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Here at the New Yorker



By LAURA B. WEISS

When the New Yorker Hotel swung open its brass doors at Eighth Avenue and West 34th Street at the beginning of the Depression, the 2,500-room Art Deco structure was considered a marvel of engineering and construction. A private tunnel whisked guests directly from the 43-story hotel into nearby Penn Station, and a laundry handled 15 tons of linen daily.

Seventy-seven years later, now known as the Ramada New Yorker and owned by the Unification Church, the hotel has begun booking guests into its newly refurbished rooms in the hope of recapturing its glory days. And in its redesign, one source of inspiration came from nearly 1,000 photographs and pieces of memorabilia that have been lovingly collected by the building's engineer, Joseph Kinney.

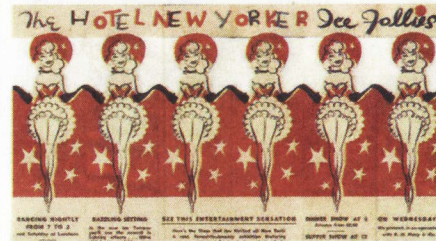
Gems include a photograph of Johnny Roventini, the diminutive bellhop who first sang out in the hotel lobby what became the famous jingle, "Call for Philip Morris!" Mr. Kinney also has pictures of Hollywood stars like Barbara Stanwyck and Robert Taylor, gliding across the dance floor of the hotel's famed Terrace Room nightclub. And Muhammad Ali, defeated by Joe Frazier in the "Fight of the Century" at Madison Square Garden in March 1971, is seen recuperating in one of the hotel's bedrooms, the covers pulled up to his chin.

Mr. Kinney, who is also the hotel's unofficial archivist, realizes that his collection, coupled with his deep interest in the building where he has worked for 11 years, might brand him as something of an eccentric. "If I listen to myself talking about this place," he said, "I'd think, 'This guy has issues.'"



PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE COLLECTION OF JOSEPH KINNEY

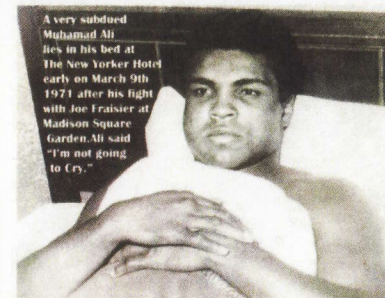
ART DECO WONDER A 1929 rendering of the hotel.



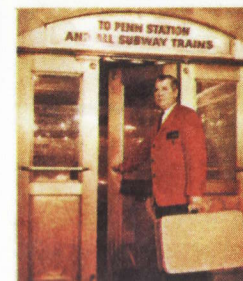
FUN AND GAMES
An Ice Follies brochure, left; cocktail hour, below left; the "Call for Philip Morris," below.



GLAMOUR DAYS
Lana Turner, far left, next to Artie Shaw.



FIGHT OF THE CENTURY
Muhammad Ali, defeated by Joe Frazier in March 1971, recuperating in a hotel room.



ALL ABOARD
A private tunnel whisked hotel guests directly into nearby Penn Station.