

Opinions

Let's call a comeback for vintage hotel design

10 MAY 2018 7:09 AM

Are you familiar with Googie architecture? You should be.



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I enjoy vintage hotel design a lot—1950s motel postcards, classic hotel swimming pools, stories about historical moments and events at grand (and not-so-grand) hotels, I love it all.

I recently ran across a fun article in Mental Floss I'd like to share with you, headlined "[10 things you no longer see in hotels.](#)"

From key fobs printed with that "if lost, drop in any mailbox" message to Magic Fingers beds, this list is a great trip down memory lane, and not just for true old-timers.

I remember taking family vacations and marveling at how the Knights Inns were built to look like castles, fighting with my brothers over who got to try out the bizarrely weird Magic Fingers bed. (It was never me, since I was relegated to a roll-away cot every time). I remember taking photos underneath the giant Holiday Inn signs, which I just learned were part of a design trend known as [Googie architecture](#), and now I can't get enough of that Wikipedia rabbit hole.

You want authenticity and lifestyle? THIS is authenticity and lifestyle. My boss Jeff Higley likes to talk about how brands like Knights Inn were the first true lifestyle hotels—it's just that "lifestyle" then meant "trucker lifestyle," while the term now means "hipster lifestyle." Hey, a lifestyle's a lifestyle, people.

So it's been fun to see the recent resurgence of hotels and lodgings adopting vintage design elements, as well as the ones that are still around that never lost it. I say, embrace the fun. Embrace the kitsch. This is what's truly unique.

You need look no further than the [hotly anticipated opening of the TWA Hotel](#) at JFK Airport to know that vintage is back. I don't think anyone is more Googie than Eero Saarinen! (Can we use Googie that way?)

Country Living last year did a great article on some other [recent hotel projects](#) jumping on to the vintage style trend, like Wyoming's [Mountain Modern Motel](#) (operated by The Yarrow Group out of Jackson Hole); Miami's [Vagabond Hotel](#), which recently completed a renovation restoring vintage elements and more. Personally, I've loved seeing what Valencia Hotel Group has done in recent years with the revitalization of the [exterior-corridor motor court hotel concept](#).

Personally, the one I've had my eye on most recently is the Capitol Reef Resort in Torrey, Utah. You can stay in a Conestoga wagon, Oregon Trail-style! (No, do not mention dysentery. Don't even say that word right now or you'll ruin my dream.)

While it's great to see this style return, it is sad to see many original high-design (for the time at least) motels that have fallen from grace and turned into havens for crime and drugs.

But I know there are some still out there on the dusty trails that are calling my name. Do you own, operate or know about a true vintage motel that is still making a go of it? I want to know about it. Comment below, email me at sricca@hotelnewsnow.com or find me on Twitter [@HNN_Steph](#).

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