

OMNI® RESORTS

the grove park inn

Historic Walking Tour

Edwin Wiley Grove, a pharmaceutical magnate from Tennessee, envisioned the building of a resort hotel in the restful atmosphere of the Blue Ridge Mountains. On July 12, 1913, Mr. Grove's dream became reality as the legendary Inn opened its doors. William Jennings Bryan delivered the address at the grand opening banquet, stating that The Grove Park Inn had been "Built for the Ages."

MAIN ENTRANCE: Before entering this historic Inn, notice the structure of the building. With its steel and concrete frame, it is almost 500 feet long. Mr. Grove's concept for the Inn was influenced by a visit to the Old Faithful Inn in Yellowstone National Park. Fred Seely, Grove's son-in-law, designed and built the Inn from boulders taken from nearby Sunset Mountain. Italian stonemasons and hundreds of local laborers fit the boulders into place. Workmen were instructed that every visible stone should reveal its most time-worn face.

On the porch at the main entrance, you will see our popular rockers made in 1913 by the White Furniture Company (Mebane, NC), which produced all the bedroom furniture and doors for the Main Inn. The plaque commemorating the date that the Inn was enrolled on the National Register of Historic Places (1973) is located on the wall between the two front doors.

GREAT HALL: You are now entering the Great Hall for which The Grove Park Inn is famous. Flanked by two massive fireplaces large enough to burn 12-foot logs, the hall is 120 feet long and 80 feet wide. In the early days, when it was called the Big Room, it was the center of all social and cultural exchange, as no mention can be found in historical records of parlors or suites.

A superb orchestral organ was built by Ernest Skinner of Boston and installed in the Great Hall. Evening concerts were held by the noted organist of the day for the enjoyment of the Inn's early patrons. The organ was sold in 1927 for \$15,000 to The First Presbyterian Church of Baltimore.

FURNITURE HIGHLIGHTS: The furniture throughout the hotel is designed and built in the Arts & Crafts style. Elbert Hubbard, the guiding spirit of the Roycrofters, made an important contribution. Easily identified by the orb and cross, there were at one time over 700 pieces of furniture and 600 lighting fixtures of solid copper at the Inn, all made by hand by the Roycrofters. Today, pieces of that furniture have been restored and can be seen throughout the hotel, including the twelve hanging copper chandeliers in the Great Hall.

GRANDFATHER CLOCK: You will see the most famous piece in our antique collection, the majestic Roycroft grandfather as you walk through the front doors of our historic Inn. The Roycrofters made only three such clocks of this design. This clock has a hammered copper face and bears the orb and cross insignia on the left side.

LIGHTING FIXTURES AND CEILING: As stated in a 1912 advertisement, "The Grove Park Inn could never be complete in its fulfillment of purpose without the assistance of

the Roycrofters. From their copper shop will come the lighting fixtures, made after special designs, with the loving mark of the hammer still on them. It was nothing rude or impractical but along the line of the most modern methods of illumination."

These methods described in the early ad were indirect lighting. No light bulbs were to be showing. The ceilings were made concave in the Great Hall in order for the light to reflect off the ceilings.

FIREPLACES: These massive fireplaces are famous for their size and uniqueness. The andirons, weighing 500 lbs. each, were designed in Asheville during 1913 especially for the huge hearths. In the winter, roaring fires add warmth and atmosphere to the Great Hall where visitors enjoy evening entertainment. The quotations inscribed on the boulders throughout the Great Hall were hand selected by Fred Seely, and chosen to act as words of wisdom for guests and employees.

SUNSET TERRACE: The Sunset Terrace has become a Grove Park legend with its breathtaking views and spectacular mountain sunsets. We hope you have had the opportunity to dine at one of the South's most famous outdoor dining verandas.

ELEVATORS: These remarkable Otis elevators are listed in *Ripley's Believe It Or Not* for their unique design and engineering. Each runs alongside the chimney shafts within the rockwork of the great fireplaces. The original intent of building the elevators inside of the fireplaces was to block the noise from the machinery, so guests who had gone to sleep early would not be disturbed.

*Proceed toward the Front Desk. Notice the copper light fixture above the double doors on your left. This light has its original copper bottom, as designed by the Roycrofters. To your left, you will see two single doors and the small door of one of our two Otis elevators. Choose to ride the historic elevator by pressing the "call" button and waiting for an Elevator Operator, or enter the door to the far right and follow the steps up to the **third** floor of the Main Inn, which will take you to the Palm Court.*

PALM COURT: You are now in one of the first atrium lobbies in the country. The handsome wicker furniture was added in 1995 and reflects furniture styling similar to what would have been in the Great Hall back in 1913. In 2000, the skylight was replaced with new glass, which brightened and updated this magnificent courtroom.

In the early years, there were beautiful stenciled designs decorating the Palm Court's balconies. Unfortunately, they were painted over many times and forgotten. In an effort to restore historical integrity to this unique atrium lobby, the Inn commissioned decorative artist Mark-Ellis Bennett to uncover samples of the original artwork and redecorate the balconies with one of the two original stenciled motifs.

*On the floor above the Palm Court, in rooms 441 and 443, F. Scott Fitzgerald, author of *The Great Gatsby*, wrote articles and short stories during extended visits in 1935 and 1936. Proceed to the opposite end of the Palm Court, and take the stairs or the elevator back down to the Great Hall. You should now be near the Nantahala Outdoor Center and Gallery of the Mountains.*

PORTRAIT GALLERY: Returning to the Great Hall, you should be near the Carolina Walk with three specialty retail outlets. Along the wall, you will see the many celebrated visitors who have stayed at the Inn throughout its illustrious history. Proceed toward the Sammons Wing.

EDISON: (This is located on your right side just before entering the Sammons Wing). EDISON, craft ales + kitchen was completed in July 2013 and offers breathtaking views

and informal indoor or outdoor dining in a cozy, yet contemporary setting. The fireplace that warms this dining room in the winter was originally an exterior one. This south porch area was enclosed in 1955.

SAMMONS WING: You are now entering the portion of the hotel that was completed in 1984.

Continue to The President's Lounge, which now offers cocktails and appetizers in the evening, along with extraordinary views from the large picture windows. If you look out these windows, you can see the majestic Blue Ridge Mountains, Downtown Asheville, and our Donald Ross Golf Course.

VUE 1913: AN AMERICAN BRASSERIE: At the end of the hallway is Vue 1913, which offers guests a comfortable and stylish setting for a leisurely meal with its art deco decor and panoramic view of the Blue Ridge Mountains. American and French cooking is highlighted by a marvelous selection of wine from an abundant French cellar cultivated over the years.

Follow the hallway back through the The President's Lounge. Take the elevator on the right to Level 1 for a visit to the reception area of The Spa.

THE SPA: After leaving the elevator, turn right and proceed through the rock-walled passageway. Notice the soft sounds of music, and the unique water features located along the hall.

Once you've arrived, visit The Spa's reception area and The Spa Café, and you will notice just outside there is a large, lighted waterfall and courtyard area. While visitors are not permitted into the Spa's private treatment areas without a scheduled treatment or a day pass, you may view the pools through a window at the rear of the reception area.

Continue through the opposite passageway towards the Vanderbilt Wing. Take the elevator to the Lobby level (10th floor). Upon exiting the elevator, you will see Blue Ridge, our buffet restaurant.

BLUE RIDGE: This spectacular dining room with its glass-enclosed terrace has panoramic views and seats 300 guests for lavish buffets or a la carte dining. This restaurant is primarily known for their incredible Friday night Seafood Buffet, Saturday night Prime Rib Buffet and Sunday Champagne Brunch. The upper level is more formal with antique sideboards and the original Roycroft buffets and chandeliers.

TALE OF THE POOL TABLE: This pool table was originally installed in 1913 here at The Grove Park Inn. The table was manufactured between 1908 and 1909 by The Brunswick & Balke Company in Chicago. This particular model, a St. Bernard mission, came in a variety of finishes and either a four or six leg design. This table was manufactured in an Old mission color without polish or luster. The bed of the table is 1 ½" Vermont slate. The cabinet is quarter sawn oak with ivory inlaid diamond sights and rosewood cushion rails, chosen because of its ability to withstand a lit cigar.

The table was originally installed in the hotel's recreation room, located directly below the Sunset Terrace. In 1928, the recreation room was remodeled and renamed to become the convention hall. Though the bowling alley was removed, the billiard table remained.

In 1956 in yet another remodel, the recreation/convention hall became the Cherokee room. According to former employees, the pool table remained at The Grove Park Inn

in various locations until the 1960s, when it was either given or sold to one of the employees. Its whereabouts from that time until 2007 had remained unknown.

In January 2007, this table, original racks and balls were reacquired by The Grove Park Inn into our permanent collection of antiques and Arts and Crafts furnishings. It has been put on permanent public display for generations to enjoy.

RETAIL WALKWAY: After an extensive renovation of our previous retail shops, these shops were completed in July 2013 and offer guests a unique shopping experience. They specialize in fine fashions, children's items, GPI logo merchandise, home décor and a coffee shop with grab and go snack offerings – all within one open concept floor plan.

Follow the Retail Hallway back toward the Main Inn, but take a left into the Vanderbilt Atrium, just past the retail shops.

ATRIUM LOBBY you will notice the **MEDICINE DISPLAY:** This exhibit, located to the right of the Atrium Elevator, displays a collection of Grove's early medicines. In 1889, Grove founded his Paris Medicine Company after operating a pharmacy in Paris, Tennessee. The Paris Medicine Company eventually became Grove Laboratories, a division of Bristol-Myers in 1964. The profit from these "miracle cures" afforded Mr. Grove the means to build the Inn. Remedies on display include Tasteless Syrup of Quinine, Grove's O-Pen-Trate Salve and Pazo Ointment for Piles.

Exit the Vanderbilt atrium by proceeding through the wooden double doors. Follow the hallway towards the Main Inn.

CELEBRITY GALLERY: Here you'll see famous guests who have visited the Inn, including film and television stars, sports legends, authors and musicians. After their departure, plaques were placed on the guest room doors where they stayed.

Continue past the celebrity gallery and take a left to head towards the Great Hall again.

MEMORABILIA EXHIBIT: This exhibit displays fascinating artifacts and early memorabilia of the Inn, including a letter and photo from Thomas Edison, a copy of Margaret Morley's "These Carolina Mountains," covered in homespun fabric, the original dining room china used until 1943 and a copy of "The Fra," as published by Elbert Hubbard of the Roycrofters.

Also on display are two wonderful Roycroft American Beauty Vases. Remarkably, the antique dealer, commissioned to collect pieces for the Sammons Wing, came across one of the vases during his search, finding the hotel's name inscribed on the base.

Opposite from the Memorabilia cabinets, you'll see a six-foot Roycroft grandfather clock, which is shorter and thicker than the clock located in the Great Hall. This smaller version was made for Fred Seely's office.

Continue into the Main Inn and you're back where you started. We hope you enjoy your time here, and return soon!