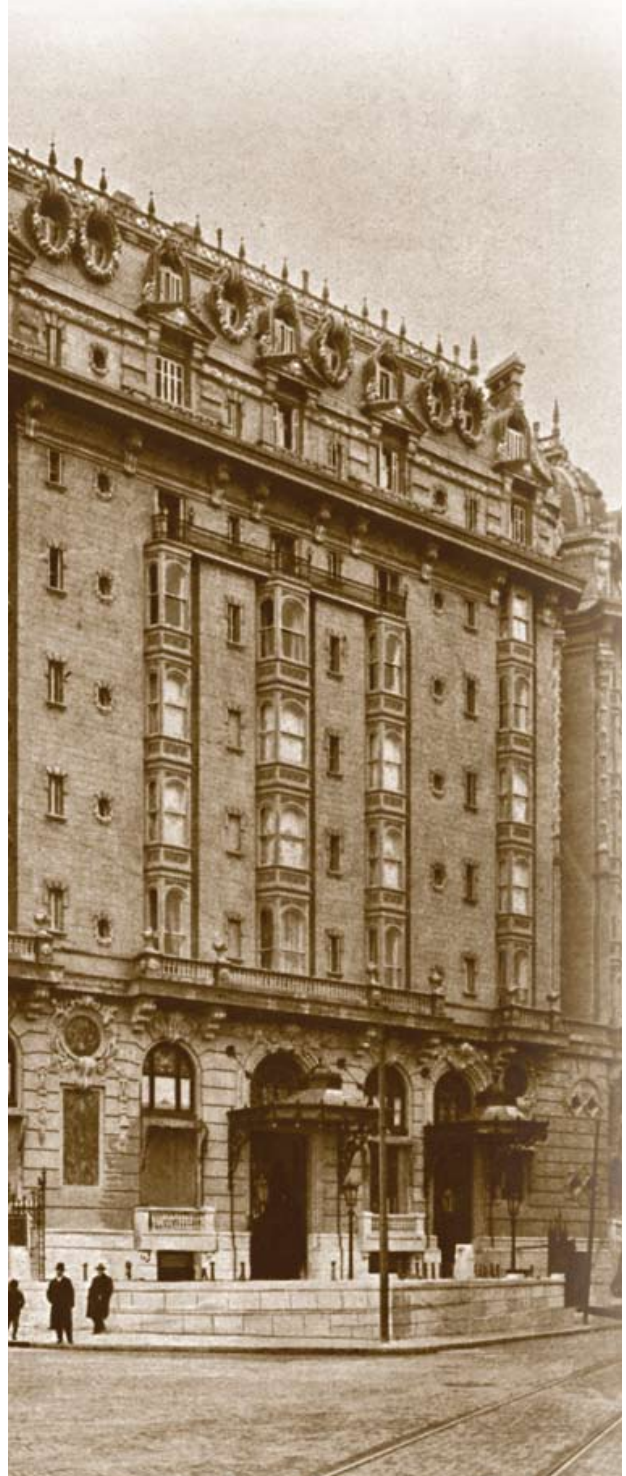


**MARRIOTT PLAZA HOTEL BUENOS AIRES
IS CELEBRATING ITS FIRST 100 YEARS...**





To tell the story of Plaza Hotel is to talk about the growth of Buenos Aires at the early 20th Century, when it became the most relevant city of South America. Please let us take you on a journey back in time...

The culminating moment of this Buenos Aires Belle Époque were the celebrations at the time of the Centennial Anniversary of the May Revolution. In 1910, 1,200,000 people inhabited the city of Buenos Aires (15,000 people were subscribed to the telephone service); 2,000 electrical trolleys were running and the construction of the first Latin-American subway was started (current Line A); 23 newspapers were published and there were approximately 90 cinema rooms. The only thing Buenos Aires was still missing was a hotel to welcome worldwide celebrities and please their demanding refined taste. It was at that time when **Ernesto Tornquist, the most important businessman in those days, decided to build the first urban hotel of the country**, designed at large-scale and with all the features of an international building, in accordance with the European tradition. It was **Alfred Zucker, a German architect with vast experience in the United States of America**, the author of the original project.

A CURIOUS ANECDOTE

Tornquist chose the premises located at the corner of Florida and Charcas Streets; where there was a cart lumber yard, located opposite his own mansion (currently Banco Patagonia) in order to best control the progress of the building. In addition, Tornquist imposed one condition: since his wife used to embroider in a room at their house's top floor, she asked her husband not to build a very high building opposite her window that would block its natural lightening. Therefore, the distribution of the two towers was altered (originally, they were planned to be parallel to Florida Street instead of perpendicular) and, at the corner, the construction fell behind the municipal line and was prepared for carriage access.

A RESOUNDING STARTUP

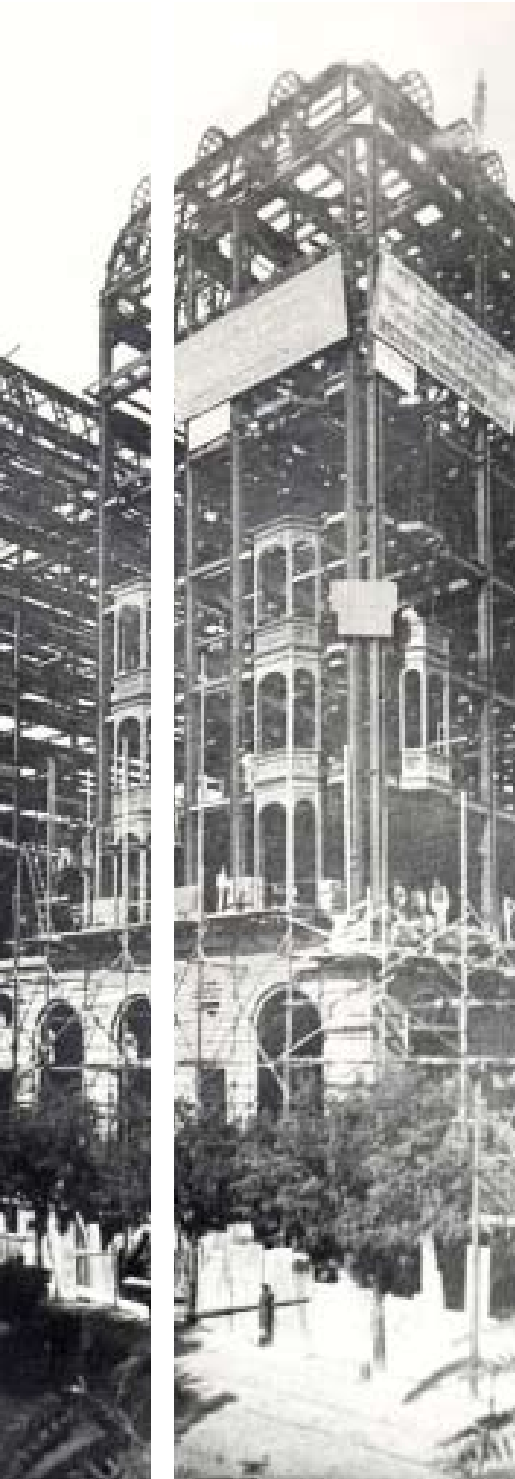
The Plaza hotel was inaugurated on **Friday 15 July 1909** in occasion of the visit to the hotel premises

of a committee led by the acting Argentine Vice President, José Figueroa Alcorta. In those days, the press continuously highlighted that the construction was finished within record time.

However, its founder could not see the final building, since he died three months before its completion (June 1908), at the age of 66. Ernesto's son, Carlos Alfredo, took the place of the host. During the early hours of the Saturday 16 afternoon he **"opened its doors and several ladies and gentleman were invited to visit the new house so as to warm it up, in accordance with the intimate and exact English expression"**. The audience was very large but still distinguished, always within the reduced group of peers. Free-charge shows were not held and, for such reason, it was the task of architects to make sure that large windows were built to keep them safe from indiscreet external looks: the rest of the world would stuck their heads inside the interiors only through photographs published in fashion magazines covering the events. On Monday 18, the hotel opened its doors to welcome its first guests and, on the same night, the dining room was inaugurated. The touch of color was set by the china: at first, the hotel was to be named "Phoenix" and only at the very last minute, it was decided that such name should be replaced by the New Yorker "Plaza". However, all the china had already been bought, so the china used during the inauguration day had "Phoenix Hotel" printed on.

The Plaza had gained everybody's approval and was consecrated as **a vital scenario to celebrate future major meetings**. This is so since hotel life or attendance to hotels was a natural step for all new bourgeoisies around the world.

Additionally, hotel management services included the following services at the time of its opening: pastry, bakery, icemaker, printing press, upholstery, cabinet making, repair shop, plate foil, tailor's shop, laundry (the most important in the country until the 80's) and dry-cleaning.





THE NEW STANDARD IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

The history of hotel management in Argentina is divided into "before and after the Plaza". Its modern conception and the technological advances it offered turned this building into an existing example even nowadays, at the point of its hundredth anniversary. The plant was U-shaped model, including two symmetric wings of rooms: the north and the south wings; both separated by dividing walls, allowing for every room and restroom to possess its own ventilation and lightning. All rooms had communicating doors, thus allowing for individual or suite hire. Each of them included an American built-in closet with an inside light that turned on automatically upon opening of its doors. What is more, the telephone installed inside each room served to communicate with any telephone subscriber within the city, the province and the city of Rosario, the second major city of the Republic. The main apartments had their own chimney, and there was a refrigerated pantry and kitchen on every floor, so guests could choose to have breakfast inside the room. Its vertical circulation was planned in the way of a wide central stairway made of white marble (demolished during the 1913/14 repair) and two Otis elevators with capacity for twenty people each (the third one was added by the time of the Football World Cup 78'). All necessary measures were adopted in order to make the building fire proof (abundant water supply, automatic pumps, floors built with both fireproof and insect-proof materials, three hydrants for fire prevention on each floor). Finally, it is worth mentioning that **its famous winery, which during upon the late years of the century contained around a million bottles** and the "escalator" communicating the two cellars (that is how they called the mechanical stairs in those days).

The fame of personalized services included the construction of a bed for the French President Charles de Gaulle during his stay (1964). That man, almost 7 feet tall, fitted none of the available beds. This piece of furniture was only used again when the actor Rock Hudson, same height, visited the hotel.

THE PLAZA FACILITIES

The simplicity of rooms contrasted with the majesty of the hotel's public areas: foyer,

Gran Comedor (that is at present the Fiestas Room), private dining rooms (where nowadays there is the Gran Hall) and ballroom (a part of HStern's shop at present). All of them had wide dimensions and included **the most exquisite luxurious and sumptuous details**, worth of a Prince Palace. Mr. Tornquist Jr. used to organize balls every week in order to promote the hotel. But from the time of its inauguration, the major Argentine families had chosen it as the appropriate place to hold their meetings. During the season, function rooms were a big scenario where night after night banquets, balls and receptions took place. Sunday afternoons were dedicated to *tés dansants* and bridge games. At the top of the building there was the roof garden, with its separate kitchen during the summer, for those looking for a panoramic view or who desired to breathe "the best air of the city".

Employees used to go to the roof garden and await the time when passengers descended from ships. That meant that in twenty minutes the first guests would appear at the hotel lobby.

So much success brought the expansion of the Plaza that in the forties, two new towers were built with rooms and halls. This was not the first reform performed in the hotel: in 1913, only four years after its inauguration, changes in the entrance and lobby areas had already been made to look like luxury European premises.

THE PLAZA GRILL

The Plaza Grill is one of the few hotel areas where the structure is standing since its inauguration in 1909. At the time the hotel was opened, the Grill was not the main dining room but a place for those who wanted to lunch or dine "with no dress code etiquette", which explains its comfortable and sober atmosphere, supported by wooden panels brought from Europe to cover its walls. Of course, it has "touches", truly distinctive and neatly arranged, details that had to be "conversation pieces", or in other words, pieces giving way to comments and stimulating sociability. The Grill was also the first city restaurant that offered "air conditioning". At that time, the system consisted in airing hidden ice bars surrounding the dining room.

The Grill's cuisine has always met the preferences and tastes of the high society of the city of Buenos



Aires: Criolla and French. For many years, the Plaza was a subsidiary of Maxim's in Paris, and every week the Chef of Maxim's sent recipes that were cooked by the hotel Chef. The Plaza cuisine served as a sort of university to train the best chefs of the country. The menus were always written in French. A very famous dish offered at the Grill is the **Po Parisky Eggs**, as of the forties (apparently, one of the three unique original dishes of the Argentine gastronomy). These days, from Monday to Friday, we still serve the **Belle Époque Menu**: Po Parisky Eggs, Sirloin King Edward VII, Crab Sarah Bernhardt, Sweetbreads Demidoff and Pressed Duck, the Plaza Grill most ordered dish by regulars along a century. The originality of its preparation consists in cooking the dish in front of the customer as in the old days. First, a Foie Grass sauce, duck stock, fine herbs and black pepper. Then, the duck meat is pressed using a silver press, unique in the country. The cooking in front of the customers takes approximately 15 minutes.

THE PLAZA BAR

The only place that can rival in fame with the Grill is its close neighbor: the Plaza Bar. For many years, it was visited by men only, who usually had a drink before lunch or dinner. Sooner or later, this custom **became the one of anybody who is "somebody" in this city**. For many years, Manuel "Manolo" Cerqueiro, a recognized barman, prepared his best drinks for the celebrities who visited the Plaza Bar: Henry Ford, Edward Kennedy, the count Maroni Cinzano and our Juan Manuel Fangio, among others. The Plaza Bar ended up offering **forty-five brands of Scotch and ten of Bourbon**. Two years ago, the Forbes® magazine chose the Plaza Bar as one of the nine best hotel bars in the World.

RENOWNED GUESTS

This classy, elegant and distinctive hotel, on the verge of its 100th anniversary celebration, is a milestone in Buenos Aires, recognized by its service excellence, its elegance and all the comforts required by the modern traveler. The Marriott Plaza has always been the favorite place of the European aristocracy, foreign presidents, ambassadors, recognized artists, musicians, movie stars, businessmen and the international jet set. Among other distinguished guests who have visited our hotel, we may

mention Joan Crawford, Ginger Rogers, Maria Felix, Catherine Deneuve or Sophia Loren.

The suite *Fundador* is surrounded by so much history that you do not know where to begin with. More or less fussy kings, princes and presidents such as Juan Carlos and Sofia from Spain; Balduino and Fabiola from Belgium; the Aga Khan, emperors of Japan; English princesses and Dutch princes; Theodore Roosevelt from the United States have lived within its 521 m². Nowadays, nobody would have thought of painting a whole room or fully redecorate it in view of the visit of a celebrity, but in 1965 when the Sha of Persia and his third wife Farah Diva visited the Plaza Hotel (April 1965), the decorator painted the walls in Nile green, had Italian panels painted in tempera and the entire Tornquist family provided luxury garments: paintings, lamps, and even antique linen sheets of a hundred years. All these aimed at helping the majesties feel as if they were in their own palace in the City of the Roses (Teheran). **The legend says that at the luxurious honor banquet offered, each guest received a pearl in their oyster dish, as a souvenir.** Fancies of other travelers were far more modest: the former Premier of India, Indira Ghandi, slept with the curtains open because she enjoyed waking up to sunlight.

When the first astronauts to land on the moon stayed at the hotel, so many people gathered at the entrance doors that, on the day of their departure, they had to leave through the back door.

As a "divo" and before acting as the Master of Ceremony during the re opening of the Grill (1987), Luciano Pavaroti asked to have a kitchen installed in his Diplomatic Suite in order to prepare his dishes *a piacere*. He also asked to have the frame of his bed replaced by a wooden plate and a hard mattress. He requested a grand piano in the living room and as he learned that Maria Callas and Arturo Toscanini had once dined at the dining table of his Suite, he fell in love with the table and bought it. He also liked the English Style Bar and bought two other pieces of furniture made by famous Argentine finish cabinetmakers at the request of the company Nordiska. The hotel gave him a third piece of furniture as a gift. Everything was packed and shipped to Italy.



MARRIOTT PLAZA HOTEL BUENOS AIRES

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We cannot forget to mention the tenor Enrico Caruso who during the rehearsal of the *allegro vivace* in his room shattered the restroom cabinet mirror; or the *maestro* Arturo Toscanini, who in 1936 played *la murra* (an Italian hand game) over one hour with Luis, one of the hotel waiters. The brilliant Louis Armstrong, on a tour around Argentina and Chile (1957), could not find a better way to thank the serenade offered by a group of fans from the sidewalk but by opening the window and joining them with his trumpet.

THE MARRIOTT PLAZA HOTEL BUENOS AIRES

Since 1994, the Plaza Hotel is managed by the Marriott International chain. Today with 318 fully-equipped rooms, the comforts for these days' travelers, its 9 function rooms –flexible and fully-equipped for different events– of over 1,250 m² with a capacity to hold 1,500 people; the Marriott Plaza Hotel Buenos Aires is today **a truly significant icon in the history of the city of Buenos Aires.**

For further information please visit
www.marriott.com/buear