



WOLFSONIAN THE MUSEUM OF THINKISM

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'IN PURSUIT OF PLEASURE: SCHULTZE & WEAVER AND THE AMERICAN HOTEL' EXHIBITION ON VIEW NOVEMBER 13, 2005– MAY 28, 2006 AT THE WOLFSONIAN

Upcoming Exhibition Explores Hotels, Inside and Out



MIAMI BEACH, FL —[August 2005] The Wolfsonian–Florida International University will present an exhibition offering an insightful exploration of American hotels in the early 20th century. *In Pursuit of Pleasure: Schultze & Weaver and the American Hotel* will open at The Wolfsonian in Miami Beach on November 13, 2005, and run through May 28, 2006. The opening of the exhibition marks the beginning of The Wolfsonian's 10th anniversary weekend celebration.

The exhibition will center on original architectural presentation drawings and plans from The Wolfsonian's collection, supplemented by loans from private and public collections. It will provide a detailed look at the landmark luxury hotels designed by the architectural firm of Leonard Schultze and S. Fullerton Weaver, and help viewers understand these buildings as the culmination of decades-long trends in the development of American hotels.

"In Pursuit of Pleasure will offer a glimpse into the hotel industry of the 1920s and '30s, enabling visitors to examine its rich, fascinating history and better understand today's hotel culture. This exhibition will focus on subject matter that, until now, hasn't been widely explored," said Cathy Leff, museum director.

The 1920s were the last great era of grand hotel construction until the post-war boom, and no firm made a bigger mark in those years than Schultze & Weaver. The partnership, formed in 1921 and based in New York City, began by designing hotels for the Biltmore chain in Los Angeles, Atlanta and Havana. The architects went on to design luxury hotels in New York City and South Florida. These include the Waldorf-Astoria, the Sherry-Netherland, the Pierre, and the Lexington, in New York; the Breakers in Palm Beach; the Nautilus and Roney Plaza in Miami Beach; and the Miami Biltmore in Coral Gables. A number of these remain among the grandest hotels in America.

The exhibition will focus on these Schultze & Weaver hotels, while also framing their work within a broader historical context. It will explore changing patterns of design and use, from the rambling urban hotels of more than a thousand guestrooms at the beginning of the century to the small, streamlined hotels of the 1930s, concluding with Morris Lapidus' 1953-54 Fontainebleau, which marked the rebirth of the grand, full-service hotel on Miami Beach. Presentation drawings and architectural plans will comprise the core of the show; the addition of furniture, tableware, photographs and printed ephemera will enhance visitors' understanding of hotels as fully designed environments.

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“When Mitchell Wolfson Jr. purchased the Schultze & Weaver collection in 1994, he preserved a vital part of American architectural history. The Wolfsonian is committed to maintaining that history and providing the context for understanding how hotel design and use are a reflection of larger societal issues,” said Marianne Lamonaca, assistant director for exhibitions and curatorial affairs at The Wolfsonian. “The rare and superbly rendered Schultze & Weaver design drawings are the foundation of this fascinating exhibition.”

The exhibition will be curated by Lamonaca, with research associate Dr. Jonathan Mogul and content consultants Dr. Robin F. Bachin [University of Miami, Department of History] and Dr. Kenneth J. Lipartito [Florida International University, Department of History]. *In Pursuit of Pleasure* will be accompanied by the monograph *Grand Hotels of the Jazz Age: The Architecture of Schultze & Weaver*, edited by Lamonaca and Mogul, and published by Princeton Architectural Press. This beautifully illustrated volume will contain contributions from the editors as well as Bachin, Lipartito and Dr. Keith D. Revell (Florida International University, School of Policy Management).

In addition, the 25th issue of The Wolfsonian’s award-winning *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* is devoted to the American hotel; its 10 essays explore the material, social and cultural world of large American hotels and tell the story of how they evolved into some of the world’s most significant and interesting buildings. *The Journal* is distributed by MIT Press and is available at The Wolfsonian museum store and at other bookstores.

Enhancing the exhibition will be a community-wide program of cultural events, produced in partnership with local arts, hotel and tourism organizations that celebrate hotel culture in Miami Beach and Miami.

In Pursuit of Pleasure is sponsored by The William R. Kenan Charitable Trust and American Express; *Travel + Leisure* is the media sponsor. This exhibition has been financed in part with Historical Museums Grants-in-Aid Program assistance provided by the Bureau of Historical Museums, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, Secretary of State. Additional support has been received from the Aaron I. Fleischman Foundation; the Funding Arts Network; and Continental Airlines, the preferred airline of The Wolfsonian. The accompanying book is supported by the Cowles Charitable Trust and Furthermore: a program of the J.M. Kaplan Fund.

An Exploration of the American Hotel

The history of the hotel constitutes an important chapter in the development of modern America. Since the first hotels were constructed for commercial travelers in the early 19th century, they have been a mainstay of the nation’s commerce. More than mere places to briefly reside, hotels were locations for making deals and meeting clients as business relationships extended across the nation. As public spaces, hotels have also been exemplars of urban pride and aspirations. No progressive city with hopes of growth and prosperity could afford to be without one.

Yet for all their practicality and economic significance, hotels have also been places of leisure, rest, recreation and fantasy. Though often among the most well known and recognized urban public spaces, hotels have also sought to maintain a connection to the domestic world. Well-appointed parlors and communal dining rooms marked early hostleries as bourgeois “homes away from home,” while lobbies and bars enabled the general public to enter this domain for business and leisure. At the same time, as the American “leisure class” came into its own at the end of the 19th century, hotels catered to the desire of wealthy people for an escape from the quotidian, for a place where opulence and fantasy combined to create a vision of life as it *might* be.

An Overview of the Exhibition

The exhibition will offer a number of different ways of looking at hotels. Among the themes the exhibition will address is the physical impact of hotels on their surroundings. Hotel site plans and maps will show how specific hotels reinforced or changed the organization of urban space, contributed to the economic development of regions and tied into transportation networks, especially, in the early twentieth century, the railroads. Architectural renderings and plans—which include both overall building perspectives and elevations, and elaborate details of facades—will illustrate the exteriors of the hotels, revealing the design statements the buildings made to visitors and to the larger communities in which they were located.

The exhibition will also explore the world inside hotels, presenting decorative objects and renderings of interior spaces to give visitors an impression of the opulent, exotic environments the designers created for their mostly upper-class guests. Such spaces—whether a Spanish-style courtyard in the Miami Biltmore, a dining room at The Breakers inspired by a Florentine palazzo, or a grill at the Waldorf-Astoria decorated in a Scandinavian manner—were meant to take guests to distant places and times, far away from their everyday cares. But escape was not the only function of hotel interiors. Hotel lounges, lobbies and ballrooms were important spaces for both informal meetings and formal public events, thus providing services not only to guests but also to members of the larger community. And the hotels, especially in New York, were also homes to hundreds of guests who chose to live there permanently, rather than maintaining their own households in the city.

The exhibition, in addition, will take visitors behind the scenes, using plans and photographs to demonstrate the nature of hotels as complex and highly efficient systems for delivering services to guests. Detailed architectural plans, together with photographs, demonstrate how hotels organized their space and their huge staffs of workers, and used technological systems to provide the rapid communications, climate control, electrical power and massive amounts of food and clean laundry that were required in a modern luxury hotel. The exhibition, in sum, presents a picture of the luxury hotels of the early 20th century that captures their dual nature—as places of pleasure and escape, and as modern business enterprises.

About The Wolfsonian–Florida International University

The Wolfsonian is a museum and research center that uses objects to illustrate the persuasive power of art and design, to explore what it means to be modern, and to tell the story of social, political and technological changes that have transformed the world. The 100,000 artifacts that comprise the Wolfsonian’s collections range from fine art, graphic design and political propaganda to furniture, rare books and ephemeral materials such as postcards and travel brochures.

The Wolfsonian is located at 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, Fla. Admission is \$7 adults; \$5 seniors, students, and children six-12; free for Wolfsonian members, State University System of Florida staff and students with ID, children under six, and Miami Beach residents with ID. The museum is open Monday, Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday from noon-6pm; Thursday and Friday from noon-9pm; and is closed on Wednesday. Contact us at 305.531.1001 or visit us online at www.wolfsonian.org.

The Wolfsonian receives ongoing support from the State of Florida; Department of State; Division of Cultural Affairs; Florida Arts Council; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs through the Cultural Affairs Council; the Mayor and the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners; the Mayor and City Commission of the City of Miami Beach and the Miami Beach Cultural Arts Council; Crispin Porter + Bogusky; Dacra and the Miami Design District; Continental Airlines, the preferred airline of The Wolfsonian; the Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Foundation; Artécity, for inspired condo living; Carnival Foundation; and RBK Productions.

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