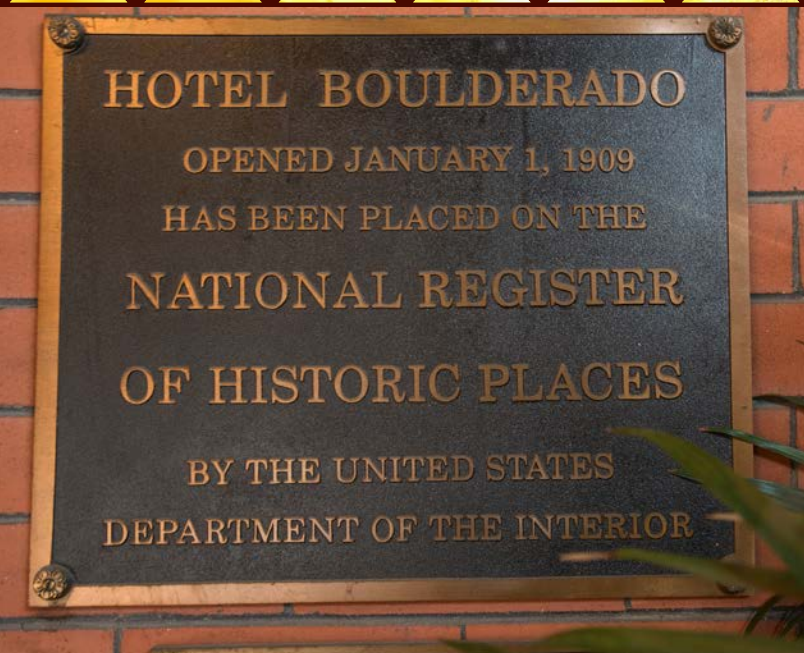
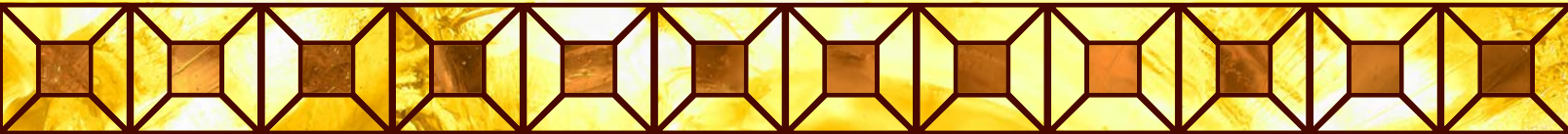
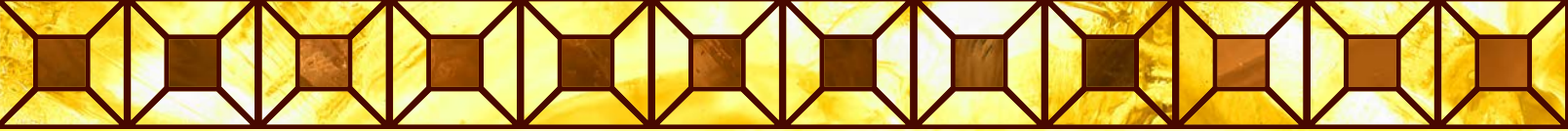




SO BOULDERADO

The landmark hotel in downtown Boulder has played a big role in the city's history for more than 110 years. That's just one reason to check it out this summer. **by STEPHANIE WILSON**





IN THE PAST DECADE, DENVER GREW BY A BOULDER.

SINCE 2010, THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO MOVED TO DENVER (ABOUT 103,000) IS ALMOST EQUAL TO THE POPULATION OF BOULDER (ABOUT 107,000), ACCORDING TO THE LATEST US CENSUS BUREAU ESTIMATES. THE RESULT: CRAZY TRAFFIC, SKYROCKETING RENTS, AND DEVELOPMENT ANGST GALORE ARE THE NORM IN THE MILE HIGH, PROMPTING THE CITY TO CREATE A SERIES OF PLANS TO GUIDE ITS DEVELOPMENT OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS.





Boulder, on the other hand, has been about strategic growth from the literal start. Since before Colorado was Colorado. In 1858, gold prospectors settled in what's now known as Settler's Park. A year later, a settler named A.A. Brookfield organized Boulder City Town Company, and Boulder City was born, with Brookfield as its first president. He and 60 shareholders divvied up 1,280 acres of land along the Boulder Creek, keeping 18 lots each and putting the remaining lots up for sale for \$1,000 a pop—a big ask in 1859. (Boulder real estate: unaffordable from day one.) The high-priced real estate kept growth slow, steady, and controllable.

Soon enough, Boulder was an incorporated town, home to the state university. There were dog control and tree planting initiatives in place, established high-end neighborhoods, a banking system, and additional development projects. Electricity came next, then the railroad, which brought a new level of sophistication to the town. The final piece of the puzzle arrived with Chautauqua, a beautiful retreat at the base of the stunning Flat Irons that served as a hub for culture, music, education, nature, family, and religion—and established Boulder as a destination for tourism.

By the turn of the 20th century, Boulder was a small and sophisticated city with a thriving educational institution, cultural attractions, insanely abundant natural beauty, and accessibility by train. The "Athens of the West," some people called it. With all this in place, it became clear: Boulder was ready for its next chapter.

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

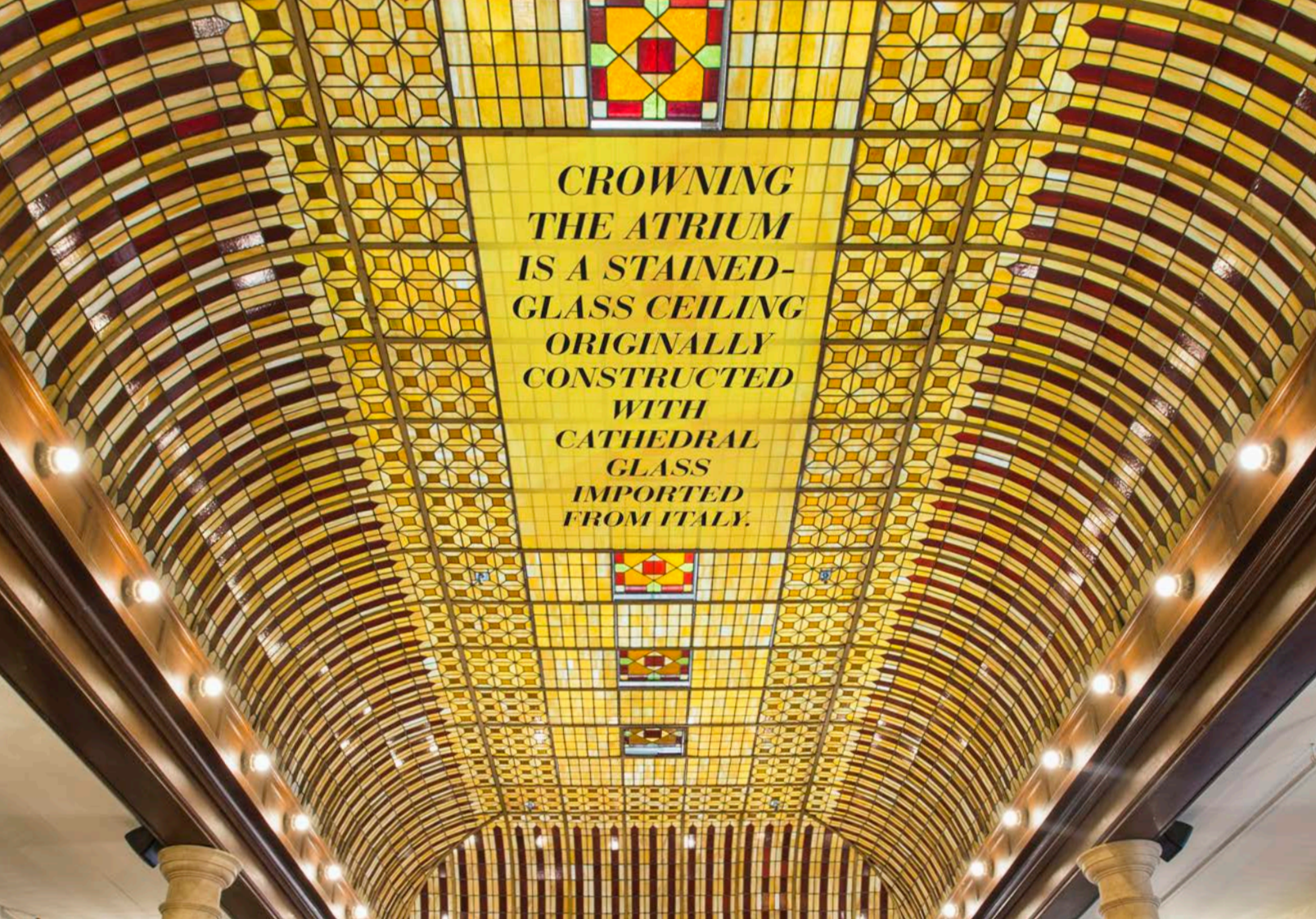
The city officials had realized that one thing was missing from Boulder's many draws: an upscale hotel catering to the discerning travelers the area attracted. So they made a plan, joined forces with some locals, and formed the Boulder Hotel Company to build something spectacular that would do the city justice.

The result: Hotel Boulderado. It's been doing the city justice since 1909.

If you've spent any time in downtown Boulder, you've seen the Boulderado. It's that striking five-story brick and sandstone landmark building where 13th Street meets Spruce, a few blocks off the Pearl Street Mall. If you've never stepped foot inside, that's gotta change. There are a bunch of reasons visiting the Boulderado should be on the to-do list this summer, no matter what drives you.

If history is your thing, then...well, you've probably already been there. It's on the National Register of Historic Places and is a City of Boulder Landmark. It's also stunningly designed and meticulously maintained. While an extensive renovation gave the property a facelift a few years ago, stepping into the lobby is meant to evoke feelings of entering a bygone era. It's "Boulder before athleisure and cold-pressed juices," according to the *Washington Post*. You can picture Louis Armstrong, Robert Frost, and Douglas Fairbanks Sr. strolling through the lobby. (That's because they did.)

In summer 2017, the property debuted an updated lobby and mezzanine, infusing contemporary decor and a



revamped layout to “encourage conversation,” according to Boulderado marketing manager Amber Winston.

Crowning the atrium is a striking stained-glass ceiling originally constructed with cathedral glass imported from Italy. The curved cherrywood staircase connecting the lower level to the fifth floor leads to a balcony overlooking the lobby floor’s 100-year-old mosaics. There are exhibits detailing the property’s history tucked throughout the building, and the self-guided tour of the third floor historic wing is award-winning.

Photos from throughout the last century give snapshots of moments in history. There’s a black-and-white photo of firemen in uniform. “The fire department loves us,” Winston explains. “We’ve always kept a great relationship with the firemen. And they’d dress up in their finest blues and do photo shoots in front of the hotel, because it’s such a beautiful building.”

Another of the hotel decorated with patriotic fanfare: “This is the 4th of July parade in the early 1900s–1913, around there,” she says. “One thing that I think is really cool is we still use similar decorations for the 4th of July, so the

hotel still looks like that, just with less horse and buggies.”

There are period furniture pieces, luggage from a time when travelers arrived by train, and framed displays of evolving fashions. It’s a mini history museum, as are the rooms in the historic wing—shrines to Victorian opulence, equipped with modern amenities. (In total, the Boulderado offers 160 rooms and suites in its historic and contemporary sections, featuring either Victorian or “Modern Mountain” decor.)

But the historic highlight is hands down the elevator.

Yes, the elevator. “The Otis elevator is a 1906 edition—one of five still working in the country,” shares Winston during my tour of the historic highlights this spring. “It’s one of five still working in the country. Otis technicians actually come out to train with us. We do regular maintenance on it, of course, but it does have to be manned. It’s our only working elevator in our historic section. When the hotel was being constructed, the elevator shaft was built first and the hotel was built around it.”

Ring the bell to summon it, and ask the attendant to take you to the underground speakeasy, License No. 1—so named because it still holds the first liquor license granted by Boul-



der when the city finally ended alcohol prohibition in 1967.

“This space was originally used as storage,” says Winston. “When our new/current owners bought the property, they decided it would be great space for a restaurant. They tried a few different concepts, and then it became Catacombs Night Club, a college bar where the floors were kinda sticky.”

It needed a rebrand. License No. 1 is a more upscale establishment, a decidedly better fit for the hotel upstairs. Patrons can also enter from a door on 13th Street.

The music: “A perfect fit of vintage with a modern twist.” The drinks: classic cocktails from the Prohibition era as well as modern favorites. There are two bars, multiple seating areas, and a dance floor, live music four nights a week, comedy once a month, and decor that’s right in line with the theme. Winston says some people assume that the hotel was slinging illegal cocktails down here in secret.

“We did not have a secret speakeasy down here during Prohibition,” she clarifies. “Prohibition lasted in Boulder for a very long time.”

Along with License No. 1, the hotel has three other options for food and bev: the Corner Bar (opt for the patio, order the spicy smoked wings, wash them down with a local ale), Boxcar Coffee Bar, and Spruce Farm & Fish, Boulderado’s signature restaurant.

It’s led by chef John Payne, who came up working under some of the finest James Beard honored chefs from San Francisco to Seattle. His approach lets the fresh, lo-

cal ingredients shine in dishes of nostalgic classics with modern twists. Think: deviled eggs with roasted tomato, Sriracha, and crispy pork belly, and peach glazed lamb ribs with bacon studded sweet potato salad. Pan-seared scallops with cauliflower couscous, apple bay syrup, and scallion oil. You get the picture.

And then you get dessert. Maybe two: the crème brûlée with fresh berries and the key lime pie are both to-die. Or just plan on coming back again. The restaurant hosts Wine Club tastings the second Wednesday of every month. Led by representatives from a winery, the event features four wines paired with appetizers and tasters from Chef Payne. If you attend a tasting, you’re automatically part of the Wine Club—and being a member comes with benefits: 20 percent off dinner the night of the tasting, 40 percent off all wines by the bottle (Sunday to Thursday only), 10 percent off wine by the glass, and 10 percent off dinner. The more tastings you attend, the bigger the perk. On your fourth one: free appetizer. On your eighth: free bottle of wine. Being rewarded for drinking wine with more wine: yes, please.

Speaking of wine and more wine, Boxcar Coffee Bar has a great happy hour, with Spruce’s full menu available at the bar. Or take your cocktail to the lobby, settle down in a chair in one of the seating areas beneath the stained glass ceiling, drink in the eclectic, ornate details all around while you languish the evening away in a timeless space.

That’s the route Winston suggests. “We worked hard to preserve our history, and it shows.” 