



## RENOVATION FACTS

### RESTORED TO ITS ORIGINAL GLORY

An extensive renovation of the historic hotel was launched, beginning with an exterior restoration of stonework and windows. The hotel was closed for a complete renovation of all interior spaces. The Hotel Julien Dubuque had its grand reopening in September 2009, bringing new energy to the city's historic downtown district.

The interior redesign converted the existing 168 guest rooms into 133 luxury rooms and suites and restored the historic lobby and grand ballroom, while at the same time adding modern systems and amenities like a geothermal heating and cooling system, a reflective roof, a swimming pool and fitness facility.

This \$30 million renovation has restored the classic grandeur of the 1915 original Hotel Julien while adding modern amenities guests expect from a contemporary boutique hotel experience.

### OWNER AND COLLECTOR

Louis H. Pfohl, the former owner and late grandfather of the current owners, had an eclectic sense of style. According to family, and confirmed by the design team, he collected what he liked and found ingenious ways to give new life to historic finds.

Louis and his descendents were also respectful of the past, which was a good thing when it came to the renovation work. As it turned out, there was a treasure trove of artifacts that had been stored at the hotel - from original wrought iron tiles to Victorian-era mirrors to historic art prints - with many of those items repurposed in the new design. For example, the massive mirror that now hangs on the second floor landing of the lobby staircase was originally used as a door in a Victorian mansion. Pen and ink drawings by European artists displayed in the hotel's common areas were in such fragile condition it took museum-quality framing to bring them back.

While some original elements of the hotel had been taken apart, enough remained to remanufacture and replicate many of them.

### EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL REVEALS

- The building is Beaux-Arts in style, as evident in its arched windows, symmetry, flat roof and use of decorative cornices at the top.
- It has a very prominent footprint, taking up an entire city block.
- The exterior makes use of both limestone and brick. The framing is concrete (a fire destroyed an earlier version of the hotel so no chances were taken when rebuilding in 1914).



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- Much of the ironwork that had once graced the exterior made its way to the interior at some point, including the decorative metal trim of an exterior awning that had been repurposed as a decorative canopy over a bar area. The architectural team reclaimed what they could, beautifully restoring the exterior lobby awning from original metal pieces.
- Three arched windows on the main floor, once bricked over, now define the street level façade. Those windows were reconstructed from old photographs, as they had been largely destroyed in earlier renovations.
- Similarly, windows in the ballroom that had once been bricked over were restored, letting in streams of natural light.

## EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL REVEALS

- The interior design team also studied the building's past, referencing original drawings and blueprints and historic photographs and articles.
- The magnificent lobby and grand staircase make for a dramatic entry to the 2nd floor Atrium. The atmosphere harkens back to the days when the hotel lobby was the place to see and be seen for businessmen and high society. This is a favorite location for wedding and group photography.
  - o Upon removal of the lobby carpet, the interior design team was delighted to discover one-inch-thick marble tiles. While a significant investment, the design team removed the adhesive and lovingly restored the tiles.
  - o Walls were removed on the second floor, opening it to the lobby below, as it was in the original design.
  - o The staircase was repositioned and made even grander.
  - o Intimate furniture groupings for conversation and impromptu meetings fill the volume and give the space a cozy, home-away-from-away feel.
- Original mosaic tiles informed the warm, rich color palette of cream, black and terra cotta red found in the sumptuous fabrics, furniture and wall coverings.
- Millwork and the railings on the second floor lobby closely mirror the original design.
- In the Capone Suite, the gangster's safe had 10 layers of paint on it. A restoration expert was brought in to remove the paint, revealing the original decorative filigree artwork on the safe's door. Even the hinge and locking mechanism cast in brass were inscribed with an ornate pattern.
- In the ballroom, decorative plaster crown moldings and a 20-foot-high coffered ceiling that had been covered were uncovered.
- In the restaurant, the stained glass panel doors leading to the private dining area are Tiffany glass from the early 1900s. The four backlit glass panels at the restaurant entrance featuring four knights were rescued from a European castle-style home and are considered priceless.
- Elaborate cornices with a center urn detail that originally resided above the entry doors to the hotel now serve as accent pieces topping large upholstered wall panels in the Riverboat Lounge.
- Historic family photos were chosen for the guest suites.



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## BALANCING HISTORIC RENOVATION WITH MODERN AMENITIES

Blending the aesthetic of the new work with the building's history was no small feat, especially given the new work needed to meet the needs of modern travelers.

"Guests want that special experience that they won't get in a new building but also want all the amenities and sometimes even more," explained lead interior designer Renee Kiser, a partner at Colorado design firm Studio R Interiors, "making this an especially challenging renovation."

- All the guest rooms were redesigned, with walls removed to determine the best room mix and layout.
- So as not to disappoint guests with suites that looked "too new," the original doors to the rooms were kept and refurbished. Similarly, the wood windows, which were historically appropriate, were repaired rather than replaced.
- The modern energy code would not tolerate the incandescent bulbs of past. Historic light fixtures in the lobby could not be rewired to meet the energy code. A vendor specializing in historic reproductions was enlisted to create new light fixtures based on the original design. The original molding piece at the crown of the lights was used to create a mold for mirrors now displayed in the common areas in the hotel.
- The restored ballroom now boasts large projection screens and computer equipment, camouflaged behind walls and in the ceiling without disturbing the beautiful crown molding and ceiling beams that help define the space. The room's light fixtures are original and those were able to be converted to energy efficient pendants.

As for modern amenities, the list is extensive:

- Guest rooms are richly appointed with dark wood furnishings, high-end linen and bedding, oversized desk with ergonomic chairs, flat panel HDTVs, and spacious spa-inspired bathrooms. The largest suites have fully-stocked kitchens that adjoin open living areas.
- There is 15,000 sq. ft. of meeting and banquet space that can accommodate up to 400 people.
- Caroline's Restaurant, American cuisine with a twist, is open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Riverboat Lounge is once again a sophisticated fixture of the Main Street scene.
- Potosa Spa, tucked away on the ground floor, offers a full menu of spa and salon services.
- An addition with sunlit pool, whirlpool spa and Fitness Center with selection of cardio equipment and free weights was added to the existing hotel.
- Parking is ample and complimentary.
- The hotel provides shuttle service to the airport and area businesses.
- There is a Business Center.
- Wi-Fi is available throughout the hotel.
- The Barber Shop, a classic fixture, remains.
- Guests have easy access to the Trolleys of Dubuque.
- Within walking distance of the hotel are:
  - o Museums, aquarium and many historic points of interest
  - o Scenic riverboat and dining cruises
  - o Boutique shops
  - o Theaters
  - o Restaurants, bars and Diamond Jo Casino



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## FINAL THOUGHTS FROM THE DESIGN TEAM

Interior designer Renee Kiser offered this take on the renovation. “We don’t build things that have permanence the way we once did. This hotel carries on the legacy of generations gone by of incredibly well-built spaces.”

Lead architect Jeffrey Morton of local Dubuque architectural firm bearing his name echoed Kiser’s thoughts. “The renovation has elevated the image of the downtown area and is clearly a point of pride for residents who have fond memories of this grand old building. I hope the hotel once again leaves visitors with a nice memory of their trip to Dubuque.”

