

Houston on Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars a Day

The hotel for the man who has tried everything else in Houston

by William C. Martin

"An Adventure in the good life as it must have been lived by famous folk in Legend, in Literature, and now in the Lunar Age" can be yours for

only \$2,500 a night, the going rate for a unique American experience now available at the Celestial Suite atop the Astroworld Hotel in Houston.



1. The Mini-Dome



2. The Tarzan Room

Judge Roy Hofheinz, father of indoor baseball, has given mankind yet another extravagant setting for its traditional sports. The thirteen-room Celestial Suite, created under the direction of Hollywood stage-designer Harper Goff, offers guests the opportunity to indulge in an astonishing array of fantasies. Focal point of the suite is the Mini-Dome parlor and bar areas, modeled after the Astrodome and featuring genuine Astro-turf carpeting, a diagram of a baseball field, and an orgastic scoreboard. (In the Astrodome, Sr., one must hit a home run or score more than his rivals to set off the climactic display.) From the lounge areas extending past the Mini-Dome, one can survey the entire Astrodomain—the Astrodome, Astrohall, Astroworld, and the only privately owned bridge over an interstate

highway in the entire United States. At the opposite end of the suite, through the Foyer of the Fountains, down the Lane of Lanterns lined with sculptured plastic trees standing like somber sentries on their Astro-turf plots, and opening off the Acapulco Patio, is the Adventurer's Suite, containing the Fu Manchu Room, the Mandarin Bath, and the Tarzan Room, pictured above. The dominant treesy decor is complemented by rugs and wall panels of animal skins, mostly in leopard and zebra. The latter can be seen in the conventional black and white and the somewhat rarer orange and gold. The man is Gerald Jacobs, whose duties as director of sales for Astrodomain include persuading corporations and other organizations to use the penthouse for promotional purposes and parties.



3. The Marble Library

Stained-glass windows and plush velvet chairs set the tone for the opulent Marble Library, a center for quiet conversation and philosophical reflection. Guests who may prefer to read are advised to bring their own books, as the library shelves have been stocked with selections chosen more for their decorative than their literary quality. In the fiction section, one can find *The Case of the Blonde*

Bonanza, *Homicide Blonde*, *Dead as a Dinosaur*, *Doctors Also Die*, and 200 copies of *Reader's Digest Condensed Books*, ideal for short-term residents. Reference works include ten copies of Vol 2 (arti to camp) of *New Illustrated Medical and Health Encyclopedia*, eleven copies of Vol. 4 of the *Made Simple Self Teaching Encyclopedia*, a complete set of *Britannica Junior*, and *The Sucker Rod Handbook*.



4. The Crusader Room and Roman Bath

In addition to suits of armor, ashtrays fashioned from swords, liqueur glasses tucked in a visored helmet, and a television set sequestered under the velvet canopy of a knight-sized bed, the Crusader Room opens onto the Roman Bath, a world of delights for the compleat bather. After a spin in the small whirlpool, guests can wash themselves lazily in the sinuous larger tub, which will hold a

hundred gallons of water and only slightly fewer bathers. For those who prefer it, the shower room at the end will accommodate six persons comfortably, although only three can sit at the same time. Vice-President Spiro Agnew once stayed in the Crusader Room and was so impressed by it that, according to Mr. Jacobs, he remained in the room four hours past his scheduled check-out time.



5. The Bandwagon Room

The headboard and base of the Bandwagon Bed simulate a circus wagon of days gone by. The adjoining Calliope Bath features a gold toilet and, like its counterparts elsewhere in the suite, a conveniently located telephone for the hard-driving businessman, always on the go and with minimal needs for privacy. The Bandwagon and Big Top rooms comprise the P. T. Barnum Suite, a tribute to

the legendary showman and a reminder that Judge Hofheinz is Chairman of the Board of the Ringling Bros., Barnum and Bailey Circus. Treasured items of circus memorabilia in the suite include a tiny chaise longue that once belonged to General Tom Thumb, and a statue of General Thumb dressed as Napoleon, whom he loved to impersonate despite the fact that the latter was several inches taller.



6. The Lillian Russell Room

For the ladies of the evening of a lifetime, the suite offers several bedrooms that might have belonged to famous females of legend and literature. The loveliest, perhaps, is that honoring Lillian Russell. The brass bed and Acorn stove, like numerous other pieces of furniture and objets d'art in the suite, are from the judge's personal collection. In virtually all the rooms, the baths are as

fascinating as the bedrooms themselves. The Bouquet Bath, separated from Miss Russell's bedroom by a rakish swinging door, is no exception. Its circular marble tub and ruffled taffeta shower curtain, its antique mirror, and the tiny hand-painted blossoms that grace its antique toilet (inside and out), its lavatory, its tissue holder, and its dainty chamber pot must be seen to be believed.



7. The Sadie Thompson Room

Guests with a thwarted missionary desire will enjoy the South Pacific island atmosphere of the Sadie Thompson Room, constructed to simulate a bamboo-and-rush hut, albeit one adorned with a cut-velvet bedspread and two varieties of flocked wallpaper. The mosquito netting and sultry Houston haze make one grateful that rain and the ceiling fan are not the only sources of relief from the

heat in the Lunar Age. The walls of the room slope toward the roof at such an angle that the large hanging mirror affords guests an excellent view of themselves while in bed, a sentimental touch, perhaps intended as a silent tribute to Miss Thompson's profession. Should guests grow hungry, the Monterrey Kitchen, equipped for everything from snacks to gourmet meals, is but a few steps away.



8. The Lady Chatterley Room

The narrow Red Staircase leads to two upper rooms, the Lady Chatterley, pictured above, and the Penthouse Pad. Away from bars and hallways and equipped with darkroom and projection facilities, the upstairs areas are often used for meetings or display purposes by corporations that pick up the tab for most of the 150-200 days the suite is rented each year. But corporations and their customers are

not the only ones to enjoy the Celestial Astrowonder. It has served the great, the near great, and the merely wealthy as a setting for gala parties, a night's lodging, and, on at least one occasion, a family reunion. And who can say to what uses it may be put in the future? As Gerald Jacobs observes, "There is nothing like it anywhere in the world. No one has challenged me on that."

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