

50 Years of The Beverly Hilton Milestones

- **July 31, 1953 – A Hotel is Born** – After scouting the ideal plot of land in 1943, ten years later hotel mogul Conrad Hilton officially hires architect Welton Beckett to design and contracts Del E. Webb to build his flagship hotel on the West Coast: The Beverly Hilton.
- **August 28, 1953 – Ground Breaking Ceremony** – Construction begins on the nearly 9-acre property as Conrad Hilton and film star Terry Moore turn over the first shovelful of earth.
- **August 1954 – Time Capsule Buried** – Within the first year, the hotel progresses to the seventh story. To celebrate a stainless steel-lined time capsule is lowered into a concrete vault beneath the lobby.
- **November 9, 1954 – Topping Out Party** – Right on schedule, The Beverly Hilton reaches its top floor. The celebration, which according to industry tradition signifies the hotel will soon be in the final phases of construction, is held on the eighth and highest floor.
- **August 10, 1955, 11:00 a.m. – Flag Raising Ceremony** – A week of festivities begins to celebrate the hotel's completion with a flag raising ceremony after which Conrad Hilton presents a golden key to the new general manager Arthur E. Elmiger.
- **August 12, 1955, 5 p.m. – Official Opening** – More than 60 members of the press, hundreds of Hollywood stars, as well as numerous socialites, dignitaries and politicians arrive to celebrate the hotel's completion as the doors open to the public for the first time. (photo)
- **May 4, 1959 – First-Ever Grammy Awards** – Jazz vocalist Ella Fitzgerald is awarded Best Female Vocalist in the pop category at the first-ever Grammy Awards, which took place in The Beverly Hilton's Grand Ballroom.
- **July 10, 1960 – Democratic National Convention Closing Ceremonies** – Presidential nominee John F. Kennedy holds a gala fundraiser at The Beverly Hilton where his pal Frank Sinatra rounds up a host of celebrities including Milton Berle, Janet Leigh, Tony Curtis, Judy Garland, Mort Sahl and the entire 'Jack Pack' to mingle with the crowd of 2,800 supporters – by the time Judy Garland began her second number, the crowd had filled two separate ballrooms to capacity.
- **March 16, 1961 – Golden Globe Awards** – Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* takes home the award for Best Picture at the first Golden Globe Awards in the International Ballroom (in 1971, the Golden Globe Awards return to The Beverly Hilton and remain there today).
- **March 3, 1973 – First-Ever AFI Lifetime Achievement Awards** – In a unanimous vote, the AFI committee headed by Chairman Charlton Heston, votes to honor the works of famed Hollywood director and producer, John Ford (director of more than 100 films including *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*). The event (which became an annual occurrence at The Beverly Hilton until 2001) is hosted by Danny Kaye and attended by special guest President Richard Nixon.
- **March 29, 1978 – The Academy Awards** – The 50th Annual Academy Awards presents the Scientific and Technical Awards for the first time in the Versailles Room.

- **November 16, 1987 – Merv Griffin Purchases Hotel** – Entertainer Merv Griffin buys The Beverly Hilton from a partnership of Hilton Hotels Corporation and Prudential Insurance Company. When Griffin originally bid on the property in mid-October, he lost the deal to foreign investors; however, the deal fell through allowing Griffin to officially purchase the hotel in November.
- **October 17, 1988 – A Royal Tribute to Cary Grant** – The Grant family chooses The Beverly Hilton – one of the late actor’s favorite hangouts – to host a one-time-only tribute to Cary Grant. The evening netted over \$1 million for the Princess Grace Foundation. The wealthiest of Hollywood insiders, Monaco royalty and dozens of legendary entertainers (including Frank Sinatra, Liza Minelli and Burt Lancaster) come out to celebrate their personal connections to both Cary Grant and Princess Grace (a.k.a. screen legend Grace Kelly).
- **November 9, 1989 – Lifetime Achievement in the Arts Awards** – As one of the city’s true cultural gathering locations, The Beverly Hilton is the home of the first-ever Los Angeles Honors for Lifetime Achievements in the Arts Awards. Honorees include local arts luminaries Eli Broad, Gordon Davidson, Ernest Fleischmann, Bella Lewitzky and Robert Wise.
- **October 26, 1990 – Carousel of Hope Ball Raises \$2.5 Million** – A bi-annual event at The Beverly Hilton, the Carousel of Hope Ball (which still continues today) makes history by raising an astounding \$2.5 million in one evening. Stars are out in full force as emcee Merv Griffin is joined by honorary chairmen, and former presidents, Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford.
- **January 27, 1996 – Announcement of Yitzhak Rabin Wall of Peace** – A host to both domestic and international politics, The Beverly Hilton is the home of the first-ever Rabin Award. Presented to Leah Rabin, widow of the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for whom the award is named, she uses the occasion to announce the establishment of the Yitzhak Rabin Wall of Peace in Tel Aviv.
- **October 3, 1999 – Clinton Honored By Access Now** – In an event that raises nearly \$1 million for the Democratic Congressional Campaign, President Bill Clinton was honored at the Access Now for Gay and Lesbian Equality dinner. Held in the International Ballroom, the dinner celebrates the tenure of the first major-party President to court gay support openly.
- **December 19, 2003 – Beny Alagem Purchases Hotel** – Entrepreneur and co-founder of Pacific Bell Electronics Beny Alagem’s new company Oasis West Realty purchases The Beverly Hilton.
- **April 5, 2004 – Reinvention Begins** – Beny Alagem and Oasis West Realty, LLC begin the more than \$80 million reinvention of the legendary property.
- **May 12, 2004 – Nancy Reagan Supports Stem Cell Research** – After years of unwavering support for the Republican Party, Former First Lady Nancy Reagan speaks out against the Party for the first time in support of stem cell research while being honored by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation in the hotel’s International Ballroom.
- **July 11, 2005 – Television Critics Association (TCA) Press Tour** – The Beverly Hilton becomes the heart of the 2005 TCA Press Tour playing host to television critics from around the country, network executives and prime-time actors in all areas of the hotel for three weeks. Due to the success of this year’s summer press tour, The Beverly Hilton will continue to play host to this entertainment industry staple through at least 2008.

- **July 27, 2005 – Governor Schwarzenegger Celebrates His Birthday** – At an intimate affair with 60 guests held in the hotel's Stardust Lounge, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and First Lady Maria Shriver celebrate the governor's 58th birthday with a California-shaped cake specially designed by The Beverly Hilton's executive pastry chef.
- **August 12, 2005 – The Beverly Hilton is 50** – Local dignitaries, team members and executives from Hilton Hotels Corporation gather to reveal a commemorative 50th anniversary logo and to recreate the 1955 flag raising ceremony. On-hand to share his memories of the Grand Opening is Gregory Dillon, Vice Chairman and Director Emeritus for Hilton Hotels who was an advisor to Conrad Hilton when the hotel was developed.
- **September 5, 2005 – Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon** – Celebrating its 40th consecutive year, the Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon moves from its previous home at CBS Television City to The Beverly Hilton's International Ballroom. The telethon, which is featured on 190 television stations throughout the country, adds a new event to the Ballroom's history as a philanthropic hub.
- **Spring 2006 – Celebrating 50 Years of The Beverly Hilton** – Who knows exactly what the future will bring ... but it will be a milestone in the hotel's ever-growing history as an important cultural gathering place in the heart of Southern California. The legendary hotel celebrates the completion of its final phase of reinvention and introduces the world to The "New" Beverly Hilton.