

GO

HOTEL DEL CORONADO • CHATEAU MARMONT • PLACE D'ARMES

BY KIM-MARIE EVANS



Hotel del Coronado

Spooky Stays

Guest or ghost?
(Only one needs a reservation)

The Eagles were right, there are some hotels where guests check in but they never leave. Many hotels trade on their haunted cache. The Stanley Hotel in Colorado, which was the inspiration for the movie *The Shining*, has guests lining up to book Room 418 in hopes of a visit from the other side. *Redrum* anyone?

We asked author Jamie Pearce, founder of Historic Haunts Investigations, why some guests seem reluctant to leave, even hundreds of years later. “One reason spirits might stay at a hotel is because they may have died, committed suicide or were murdered there. If

Haunting included but not guaranteed

1. HOTEL DEL CORONADO, SAN DIEGO

Finished in 1888, the hotel, affectionately known as “The Del,” was the largest structure outside of New York City

that was electrically lit. Thomas Edison himself supervised the installation.

Shortly after the hotel was completed, a beautiful young woman named Kate Morgan checked in under an assumed name and spent five

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The Del doesn't look so spooky by day

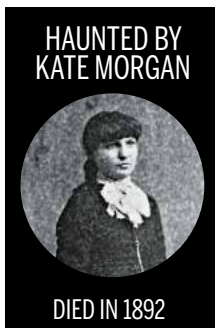


Kate is a relatively harmless ghost. “She generally limits her activity to fleeting appearances and inexplicable antics,” says Donovan. “Guests in Kate’s room report everything from breezes that come from nowhere to having to deal with a television set that turns on and off by itself.”

But, more dramatic tales have also been told. Such as the time a young couple—away for a romantic Valentine weekend—experienced a string of supernatural occurrences, culminating in their covers being ripped off in the middle of the night by a ghostly apparition. In a brilliant marketing move, the hotel claims that the vast majority of paranormal activity actually occurs in the retail shop (seriously). The hotel doesn't publish Kate's room number, but guests can request her room at check-in. Rooms start at \$425/night.

they died of natural causes, they might hang around because they don't realize they are dead or just aren't ready to go on yet. If they committed suicide, they might hang around because they are scared of what they face in the afterlife since they ended their own life.” She says that most ghosts mean no harm and in fact, can be helpful. “We investigated the Jekyll Island Hotel, and the spirit who haunts this one room wants to tidy things up. He even folded up our newspaper.”

Since the likelihood of “enjoying” an actual haunting is fairly slim, here are a few supposedly haunted hotels you'd want to visit—spooky or not. After all, there's no need to give up creature comforts just because you want to commune with ghosts.



lonely and lovesick days waiting for a man who never arrived. Kate was found dead on an exterior staircase leading to the beach with a gunshot wound to her head, which the San Diego County Coroner later determined

was self-inflicted (some skepticism still surrounds this finding).

According to Christine Donovan, The Del's historian and author of the book *Beautiful Stranger: The Ghost of Kate Morgan and the Hotel del Coronado*,



Hotel del Coronado has a long history of catering to the well-heeled



Chateau Marmont

2. CHATEAU MARMONT, LOS ANGELES

The hotel that has become synonymous with Hollywood debauchery opened in 1929 and has played host to iconic stars like Errol Flynn and Marilyn Monroe, but will not go on record as being haunted. However, rumor has it that the ghost of actor and comedian John Belushi, who took a fatal overdose of heroin mixed with cocaine is still hanging around. Belushi was discovered dead in Bungalow 3, which remains the site of many strange occurrences. The most notorious of which occurred in 1999, when a family temporarily moved into Bungalow 3 while their house was being renovated. The family's two-year-old son was often found laughing and giggling by himself. When asked what he was laughing at, he would respond, "The funny man." When his mother was leaving



through a book of celebrity guests of Chateau Marmont, the boy pointed to John Belushi and exclaimed, "The funny man!"

If you are looking for adventurous luxury, a poolside bungalow starts at \$2,200 per night.

3. PLACE D'ARMES HOTEL, NEW ORLEANS

New Orleans, with its history of voodoo, vampires and ghosts, boasts a long list of haunted hotels. To be deemed the "most haunted" is truly noteworthy.

Originally built as the first school in the city, the building that currently houses the Place d'Armes hotel was completed in 1725. When it burned in the Great New Orleans Fire of 1788, the school's headmaster and many of the young students were tragically killed. This has fueled one of the hotel's greatest legends, as many people believe that the deceased headmaster and schoolchildren still roam the halls as friendly spirits.

Reports of footsteps, children's laughter and the sound of

furniture moving in unoccupied rooms are just the beginning of reported paranormal activity here. Resident ghosts include a young girl who asks where her grandmother is before vanishing into thin air, and an elderly bearded man dressed in Victorian garb who gives a friendly nod of acknowledgment before he disappears.

A call to the front desk confirmed that the hotel doesn't like to officially be known as haunted, but that "many guests seem to think so." The helpful clerk suggested asking for a room in the Chartres Street



Building, where, off the record, chances of spooky encounters are better.

There are over thirty stories on Trip Advisor about personal haunting experiences. This from a guest who says she stayed in Room 216: "I heard a little girl crying last night for a few seconds when she was standing by the vanity...This morning the housekeeper came to our room and I asked her if there are any ghosts in this hotel...She said people in this room hear things... 'People hear the baby cry or a piano playing in this room and room 217 next door.'"

Another couple swears there were mischievous children ghosts who were keeping them up at night. "To try to get some sleep we bought marbles for them to play with and each time we left the room or each night the marbles would be moved and spread out."

Whether you experience a haunting or not, the Place d'Armes is a recently renovated enchanting collection of restored eighteenth- and nineteenth-century townhouses and structures surrounding what many say is the most beautiful courtyard in the French Quarter, Jackson Square. Rates start at just over \$100 per night (Halloween is probably already sold out).



Place d'Armes

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








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