design. The ceiling's 21-ft height impresses upon its visitors a breathtaking sense of space and grandeur, enhanced by its decorative features and private terrace. In early 2024, the Empire Ballroom underwent a meticulous renovation and restoration. The project resulted in restoring the historic ceiling's original splendor, including hand-painting it gold to recapture the awe-inspiring sparkle it had a century ago. The restoration process was labor-intensive, requiring over 1,000 hours of preparations and painting, and more than 72 hours dedicated to cleaning the chandeliers. The result is a ceiling that not only honors the historical integrity of the space, but also dazzles guests with its renewed brilliance and intricate beauty. The Empire Ballroom's ceiling stands as a testament to the timeless elegance and rich history of the Fairmont Hotel Macdonald, making it a must-see for visitors and a cherished venue for special events. Fairmont Hotel Macdonald was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2017.

[Hotel New Grand](#) (1927) *Yokohama, Japan*

When guests enter Hotel New Grand through its historic main entrance and walk up its grand staircase to the second-floor lobby, they experience a majestic blend of European Art Deco-style and traditional Japanese architecture. The foyer features ornate white plaster, detailed with motifs modeled after ancient Indian art. Storytelling silk tapestries—true works of art—hang on the upper walls and contrast with the white plaster and the patterned, washi paper lanterns hanging from the ornate ceiling. Further in the historic hotel, two more magnificent ceilings cap beautiful spaces for events: the Rainbow Ballroom and the Phoenix Room. The 273 sq m stucco

ceiling of the Rainbow Ballroom has been widely acclaimed for its plaster work. The rainbow-like arched ceiling is adorned with classic decorations that are said to be the pinnacle of stucco work. The trailing clouds and lotus flowers often seen in traditional temples and shrines recall the Buddhist paintings of Gokuraku Jodo, "the Land of Bliss." Finally, the Phoenix Room's dark wood-coffered ceiling is very different from the white plaster designs but is just as enchanting. The Phoenix Room's canopy exudes a dignified atmosphere, with crossbeams and large ornate lanterns, reflecting the aesthetic of ancient Japanese shrines and temples. Designed by architect Jin Watanabe, Hotel New Grand's historic architecture was certified by the city of Yokohama, and the hotel was designated as a Heritage of Industrial Modernization site by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. Watanabe subsequently designed numerous landmark historic buildings in Tokyo, including the Tokyo National Museum in Ueno Park, and the Dai-ichi Seimei building in Hibiya. The hotel offers a special package with historical tours of the building. Hotel New Grand was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2012.

[The Fullerton Hotel Singapore](#) (1924) *Singapore*

Built in 1924, the original Fullerton Building is situated in a historic location in the heart of Singapore's Central Business District. Named after Robert Fullerton—the first colonial governor of Singapore—The Fullerton Hotel Singapore began life as an ornate post office and is Singapore's 71st National Monument. Located on the hotel's fourth floor, the Straits Room is known as an exclusive enclave well-appointed for formal banquets, private receptions, seminars, and press conferences. Previously used as the billiard room of the prestigious Singapore Club, its lofty height, unique coffered ceiling, and crystal chandeliers are simply magnificent. Both the ceiling and wall motifs are original design elements, dating back to 1928, that were retained when the stately Fullerton Building was restored in 1997 and transformed into a luxury hotel. The ceiling is 90 years old, and was sculpted by Cavaliere Rodolfo Nolli, an Italian sculptor and architect from Lombardy, who worked mainly in Southeast Asia during the first half of the 20th century. The Fullerton Hotel Singapore was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2011.

[Fairmont Le Château Montebello](#) (1930) *Montebello, Québec, Canada*

A luxury destination like no other, Fairmont Le Château Montebello was the dream of a wealthy Swiss-American man named H.M. Saddlemyre. Inspired by the chateaus of the Swiss Alps, he invested in the venture in the 1920s and dubbed the project "Lucerne-in-Quebec." The construction site's foreman, Victor Nymark, directed the resort's main building to be constructed in the vernacular style of Karelia, the former province of Finland where Nymark was born. In 1930, the massive cedar chateau was complete, with over 10,000 red cedar logs all cut and set by hand, contributing to three main buildings. While this log cabin architecture adds drama to many of the resort's high ceilings, the grand lobby offers the pièce de résistance. Cedar logs and shingles alone were the largest shipment of materials ever shipped across the continent for a

single construction project, and today it is the largest “log cabin” in the world. The lobby is three-stories tall, but the ceiling rises higher, with exposed beams and wood slats punctuated by stained-glass skylights. Beneath the lobby rotunda is a 20-meter-tall hexagonal fireplace, with six monumental hearths that weigh more than 300 tons. After its completion in 1930, and for the next 40 years, the log chateau was the private retreat of the Seignior Club, whose elite membership included reputed Canadian businessmen and politicians such as former Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, and foreign dignitaries such as Prince Rainier and Princess Grace of Monaco. In 1970, the resort opened its doors to the public, and today, all are invited to enjoy its rustic splendor. Fairmont Le Château Montebello was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2018.

“One of the best ways to distinguish a fine historic hotel from another older hotel is to look up at the ceilings. Look up and discover the tremendous detail, artistry, and craftsmanship in the historic ceilings,” said Lawrence P. Horwitz, Executive Vice President of Historic Hotels of America and Historic Hotels Worldwide. “The ceilings in public areas, including lobbies, ballrooms, and restaurants, range from stained glass to painted ornamental plaster. Often, these grand and detailed ceilings have been recognized as historically significant local or regional historic landmarks. We encourage everyone to visit their favorite historic hotel and to look up!”

About Historic Hotels Worldwide®

Historic Hotels Worldwide® is a prestigious and distinctive collection of historic treasures, including luxury historic hotels built in former castles, chateaus, palaces, academies, haciendas, villas, monasteries, and other historic lodging spanning ten centuries. Historic Hotels Worldwide represents the finest and most distinctive global collection of more than 320 historic hotels in 47 countries. Hotels inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide are authentic historic treasures, demonstrate historic preservation, and celebrate historic significance. Eligibility for induction into Historic Hotels Worldwide is limited to those distinctive historic hotels that adhere to the following criteria: minimum age for the building is 75 years or older; historically relevant as a significant location within a historic district, historically significant landmark, place of a historic event, former home of a famous person, or historic city center; hotel celebrates its history by showcasing memorabilia, artwork, photography, and other examples of its historic significance; recognized by national preservation or heritage buildings organization or located within UNESCO World Heritage Site; and presently used as a historic hotel. For more information, please visit HistoricHotelsWorldwide.com.

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