



La Fonda
On the Plaza

FROM EVERY WINDOW
A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

Peer into the history of Santa Fe's legendary landmark hotel

and you will find a treasure of art, heritage, and narrative. The oldest hotel in the oldest capital city in the United States is situated on the Plaza—a vantage point that allowed a grand view of the tumult and spectacle of the settling of the West. Today, La Fonda remains a witness to, and a part of, the unfolding story of Santa Fe.

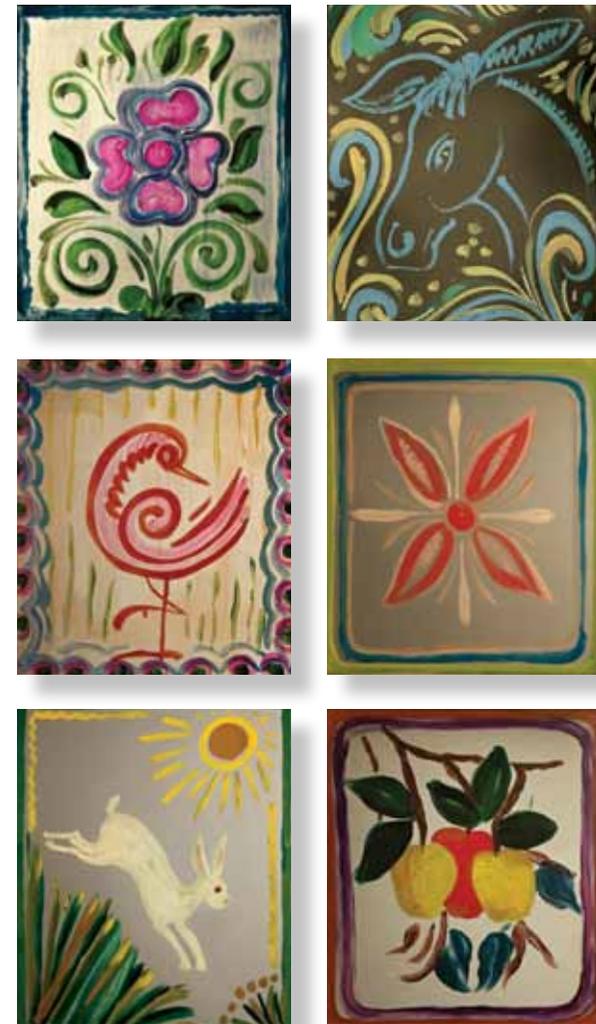
La Fonda's renowned hand-painted interior windows enclose La Plazuela restaurant, telling stories that illuminate both past and present. While these windows have a particular perspective, it is La Fonda's location on the historic Plaza that has provided a unique view of an ever-changing Santa Fe over many decades. La Fonda has seen a rustic frontier village become a booming Wild West trading center. The panorama has framed scenes of rebellion and murder, as well as parades and fiestas—as a steady influx of traders, merchants, and settlers arrived in Santa Fe.

The view from La Fonda revealed Santa Fe's evolution from a Spanish colony to a Mexican outpost, then to an American territory with an exotic mix of cultures and traditions—and ultimately, in 1912, the 47th state of the nation.

La Fonda, as a Harvey House, had a front-row seat on the development of Southwest tourism “invented” by the partnership of the Fred Harvey Company and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. Over time, the vista from La Fonda has revealed an isolated region becoming more connected—through its arts, cultures, and technology—to the country and the world.

La Fonda today looks out on a vibrant and diverse city known internationally for its arts and culture. Hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the world come here for the renowned annual markets of folk art, Indian arts, and Spanish arts, as well as the Santa Fe Opera.

Today, as always, La Fonda offers first-class lodging and hospitality at the gateway to one of the most fascinating cities in the world. Peer into the past at Santa Fe's landmark hotel and savor its fabled history, while discovering the treasures of today.



Several of La Fonda's renowned hand-painted interior windows 



 La Plazuela, ca. 1980



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CHAPTER ONE



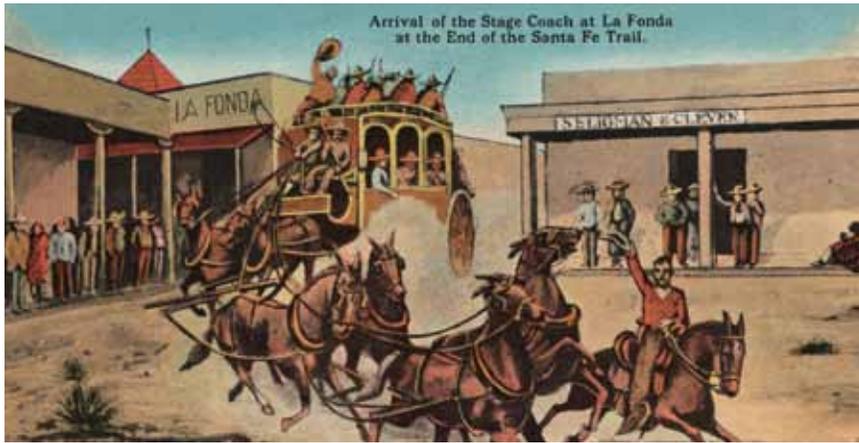
La Fonda and Hospitality in Old Santa Fe

Many accounts report that a *fonda* (the Spanish word for inn) was located on the Plaza shortly after the 1610 founding of the Villa de Santa Fe, but this is not formally documented. Travel in the Spanish colony was limited in those early days, with most rest stops along the Camino Real (the Royal Road) between Santa Fe and Mexico City being private homes and *ranchos*.



An inn or *fonda* at the end of the Santa Fe Trail reportedly did exist soon after 1821, when Captain William Becknell completed the first successful trading expedition from Missouri to Santa Fe, officially opening the Santa Fe Trail.

Historians agree that some kind of lodging in Santa Fe existed prior to 1833, when Mary Donoho, the first Anglo-American woman known to travel along the Trail from Missouri to Santa Fe, ran a hotel with her husband William. This would have been the forerunner to present-day La Fonda, according to author Sandra D. Lynn in her 1999 book, *Windows on the Past: Historic Lodgings of New Mexico*.



During the nineteenth century, La Fonda at the end of the Trail, also called “the American *fonda*,” went through various incarnations as the Santa Fe House, U.S. Hotel, and the Exchange Hotel. Under any name, it was the preferred destination of trappers, soldiers, gold seekers, gamblers, and politicians. Through the Mexican-American War, the Civil War, railroad expansion, and New Mexico statehood in 1912, the old adobe structure changed hands and names several more times but remained a Santa Fe landmark.

The Exchange Hotel had grown decrepit by the time Abraham Staab became a co-owner (with Dr. Robert Longwill) of the business in 1881. Staab was a prosperous Santa Fe merchant, civic leader, and one of the town’s largest landowners.

Staab organized a community subscription campaign to fund a major renovation of the Exchange Hotel. He and others in Santa Fe’s Jewish community contributed about one-half of the monies raised. This bought valuable repairs and changes that allowed the hotel to be more competitive, but eventually it changed hands again, and fell victim to changing fortunes.



About the time that New Mexico became a state (1912), Santa Fe’s civic leaders were dreaming up a distinctive brand of architecture based on reviving and combining old building styles—what would become known as Santa Fe Style. The Exchange Hotel, by now almost beyond repair, met its demise in a surprisingly patriotic manner. In the spring of 1919, just after the end of World War I, the citizens of Santa Fe held a Victory Bond rally. Amidst rousing speeches, a two-man tank nicknamed the Mud Puppy was enlisted to tear down the walls of the aging adobe structure.

“Every time a hundred-dollar bond was sold, the tank would bash against the hotel, sending up dust and bringing door and window frames and sections of the worn adobe wall...crashing down,” states Sandra Lynn in her book on historic New Mexico hotels.

The New Mexican, Santa Fe’s newspaper, reported on December 14, 1919 that the New Mexico capital was to have one of the finest hotels in the West, after Santa Fe’s loyal citizens raised \$200,000 to finance its construction, according to Oliver La Farge in his 1959 book, *Santa Fe: The Autobiography of a Southwestern Town*. “The result is the biggest thing Santa Fe or any other town its size has ever done,” the editor opined, “and assures the steady growth and prosperity of the city.”

The current La Fonda was the resulting hotel. Opened in 1922, it sits on the same site as previous inns, literally at the terminus of the Santa Fe Trail at the Plaza—and at the exact spot where the Santa Fe Trail met the end of the Camino Real, which originated in Mexico City.

In 1925 the new hotel was acquired by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. The following year it was leased to the Fred Harvey Company, which operated La Fonda as one of their illustrious Harvey House hotels for more than 40 years.

In 1968 Santa Fe businessman Sam Ballen and his wife Ethel purchased La Fonda. Under their leadership, major renovations and improvements restored La Fonda to its status as a first-class hotel with a unique history and character—a multi-million dollar investment.

La Fonda on the Plaza is a national treasure that has only improved with time. The hotel is still in private hands; the Ballen family heirs maintain majority ownership with a continued commitment to honoring the rich legacy of La Fonda.



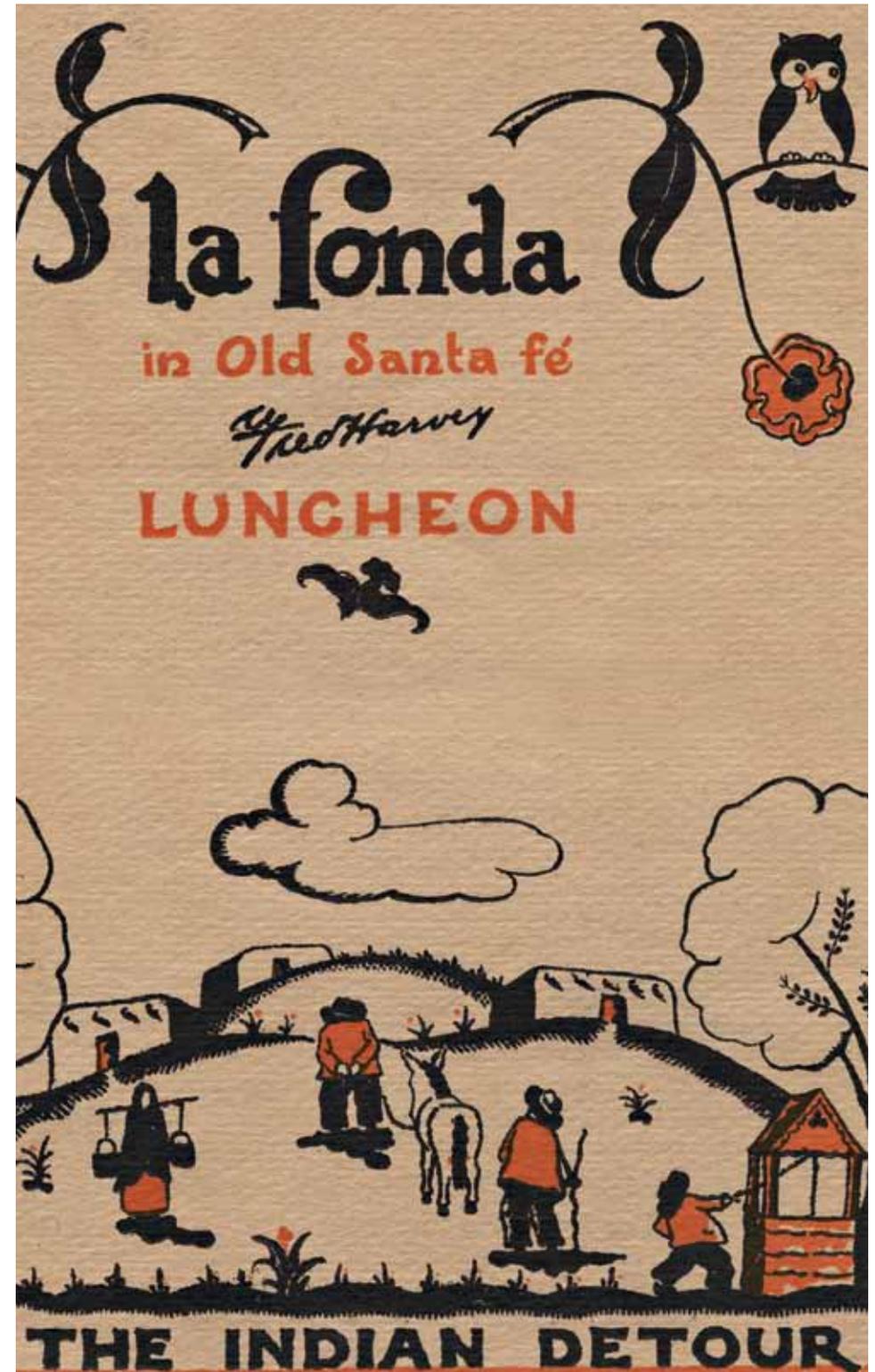


CHAPTER TWO

The Fred Harvey Era

La Fonda became one of the most famous of the Harvey Houses. Its traditional Southwest architecture and interior design, and its position as headquarters of the Indian Detour Service, made La Fonda a star of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad–Fred Harvey system. The hospitality partnership had begun to operate hotels and restaurants along the railway in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In 1926 La Fonda was added to the chain of hotels, joining several other Harvey properties in New Mexico.

Harvey, an English immigrant and astute businessman, had recognized the need to upgrade the often abysmal food and lodging offered to train travelers of the day. He approached the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF), which agreed to give his proposals a trial. That began an enduring and successful business arrangement between the Fred Harvey Company and the AT&SF. The agreement was that Harvey would provide food service to passengers at reasonable prices in exchange for free transportation by the



railroad company for workers, foodstuffs, and other supplies. In 1876 Harvey opened his first lunchroom in Topeka, Kansas, soon followed by other establishments.



 The Harvey Girls, ca. 1950s

In 1883 the first Harvey Girls were hired as waitresses in Raton, New Mexico. The presence of these young, single women, properly attired and professionally trained, lent an air of quiet gentility and efficiency—very reassuring to first-time travelers in the Wild West. (The last of La Fonda’s Harvey Girls retired in 2010, after working 44 years at the hotel.)

Although World War I brought luxury rail service to an end, the post-war period saw great expansion of the Fred Harvey Company. By 1925, automobiles were becoming increasingly popular as a way for tourists to see the country. In fact, the famous Route 66, which ran from Chicago to Los Angeles, actually began in 1926, but is best remembered as a historic byway of the thirties, forties and fifties. Route 66 crossed New Mexico, taking a detour through Santa Fe.

During this time, the Fred Harvey Company developed its vision of services beyond hotels and restaurants. Educating tourists about the indigenous cultures and arts of the American Southwest became an important new focus. Providing tours of Indian lands, along with related books and art works,

produced an enterprise that many consider the Company’s most lasting contribution to travel in the Southwest—and to the value of Native American and Hispanic art forms.

The introduction in 1926 of the Indian Detour Service, also known as Indian Detours, promised a new way for tourists to have a more personal and first-hand experience with the cultures and scenery of the Southwest. The first Indian Detours excursion left the Castañeda Hotel in Las Vegas, New Mexico in 1926, but soon after, La Fonda in Santa Fe became the headquarters. Indian Detours clients visited many pueblos, including Pecos, Tesuque, Santa Clara, San Juan, Santo Domingo, San Ildefonso, Taos, and Isleta. Also popular were excursions to Bandelier National Monument, the Puyé Cliff Dwellings, Navajo Country, and Albuquerque’s Old Town.

Early on, the Harvey Company had purchased Koshare Tours, based in Albuquerque, and merged its operations with Indian Detours. The company hired Koshare co-founder Erna Fergusson, an Albuquerque native and well-known writer, to train young women called “couriers” to lead the personalized tours into “Indian Country.” Potential couriers were schooled rigorously in the history, culture, geology, and archaeology of the Southwest—along with pueblo etiquette—so that they could effectively guide tourists “off the beaten track.” This popular touring enterprise ceased operation during the Great Depression, after introducing many travelers to adventures in the American Southwest.

The Fred Harvey Company was ahead of its time in engineering what is today called “cultural tourism” or “heritage travel.” In addition to offering the tours of Indian Country, the company published and sold books on various Southwest topics. Bookstores and reference libraries appeared in many of its properties. The company engaged New Mexico writers and artists to promote travel to the Southwest; in addition, prominent archaeologists and ethnologists were hired to write on the cultures of the region.

As the late distinguished author Frank Waters wrote in his 1950 book, *Masked Gods*, “...the Fred Harvey system introduced America to Americans.”



Harvey-era Indian Demonstration Room, ca. 1920s



CHAPTER THREE

Legends and Lore

La Fonda has played a central role in the cultural and social life of Santa Fe, and continues to be a favorite gathering place for locals as well as visitors. Its corridors echo with legends and stories still repeated today. While the fables add to the colorful heritage of La Fonda, the truth of its journey in Santa Fe's life reflects the dramatic course of the region's history.

During this historic hotel's first century, legends and lore depict a frontier town that awoke in 1821 to find itself with a new government and a sudden influx of traders, miners, gamblers, and visitors from the East. Tales of lawlessness, violence, and intrigue permeate Santa Fe's—and the territory's—history throughout the rest of the nineteenth century.

The story of Doña Tules, the prosperous owner of Santa Fe's most popular gambling hall, and her military escort to the lavish Victory Ball in 1848 at La Fonda is true. This oft-repeated tale takes on significance when all the facts are

known. Doña Tules was a woman of questionable reputation in those days; some said that her successful gambling house was also a bordello. Nevertheless, a military escort to a prestigious event would have shown her to be one of the town's leading citizens.

Another true story involves the 1867 murder of John P. Slough, Chief Justice of the Territorial New Mexico Supreme Court, in the lobby of the old Exchange Hotel. He was shot by W.L. Rynerson, a legislator in the Territorial government. The shooting followed a violent and protracted disagreement between the two—not the only time that New Mexico's politics turned deadly. Rynerson was subsequently tried and acquitted on a plea of self-defense.

Early twentieth century lore describes a golden age of creativity in Northern New Mexico, with many writers and artists migrating to Santa Fe and Taos, achieving both fame and notoriety in the period between the two world wars. During Prohibition, when “teas” were popular pretenses for stronger beverages, the bohemian crowd in the capital city imbibed freely. La Fonda was a favorite gathering spot for these writers and artists whose outings included generous servings of gossip. Among the *literati* was visiting author Willa Cather who stayed at La Fonda while writing her famed novel, *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927).

During this time, Santa Fe turned out in grand style to welcome Charles Lindbergh during his 1927 cross-country flying tour. Following his record-setting transatlantic flight, the aviator was hailed as a national hero, flying his legendary “Spirit of St. Louis” to 48 states and 92 American cities. He stopped in New Mexico's capital—which had no airport at the time—and stayed at La Fonda. He remained long enough to take part in a parade around the Plaza, to speak to a crowd of dignitaries and well-wishers, and to sleep a bit before departing.

Another citywide celebration in La Fonda's “scrapbook of memories” was the world premiere of the 1940 film, *Santa Fe Trail*. The hotel was headquarters for a grand reception in honor of co-stars Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland, who were also guests at La Fonda.

Willard Clark, late artist and print-maker, moved to Santa Fe in 1928 and operated a downtown print shop. He designed one of La Fonda's early signature images, the rounded burro next to a sleeping figure wearing a sombrero—the symbol of the hotel for a generation. Clark often spoke of his sentimental

attachment to La Fonda, where he had proposed to his wife and where they celebrated “just about every anniversary for 51 years.”

Over the decades La Fonda has hosted many other distinguished guests. Included are presidents of the United States, among them Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, John F. Kennedy, and Bill Clinton. Noted publishers, authors, artists, composers, entertainers, and leading stage and screen actors have also been hotel guests.

Many rumors circulated in Santa Fe about spies and nuclear secrets during World War II’s Manhattan Project. La Fonda was a gathering place for many of the scientists. Over drinks at the hotel bar, they would leak false information to mislead suspicious locals about what was going on in Los Alamos. Russian spies also were supposedly listening. Sam Ballen, the late owner of La Fonda, wrote in his 2001 memoir, *Without Reservations*, that U.S. Army intelligence men in plain clothes were posted at the hotel’s front desk, and served as bartenders during this time.

While the stories of Santa Fe become more legendary with frequent recounting and embellishment, it is the lore associated with the events and pageantry of the seasonal celebrations of Northern New Mexico that is best loved. La Fonda has played, and continues to play, a prominent role in these memorable events, owing much to its prime location on the Plaza.

Pancakes on the Plaza on the Fourth of July is one of the annual community celebrations that benefits local charities. Hundreds of volunteers, including La Fonda staff, help cook and serve the pancakes—with patriotic music, vintage automobiles, and laughter filling the Plaza.

During Santa Fe’s annual fiesta in September—a community celebration dating from 1712—La Fonda provides a grand view of all events. The *Fiesta de Santa Fe* commemorates Don Diego de Vargas’ reoccupation of the City of Holy Faith in 1692. Celebrations include parades, food and music on the Plaza, and the historical re-enactment of the *entrada*, when the Spanish came back to Santa Fe after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680.

At year’s end, Christmas in Santa Fe evokes rich traditions. Images of the season include the *farolitos* placed along walkways and rooftops, and the Christmas Eve Walk on Canyon Road. (*Farolitos* are, traditionally, paper bag lanterns with flickering candles anchored with sand; modern versions are plastic and electric.)

The vision of hundreds of *farolitos* lining the many roof surfaces of La Fonda and other buildings on the Plaza adds to the magical look of Santa Fe at Christmastime. Part of the festivities is the annual dramatization of *Las Posadas* on the Plaza. This historic Spanish drama depicts the biblical story of Mary and Joseph as they searched for lodgings in Bethlehem on Christmas Eve.

These stories—and more—affirm that La Fonda remains the true heart of Santa Fe.



✿ An early La Fonda signature image created by Willard Clark, ca. 1930s



Entertainment at La Fonda, ca. 1930s



CHAPTER FOUR

La Fonda's Enduring Style

Santa Fe Style has become a brand name recognized around the world. It describes everything from Spanish-Pueblo Revival architecture to home furnishings and clothing to bottles of fiery salsa.

The look of La Fonda was established in part by its architect Isaac Rapp (of Rapp, Rapp and Hendrickson) who built it in the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style. The design, later called Santa Fe Style, combines elements of both Pueblo Indian and Spanish forms, and often incorporates Moorish adaptations.

La Fonda's architecture exhibits the flat-roofed, multi-storied *adobe* structures with thick, rounded exterior walls that are typical of the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style. Other features are the thick wood beams (*vigas*), traditional ceiling supports (*latillas*), and carved wooden corbels at the top of the posts supporting the simple porticos (*portals*).

The hotel's distinctive interior design was created by architect-designer Mary Jane Colter,

a contemporary of Frank Lloyd Wright. Colter was first hired in 1902 by the Fred Harvey Company on a part-time basis, but in 1910 she became the company's preferred architect, designing many of its hotels. She completed 21 projects for Fred Harvey during her 40-year association with the company. Her work in Santa Fe dates from the 1926-29 renovation and expansion of La Fonda after Fred Harvey leased it, and includes designs for a taproom and the 1949 design of La Cantinita (now the French Pastry Shop).

Colter's work at La Fonda went beyond the interior design. She worked with architect John Gaw Meem on the late-1920s project, which added guest rooms and new wings to the hotel, along with the Bell Tower, which today houses the hotel's rooftop bar. She also consulted on various architectural elements and the exterior design. Colter's preferences for folk and ethnic art (especially Spanish Colonial, Mexican, and Native American), along with her practice of working with local artists and artisans are apparent throughout La Fonda today. Special touches include hand-crafted chandeliers, tin and copper lighting fixtures, and colorful tiles and textiles. Hand-carved, hand-painted furniture and other ornamentation by local artists add individual character and charm.

The captivating hand-painted windows of the hotel's award-winning La Plazuela restaurant were Colter's inspiration. Retired La Fonda employee and staff artist Ernest Martinez painted most of the windows in the 1970s and 1980s.

Santa Fe author and museum curator Christine Mather describes the Meem-Colter collaboration in her article in the Summer 2010 edition of *Su Casa Magazine*:

...Colter played a vital role in revamping the La Fonda hotel when in 1926 the Fred Harvey Company hired architect John Gaw Meem to create a significant addition for the Rapp, Rapp, and Hendrickson faux adobe. Harvey needed more accommodations for its rapidly growing tourist business. In addition to designing each guest room to be unique, filling the "Grandee Suites" with real and imagined antiques, and commissioning murals, furniture, and every manner of decoration for the newly refurbished hotel, Colter found time to instruct and influence the junior Meem on his first commercial project. Perhaps roughshod is too harsh a word, but that is how she seemed to invade a project...She was so successful at creating a welcoming atmosphere that overnight La Fonda became...the one and only place to be in Santa Fe—the place to see and be seen, to meet, to party, and to soak up all the character the famed little city had to offer, and that Colter's work helped to define.



Original Mary Jane Colter Indian Curio Shop at La Fonda, ca. 1930

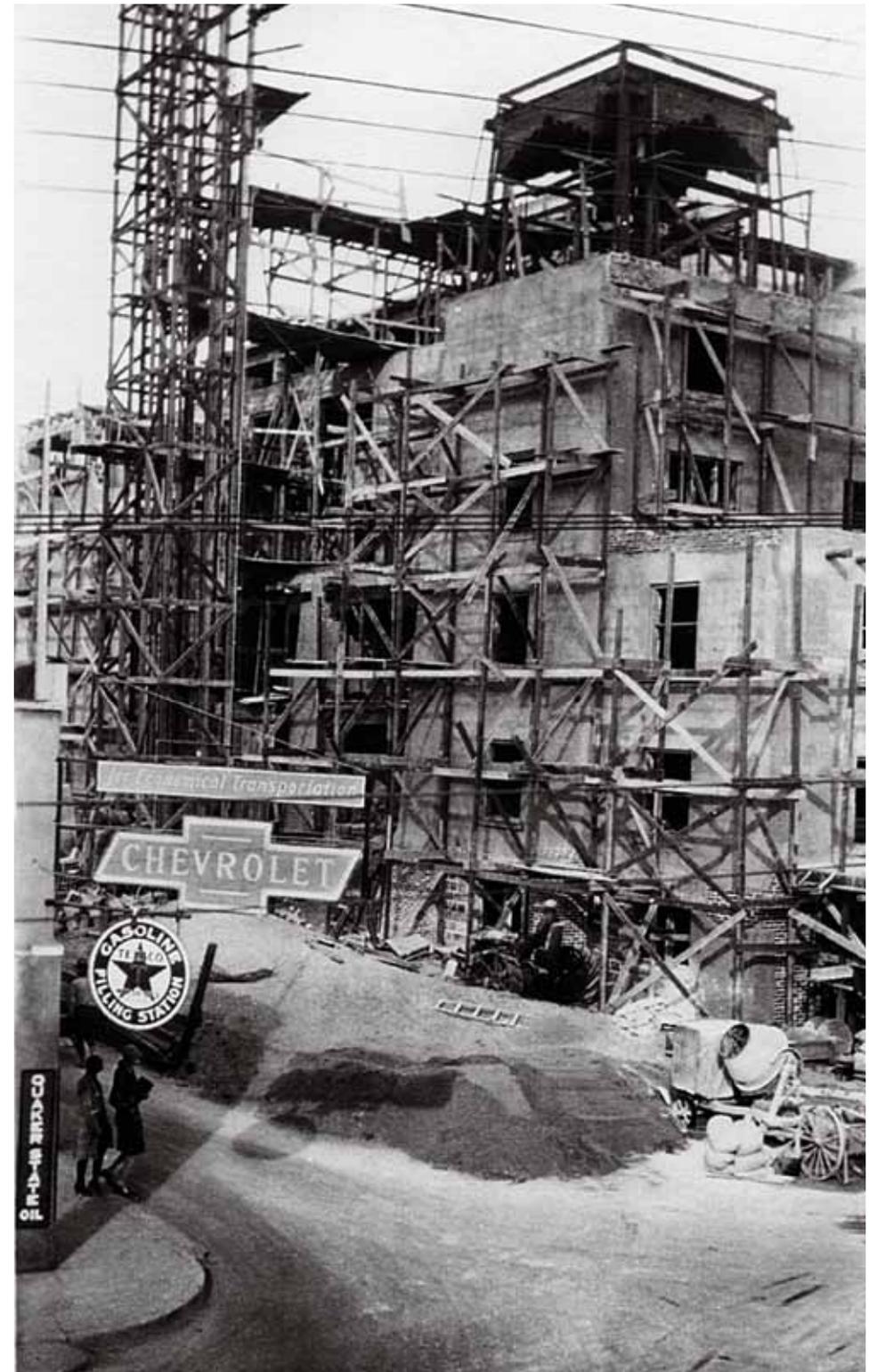


The late 1920s expansion of La Fonda into a Harvey House increased the number of guest rooms from the original 46–55 (estimates vary) to 156—a significant addition needed to accommodate the increasing numbers of tourists who stayed at La Fonda, lured largely by the popularity of the Indian Detours.

Subsequent expansions in 1949 and 1998 have increased the hotel’s capacity to 172 guest rooms and suites today. Other notable changes are the 1976 conversion of the hotel’s courtyard to an enclosed space for the restaurant La Plazuela; building the Carriage House parking structure in 1984; adding the Lumpkins Ballroom on the second floor in 1990; and the addition of La Terraza banquet room and 14 luxury rooms and suites on the third floor in 1998.

In the 2009 renovation of La Plazuela, Mary Jane Colter’s original designs and dictates were followed closely. Major structural work included a new flagstone floor and the restoration of a central fountain that had been removed in 1976, when architect William Lumpkins enclosed the courtyard. Architect Barbara Felix and Interior Designer Dierdre Wilson hired talented artisans, as Colter did in her day, to make everything from wrought iron sconces and hand-forged railings to beautifully carved chairs and furnishings. Thousands of hours went into the crafting of every detail of La Plazuela. The result is a dining room that is truly a tapestry of custom craftsmanship.

La Fonda is known for its museum-quality collection of original Southwest art and handcrafts. Among the art works on view are: paintings by early Santa Fe artist Gerald Cassidy (including images created to promote Southwest tourism in railway stations); Native American paintings from the 1920s, including work by noted artists Tomás Vigil, Julian Martinez, and Romando Vigil; a mural of the Santa Fe Trail by artist Olive Rush; murals and paintings by Paul Lantz; Jonathan Kendall woodcarvings; works of Horace Akin who lived at La Fonda for many years; works by Vladan Stiha who had an art gallery at La Fonda; terracotta bas-relief tiles by Arnold Ronnebeck; and paintings by contemporary Native American master Tony Abeyta.



🌸 Construction of the Bell Tower designed by John Gaw Meem, ca. 1926



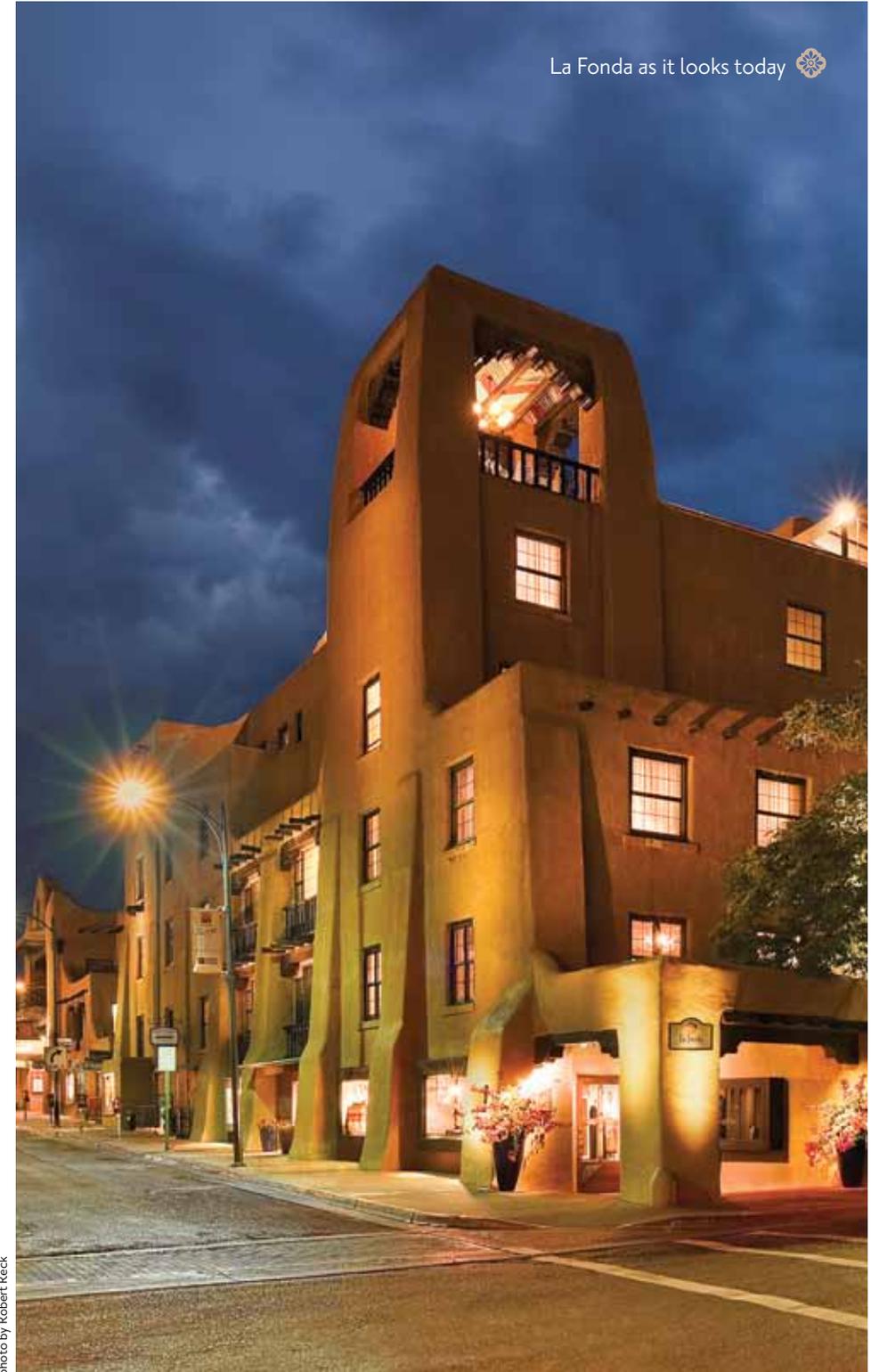
CHAPTER FIVE

La Fonda Today—Looking to the Future

Entering the lobby of La Fonda is crossing into another world—a world of gracious tradition in a textured ambience of Southwest art and architecture. Here again, the hand-painted windows of La Fonda capture the attention of visitors. The light dances on the glass panes that were so carefully painted over the years. These shimmering images evoke the past as they observe all who pass by today.

Visitors come to Santa Fe from all over the world to experience a range of art and culture: the Santa Fe Opera, various music and dance performances, first-class cuisine, art markets, and museums. They also come to ski in the nearby mountains, go riding (both horses and mountain bikes) and hiking on area trails, and to paint or photograph the wide blue skies in a stunning mountainous landscape.

The La Fonda experience today is fostered by state-of-the-art amenities and the amicable professionalism of the staff at every level.





 La Plazuela at La Fonda as it looks today

These, along with its rich history, are the hallmarks of La Fonda’s celebrated hospitality. Guests often return to enjoy the experience again and again in La Fonda’s unforgettable style and comfort.

Cathleen and David Stevenson, for example, have had the same room at La Fonda during Indian Market every August for the past 20 years, according to a 2010 article in The New Mexican. The Dallas couple booked their second-floor room with its view of Old Santa Fe Trail for the first time in 1990. “It’s a window of entertainment,” they say, and they have requested it every year since then. They also visit Santa Fe three or four other times during the year, including holiday visits around Christmastime. They don’t necessarily stay in the same room for those trips, but they do stay at La Fonda. “You can’t beat the location, the legend, the art, the hand-painted furniture and the staff,” says Cathleen.

Other Guests, in Their Own Words:

My wife and I spent a wonderful week at La Fonda, showing the town—and the hotel—to friends who had never visited New Mexico. It is our opinion that none of the area’s fine museums does a better job of summing up the Native/Spanish/Anglo cultural impact on Santa Fe than your marvelous “Inn at the End of the Trail.” (Houston, Texas, 2011)

From the moment I checked in and throughout my stay the staff (from the desk clerk, to the bartender, to the waitresses, to the concierge) all provided superb service. It was evident that they were sincerely interested in making my stay as pleasant as possible. Please give my thanks to all the staff, and congratulations to your organization for creating an atmosphere where staff is able to provide quality and caring service. (New York, New York, 2010)

A Place for Locals Too

La Fonda is also a public space that locals love and visit often. For most of the last century, starting before World War II, La Fonda had dining tables—“roundtables,” they were called—where prominent Santa Feans would gather daily to exchange news and “hold court.”

The late Miranda Masocco Levy, a founder of the Santa Fe Opera and long-time Santa Fe resident, had a table at La Fonda in the ‘50s that she called the “Harpies’ Bazaar.” In the early days of the local opera, she was seen having lunches with the composer Igor Stravinsky, who would greet friends and sign autographs.

The hotel’s late owner Sam Ballen says in his memoir, *Without Reservations*, that lawyers met in La Cantinita (now the French Pastry Shop), while businessmen gathered regularly in the Gates of Spain (now retail shops) for lunch. For a decade in the ‘70s, the most famous table revolved around Judge Lewis Sutin, who gained notoriety for his eccentric judgments on the New Mexico Court of Appeals. Ballen recalls that the table of C.B. Ogas persisted for more than 30 years. Ballen predicted in 1997 that the roundtables would soon come to an end. But, in fact, three groups still meet weekly in La Plazuela, one of which is down to three people — but they meet every day! The roundtables are still very much a part of life at La Fonda.

Cultural Tourism

New Mexico’s Centennial of Statehood celebrations in 2012—and Santa Fe’s 2010 commemoration of its 400th anniversary—represent times to reflect on the past and plan for the future. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Paul Horgan wrote in his 1956 book, *The Centuries of Santa Fe*, about an important point in Santa Fe’s history that still resonates in the present: “Imperceptibly, in a process lasting through years, the city had converted its history into an asset of commerce.”

The impact of the 1912 decision by city leaders to develop Santa Fe’s economy through tourism is still felt today. The city’s subsequent adoption, in 1957, of the historic design-review ordinance is part of earlier efforts to ensure a distinctive heritage. The strategy has worked very well—growing an arts and culture economy worth more than \$1 billion annually. Santa Fe has the third largest art market in the United States, and it continually scores in the Top 10 as a favored U.S. destination in travel and lifestyle publications.

Santa Fe is home to major art markets (International Folk Art Market, Indian Market, Spanish Market, and Art Santa Fe, for example), celebrated performing arts groups (the Santa Fe Opera, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and the Santa Fe Symphony), and major museums (New Mexico History Museum, Palace of the Governors, Museum of International Folk Art, Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Spanish Colonial Arts Museum, and SITE Santa Fe, among others).

In addition, Santa Fe is a prime location for the state’s thriving film industry. *Indian Day School*, one of the nation’s earliest films was made in New Mexico in 1898. More recently, the movie *No Country for Old Men*, winner of four Academy Awards, was filmed in the Santa Fe area in 2007.

Along with tourism and the arts, science and technology have advanced in New Mexico since the birth of the Atomic Age. Today the respected Santa Fe Institute fosters studies in complexity theory, cognitive systems, and many others, with Nobel Laureates often in residence. The scientific laboratories at Los Alamos, and Albuquerque's Sandia Labs, have multifaceted missions today that aim toward solutions in renewable energy and supercomputing, for example. Spaceport America in southern New Mexico will soon begin launching tourists into space. These developments bode well for the state's economy, and they have inevitably changed the character of New Mexico from an ancient, remote land to one on the cutting edge of technology.

La Fonda remains a major player in both Santa Fe's local economy and in the state's hospitality industry. To maintain the authentic historic character of La Fonda, the management has invested millions of dollars in renovations and upgrades of its facilities, while also investing heavily in its staff, rewarding the loyalty and services of its highly trained and highly regarded employees. The family atmosphere at La Fonda has been, and still is, one of its strengths.

What is on the horizon for La Fonda? The hotel will continue to do what it does best: provide superior accommodations, service, and amenities that keep pace with both changes and traditions in Santa Fe. La Fonda has set the standard for authentic Southwest style and charm. It continues to attract celebrities and dignitaries from around the world—while serving its local community with pride. In the hearts and minds of many, La Fonda is Santa Fe.



Written for La Fonda on the Plaza by Barbara J. Harrelson

*...La Fonda is the most beautiful hotel
in America, perhaps the most beautiful I have
ever seen in my life. The patio is surrounded by
cool walkways paved with a mosaic of tiles and
Spanish-style furnishings...*

Simone de Beauvoir, writer-philosopher
(*America Day by Day*, 1947)



Peer into the storied past of Santa Fe's legendary landmark hotel and find a treasure of history, art, and tradition.

The oldest hotel in the oldest capital city in the United States is situated on the Plaza—with a front-row seat on history, past and present. The hand-painted windows of La Fonda's interior are alive with stories. Come along on a journey that reveals the legends and the lore of La Fonda on the Plaza, a steadfast landmark in the changing fortunes of Santa Fe.



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