

February 15, 2013

4D LIFE

USA TODAY
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2013

10 GREAT PLACES

These hotels get presidents' votes

Ever since George Washington took office in 1789, presidents have been hitting the road – and staying in the finest hotels in the republic. “A lot have great little memorabilia areas. There’s usually some nugget of history,” says **Heather Taylor** of Historic Hotels of America. In honor of Presidents Day, she shares with **Larry Bleiberg** for USA TODAY some favorite hotels that have hosted commanders in chief.

**HOTEL DEL CORONADO
SAN DIEGO**

This seaside landmark celebrates its 125th anniversary this year. Its history includes many presidential guests, among them Benjamin Harrison, William Howard Taft and Franklin D. Roosevelt, who flew the presidential flag there, making it his official temporary residence. But the 28-acre resort is hardly a creaky relic. “It’s right on the beach. It’s gorgeous,” Taylor says. 619-435-6611; hoteldel.com

**THE HOMESTEAD
HOT SPRINGS, VA.**

This 3,000-acre Allegheny Mountains resort opened in 1766 and has hosted 22 presidents, starting with Washington. A few years ago, Taylor and her family surprised their grandparents with a stay at the resort for their 50th wedding anniversary. “It was absolutely gorgeous,” she says. “They did it right – massages, four-course meals, a carriage ride.” 866-354-4653; thehomestead.com

**THE HANOVER INN
HANOVER, N.H.**

When it opened in 1780, this New England hostelry housed students at Dartmouth College, and it is still operated and owned by the Ivy League institution, Taylor says. In 1972, the formerly all-male college went coed, and the building’s fourth floor became an all-female dormitory. Notable guests include Bill Clinton and, more recently, Mitt Romney. hanoverinn.com

**THE PLAZA HOTEL
NEW YORK**

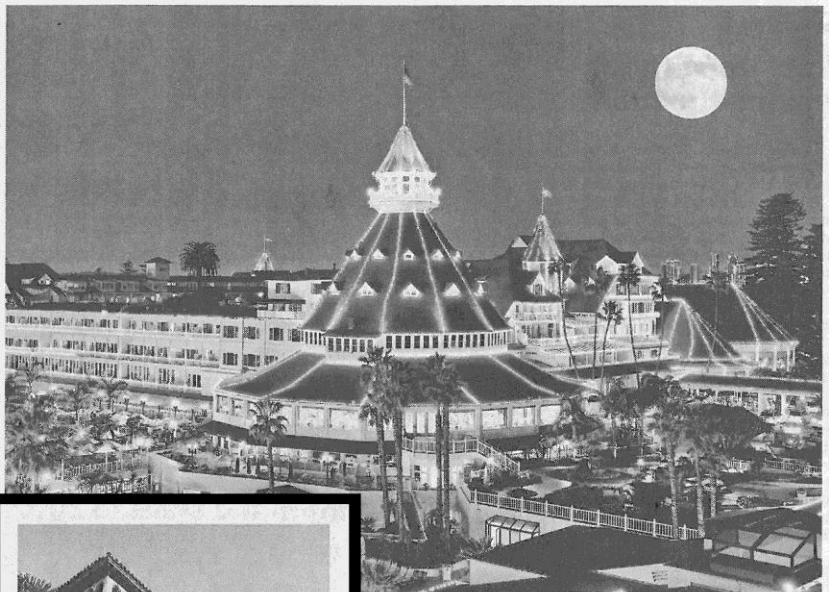
Since opening in 1907, this famed chateau-style hotel has figured into films, books and presidential history. It has been visited by all sitting U.S. presidents and was the site of the wedding reception when Richard Nixon’s daughter, Julie, married David

**SEA ISLAND RESORT
SEA ISLAND, GA.**

Celebrating its 85th anniversary in 2013, this Atlantic Coast resort has attracted its share of presidents. Like other guests, they come seeking privacy and activities such as shooting, fishing, sailing, tennis and golf. Each visiting president has planted a commemorative oak, starting with Calvin Coolidge in 1928. In 2004, George W. Bush planted a tree to mark his stay for the G8 summit. 855-714-9201; seaisland.com

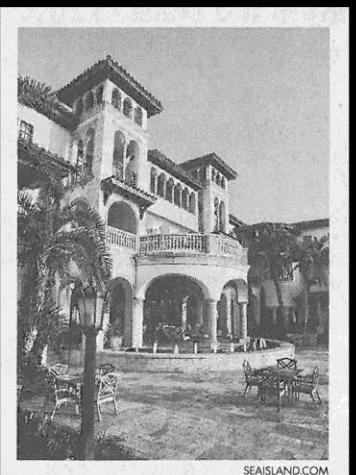
**THE HERMITAGE HOTEL
NASHVILLE**

The lobby of this grand hotel has been called a beautiful public room to try. “It was Nashville’s grandest dollar hotel, the grandest and the most opulent of the city,” says Taylor. It served as a headquarters for John F. Kennedy’s 1960 campaign, and also housed many celebrities. “There are a lot of good stories, but they can’t name names.” 615-244-3121; thehermitagehotel.com



HOTELDEL.COM

San Diego once flew FDR’s flag and is still a scenic seaside retreat.



SEAISLAND.COM

Georgia’s Sea Island Resort has grounds decorated with oak trees planted by visiting presidents.

**BILTMORE
SPA**

Arizona’s “Valley of the Desert” opened in 1929 and hosted Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Reagan, who honored him long before he occupied the White House. Frank Lloyd Wright served as the consulting architect, and the building shows his influence. 800-950-0086; arizonahotel.com

**OJAI VALLEY INN & SPA
OJAI, CALIF.**

This central California Hollywood hideaway has not only hosted presidents Reagan, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, but during the 1940s, it was used as an Army training camp. The resort hotel eventually was upgraded and restored. “Most of these hotels have great stories,” Taylor says. 805-646-1111; ojairesort.com

JARMONT OLYMPIC HOTEL

Northwest’s grand hotel during the Roaring ‘20s and presidential history by the Puget Sound. Since then, nearly every president and most presidential candidates have checked into the hotel suite. The huge hostelry, which in 2005, has 450 guest rooms and 216 suites. 888-363-5022; jarmont.com/seattle

**THE DRAKE HOTEL
CHICAGO**

Chicago’s Magnificent Mile welcomed this new luxury hotel on New Year’s Eve in 1920, and it soon gained international fame by hosting the Prince of Wales. Other notable guests range from Winston Churchill to Pope John Paul II. Presidential visitors include Eisenhower, Ford, Clinton and local resident Barack Obama. 312-787-2200; thedrakehotel.com

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