

Historic Hotels!

XLIV: Hollywood's *Hollywood Knickerbocker Hotel*

The Knickerbocker was built in 1925 as a luxury apartment house. Later it was converted to the once-stylish Hollywood Knickerbocker Hotel. Although it was overshadowed for years by its more fabled sibling the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, the Knickerbocker has a rich history of tinseltown legend. Early residents included such icons as D.W. Griffith, Bette Davis, Cary Grant, and Red Skeleton. Rudolph Valentino was often seen dancing the tango in its Lido Room, very popular hang out. Joe DiMaggio would wait at the bar for his future wife, Marilyn Monroe, she would sneak through the kitchen to meet him. They also sneaked through the place on their honeymoon.

Rumor has it that Marilyn Monroe's ghost still makes the scene at this coffeehouse. Elvis Presely lived upstairs in what he called "Heartbreak Hotel." The "King" and Jerry Lee Lewis stayed in the late 50's. In 1962, MGM dressmaker and designer "Irene", committed suicide by leaping off the building. Over the years many Hollywood spirits have allegedly haunted the building. So it was only appropriate that the late Harry Houdinis' wife, Bess Houdini, tried to communicate with him by conducting a seance from the Knickerbocker roof. Relatively recently the hotel has become a retirement home for the living and the the undead. There is a spooky cafe open to the public that gives any visitor a sense of the Knickerbocker's checkered past.

