



HOTEL DENVER CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HOTEL'S COLORFUL PAST PARALLELS
GLENWOOD'S HISTORY

ARTICLE BRIDGET GREY | PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED

The fabled Hotel Denver celebrates its 100th birthday on October 17.

For 72 of those years, it has been owned by local families. Since 1991, it has been owned by April and Steven Carver, who have earned the number one ranking among the 23 Glenwood Springs hotels reviewed online at TripAdvisor.com.

“Because historic downtown hotels frequently follow the story line of the town, the Hotel Denver is not just a place to sleep,” says April. “It’s a place to absorb the current culture and colorful past of Glenwood Springs. For the last 24 years, we have reversed the trend of look-alike hotels with look-alike rooms, and we have embraced the hotel’s own authentic past.”

In honor of the hotel’s centennial, April been researching and retelling the hotel’s story at TheHotelDenver.com/News.

That tale begins in 1906 when Italian immigrant Henry Bosco established a bottling company across from the train station. In time, that business would morph into the Star Hotel.

In 1906, the “new” train station – a red sandstone and brick building built in 1904 to match the architecture of the Hot Springs and Hotel Colorado – was bringing a lot of traffic to town. The wealthy migrated to the river’s north bank, while common folk stayed on the depot side of the river.

The south bank was a happening place. The neighborhood sported brothels, gunslingers and streetwalkers. Nine saloons were open on Seventh Street between and Blake and Cooper, and another 14 could be found within a one-block radius. Thus, when President Taft

arrived in his private train car in September 1909, he refused to enter Glenwood’s train station. It was too close to Seventh Street for comfort. (Anxious about the press and his image, the 335-pound Taft also declined exclusive use of the Hot Springs pool, saying, “I’ve found it’s much better for a man of my size not to bathe in public.”)

In recent years, the Colorado River’s south bank has become a fashionable place in its own right. “Seventh Street and the train station district is a thriving gateway to all the town has to offer,” comments Carver. It’s at the heart of Glenwood’s culinary district, serves as a stopping point for Amtrak’s California Zephyr and is a short stroll from nightlife, entertainment and sightseeing.

But Seventh Street didn’t turn into a family-friendly destination without struggle. For decades, the place remained wild – a spot frequented by gamblers and gunslingers like Doc Holliday, Kid Curry and later colorful characters.

During the Roaring Twenties, Chicago gangster Diamond Jack Alterie shot a porter at the Hotel Denver. No one knows quite why. On another occasion, Alterie and a prizefighter named Whitney Hutton argued drunkenly in the lobby. Jack retreated to his room in fear, and came back out with his guns. He mistakenly thought Hutton was in a room, and shot two innocent International Harvester salesmen through the door. After being tried for attempted murder in 1932, Alterie’s was sentenced to either serve five years in prison or leave Colorado. When Diamond Jack chose to leave, it spelled death. In Chicago, he was forced to testify against Al Capone’s brother. He was shot soon after.

Prohibition devastated Seventh Street's saloons and red light district. Real estate was depressed, and grocery stores and legitimate hotels such as the Star and the Denver Rooms, owned by the Hotel Denver's other founder, Art Kendrick, soon replaced bars and brothels.

After World War II, Bosco's nephew Mike, acquired both the Star and Kendrick's adjacent Denver Rooms, combining them into what we now know as the Hotel Denver.

For a full century, the Hotel Denver has been an anchor and a refuge for Glenwood Springs. As Carver puts it, "When the train brought visitors, businessmen and miners to the young town, the Hotel Denver provided much-needed lodging. It picked up the pieces when prohibition caused riverfront bars to close. The hotel provided jobs when hard times came, and it provided lodging to loved ones of healing WWII servicemen. It continues to anchor the vital Seventh Street hub of activity."



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