

Coordinates: 40°45′10″N 73°59′38″W﻿ / ﻿

Wyndham New Yorker Hotel

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The **Wyndham New Yorker Hotel** is a hotel located at 481 Eighth Avenue in New York City, United States. The 43-story Art Deco hotel, opened 1930, is a 1083-room, mid-priced hotel located in Manhattan's Garment District and Hell's Kitchen areas, near Pennsylvania Station, Madison Square Garden, Times Square, and the Empire State Building. The 1-million-square-foot (93,000-square-metre) building offers two restaurants and approximately 33,000 square feet (3,100 m²) of conference space.^[1] Since re-opening as a hotel in 1994, it has undergone approximately \$100 million in capital improvements, including lobby and room renovations and infrastructure modernization. The Unification Church purchased the building in 1975, and since 2014, it has been part of the Wyndham Hotels & Resorts chain.

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Early history

Construction

The New Yorker Hotel was built by Garment Center developer Mack Kanner. When the project was announced in 1928, the Sugarman and Berger designed building was planned to be 38 stories, at an estimated cost of \$8 million.^{[2][3]} However, when it was completed in 1929, the building had grown to 43 stories, at a final cost of \$22.5 million and contained 2,500 rooms, making it the city's largest for many years.^{[4][5]} Hotel management pioneer, Ralph Hitz, was selected as its first manager, eventually becoming president of the National Hotel Management Company. An early ad for the building boasted that the hotel's "bell boys were 'as snappy-looking as West Pointers'" and "that it had a radio in every room with a choice of four stations".^[6] It was a New Yorker

Wyndham New Yorker Hotel



The hotel, with its large "New Yorker" sign

General information

Location	481 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10001 United States
Coordinates	40°45′10″N 73°59′38″W﻿ / ﻿
Opening	1930
Owner	Unification Church of the United States
Management	Wyndham Hotels & Resorts

Technical details

Floor count	43 (21 for hotel)
Floor area	1,000,000 sq ft (93,000 m ²)

Design and construction

Architect	Sugarman and Berger
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Other information

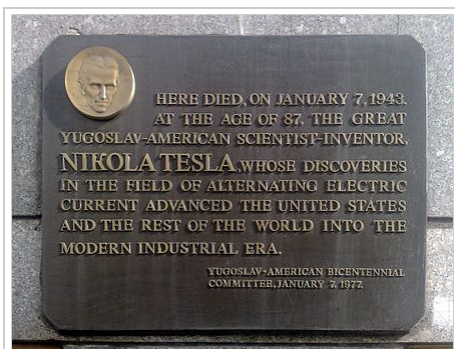
Number of rooms	1083 (originally 2,500)
Number of suites	64
Number of restaurants	2 (originally 5)

Website

bellboy, Johnny Roventini, who served as tobacco company Philip Morris' pitchman for twenty years, making famous their "Call for Philip Morris" advertising campaign.^[7]

The hotel opened on January 2, 1930.^[8] Much like its contemporaries, the Empire State Building (1931) and the Chrysler Building (1930), the New Yorker was designed in the Art Deco style which was popular in the 1920s and 1930s. In his book, *New York 1930*, Robert A. M. Stern said the "New Yorker's virtually unornamented facades consisted of alternating vertical bands of warm gray brick and windows, yielding an impression of boldly modeled masses. This was furthered by the deep-cut light courts, which produced a powerful play of light and shade that was enhanced by dramatic lighting at night".^[9] In addition to the ballrooms, there were ten private dining "salons" and five restaurants employing 35 master cooks.^[5] The barber shop was one of the largest in the world with 42 chairs and 20 manicurists.^[5] There were 92 "telephone girls" and 150 laundry staff washing as many as 350,000 pieces daily.^{[5][6]}

Later years



Plaque honoring Nikola Tesla, who lived in the hotel for ten years until he died

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the hotel was among New York's most fashionable. The *New York Observer* noted that in the building's heyday, "actors, celebrities, athletes, politicians, mobsters, the shady and the luminous—the entire Brooklyn Dodgers roster during the glory seasons—would stalk the bars and ballrooms, or romp upstairs";^[1] It hosted many popular Big Bands, such as Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey,^[10] while notable figures such as Spencer Tracy, Joan Crawford and Fidel Castro stayed there. Inventor Nikola Tesla spent the last ten years of his life in near-seclusion in Suite 3327, where he died, largely devoting his time to feeding pigeons while occasionally meeting dignitaries.^{[8][11]} In later years, Muhammad Ali would recuperate there after his March 1971 fight against Joe Frazier at the Garden.^{[1][8]}

Notwithstanding its early success, New York's changing economy and demographics caused the building to slowly decline and, as a result, its ownership changed several times. It was purchased by Hilton Hotels in 1953 for \$12.5 million and following an antitrust suit by the federal government, was sold just three years later, in 1956, for \$20 million to Massaglia Hotels.^{[12][13]} In 1959, Massaglia sold the hotel to an investment syndicate known as New York Towers Ltd., which went bankrupt, allowing Hilton to reacquire the building in 1967.^[14]

By the time Hilton reacquired the hotel, the pronounced decline in New York's fortunes, coupled with the construction of new, more modern hotels, caused the New Yorker to become unprofitable. As a result, Hilton closed the hotel in April 1972.^[10]

Initially left vacant, several proposals were made for the building, including redevelopment as a low-income housing development, and a hospital.^[10] Ultimately, in 1975, it was purchased by the Unification Church of

www.newyorkerhotel.com
(http://www.newyorkerhotel.com)



At night



Close-up of the tower

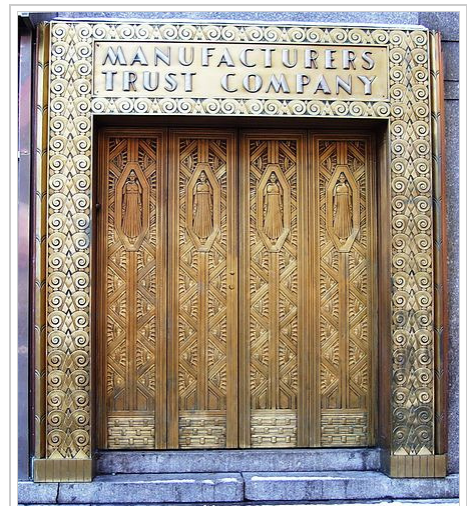
the United States for \$5.6 million. The church converted much of the building for use by its members.^[15]

Power plant

When initially built the New Yorker Hotel had coal-fired steam boilers and generators sufficient to produce more than 2,200 kilowatts of direct current electric power. At the time this was the largest private power plant in the United States. The hotel's own direct current generators were still in use during the Northeast Blackout of 1965, but by the late 1960s the hotel's power system had been modernized to alternating current.^{[8][16]} In a dedication ceremony held on September 25, 2008, The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) named the New Yorker Hotel's direct current power plant a Milestone in Electrical Engineering. A bronze plaque commemorating the achievement was presented to the hotel by IEEE.

Reopening

In 1994, the Unification Church elected to convert a portion of the building to use as a hotel again and the New Yorker Hotel Management Company took over operation of the building. It began the largest renovation project in the New Yorker's nearly 65-year history, completed in 1999, with \$20 million in capital improvements.^[17] The hotel joined the Ramada chain in 2000.



Former Manufacturers Hanover Bank branch entrance



8th Avenue entrance

In August 2007, the hotel began a second capital improvement program, which was completed in February 2009 at a final cost of \$70 million. These improvements increased the number of guest rooms available to 912 from just 178 in 1994, located on floors 19 through 40.^{[18][19]}

The renovation project was designed by Stonehill & Taylor Architects.^[19] Interior improvements included room restructuring and augmentation (now called "Metro" and "City View" rooms). Other improvements included a refurbished front entrance, lobby redesign, foyer reconstruction, and ballroom renovations. The hotel also expanded its Wi-Fi and PDA support, and added high-definition flat-screen televisions in all rooms. In addition, individual room air-conditioning units were replaced with modern centralized heating and cooling systems throughout the entire hotel. In 2009, conference room space was added to the hotel through the conversion of a defunct Manufacturer's Hanover Bank branch in the hotel, bringing the total meeting space to just over 33,000 square feet (3,100 m²), in two ballrooms and twelve conference rooms.

Ever since the New Yorker Hotel joined the Wyndham Hotels chain in March 2014,^[20] Wyndham has been undertaking additional upgrades to the hotel, including lobby and restaurant renovations, to attract more

business travelers in anticipation of the massive Hudson Yards Redevelopment Project to the west.^[8]

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External links

- Official website (<http://www.newyorkerhotel.com>)
- New York Skyscrapers-Art Deco Page (<http://www.in-arch.net/NYC/nyc2a.html#129/>)
- Tesla Society.com (<http://www.teslasociety.com/nyhotel.htm>)



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