

Historic Hotels!

XXVI: New York City's *Algonquin*

The Algonquin is a first-class hotel, located on the prestigious Club Row, 44th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, in the heart of Midtown Manhattan. The Algonquin completed a multi-million dollar historical restoration in May 1998. The newly appointed guest rooms and suites now sport plush carpeting, new mattresses, bedspreads and drapery and hand selected antique furniture. Bathrooms have period wall coverings, fixtures and refinished soaking tubs. Plush carpeting and custom wallpaper, designed by New Yorker cartoonist Robert Mankoff, join antique light fixtures and prints in the hallways. Original marble stairs were polished and layers of paint were removed from the iron banisters to reveal beautifully detailed ironwork dating from 1902.

The lobby, newly restored with writing desks, antique furniture in deep jewel tones of plum, mahogany caramel and olive--still retains the architectural properties, charm and ambiance long associated with this landmark hotel. Intimate arrangements of settees and chairs create the perfect environment for reading, writing, quiet contemplation or conversation and as a result, The Algonquin retains its position as a welcome oasis of civility amid the hectic pace of New York. The hotel has been named "One of America's 10 Best Historic Hotels" by Historic Traveler Magazine. The hotel is minutes to a variety of fine dining, shopping and entertainment.

Throughout the 1920s, a group of young writers and literary critics gathered daily in the Rose Dining Room of the Algonquin Hotel for lunch and to share stories, ideas, and a barrage of witty banter. As their careers took off, so did the fame of the gatherings, nicknamed the "Algonquin Round Table." The hotel maitre d', Frank Case, created the nickname inadvertently, by moving the growing gathering to a round table to relieve the overcrowding the group was causing in the dining room. Although artist Hirschfeld was not a member of the Round Table, he often sat on the sidelines, observing the activity and recording it in sketches.

Dorothy Parker, Robert Sherwood, George S. Kaufman, Edna Ferber, Franklin P. Adams, Frank Case [standing], Marc Connelly, Heywood Brown, Alexander Woollcott, Robert Benchley, Lynn Fontanne, Alfred Lunt, and Frank Crowninshield were all members of this famed and select group—just one of the many reasons why The Algonquin remains as one of America's notable hotels.

