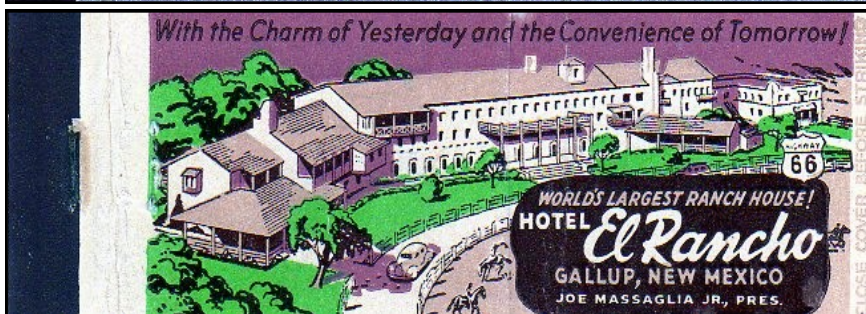


Rt. 66's El Rancho Hotel, Gallup, New Mexico

Marge Waisempacher, NJ sent in a huge Travel section article on Rt 66 from *The Sunday Star-Ledger*, Newark, NJ. It clicked with her because it mentioned Gallup's El Rancho Hotel, from which she knew she had a cover [which was too dark to reproduce here, but I found three others!].

The El Rancho Hotel was built by Joe Massaglia in 1937 for R.E. "Griff" Griffith. Originally, Griffith came to Gallup to direct a film. He later returned to build the El Rancho Hotel. He also managed the local Chief Theater. From the 1930's to 1950's, the hotel became a temporary home for many Hollywood stars. Drawn by the many films made in the area, Ronald Reagan, Spencer Tracy, Katherine Hepburn and Kirk Douglas were among the many stars listed in the guest register. Autographed photos of the stars, Navajo Rugs & Mounted trophy animal heads adorn the magnificent two story open lobby with its circular staircase.

It also became a stopping point for tourists driving on old Route 66. The hotel is now protected by the National Historic Preservation Society. This historic hotel is continually cared for by Mr. Ortega who has made it his personal hobby since its purchase. The hotel is decorated and furnished in the Old West rustic style. It is constructed of original brick, ash tar stone, and huge wooden beams with a pitched wood shale roof. The large portico overlooks the entrance and reflects the Southern Plantation style. Entering through the solid wood doors, one views the grandeur of the lobby. The floor is brick, inlaid in a basket weave pattern, and the light fixtures are made of stamped aluminum. The stone fireplace cove is surrounded by handmade wooden staircases that spiral to the second floor balcony..



Movies made at the El Rancho: **The Bad Man**, MGM film, Wallace Beery & Ronald Reagan, 1940; **Sundown**, Wanger, Gene Tierney, 1941; **Desert Song**, Dennis Morgan, 1942; **Song Of The Nile**, Maria Montez & Jon Hall, 1944; **Four Faces West & Colorado Territory**, Joel McCrea, 1947-48; **Streets Of Laredo**, William Holden & William Bendix, 1948; **Rocky Mountain**, Errol Flynn, 1950; **Big Carnival**, Kirk Douglas, 1950; **Raton Pass**, Dennis Morgan, 1951; **New Mexico**, Lew Ayres, 1950; **Fort Defiance**, Dane Clark, 1950; **Fort Massacre**, Joel McCrea, 1957; **A Distant Trumpet**, Troy Donahue & Suzanne Pleshette, 1963; **The Hallelujah Trail**, Burt Lancaster & Lee Remick, 1964.

...a great hotel...and some great full-length covers!

[Reprinted from RMS Bulletin July/August 2000]