

CALENDAR

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Hilton Archive / Getty Images

THE BEVERLY HILTON opened in 1955 and has been buzzing ever since. “We are the place to go for the entertainment business,” says manager Michael Robertson.

CELEB CENTRAL

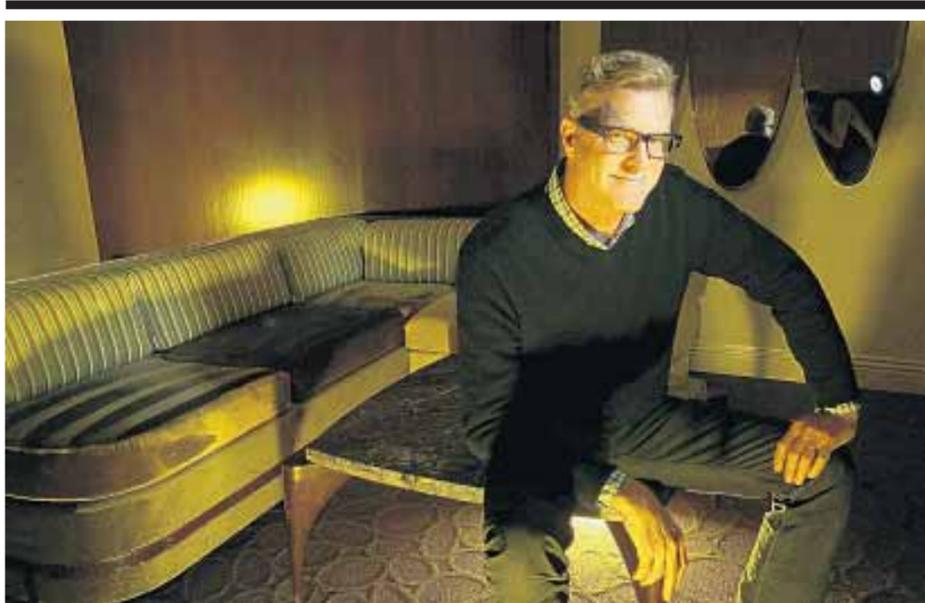
Welcome to the Beverly Hilton, the hardest-working hotel in show biz, where awards festivities are the norm

BY JEN YAMATO >>> Moments after “Moonlight” won the film drama prize at this year’s Golden Globes, guests rushed out of the Beverly Hilton’s International Ballroom and toward lavish studio after-parties. ¶ Not to the valet, however; instead, it was to wait in long star-studded lines for the elevators. ¶ Most of the post-Globes parties are held a few well-heeled steps from where the boozy awards action happens. The Globes may be a televised dinner party for 1,300 Hollywood elites, but it’s also a multimillion-dollar event that keeps local businesses, contractors and suppliers employed each year, including the 850 employees of the Beverly Hilton on hand to pour 900 bottles of Champagne, serve 11,000 meals and facilitate the night’s festivities. ¶ Indeed, as revelers bounced among competing shindigs on the property grounds, staff were breaking down the ballroom to ready it for business as usual. ¶ In the next few weeks alone, the hotel will host the 2017 Academy Award nominees at the official Oscar luncheon as well as the Directors Guild Awards, the Producers Guild Awards and Clive Davis’ annual pre-Grammys gala. More than 150 red carpet events are held here each year; come summer, the small screen [See **Hilton**, E5]



Keystone / Getty Images

MARILYN MONROE receives an award from Rock Hudson at the Globes at the hotel in 1962.



‘THE FOUNDER’S’ DRIVE
JOHN LEE HANCOCK’S TALE OF MIDDLE AMERICA
MOVIES, E6

GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

Unorthodox methods amid the orthodox

A director figures out how to shoot a scripted movie in the insulated world of New York’s Hasidim.

BY STEVEN ZEITCHIK

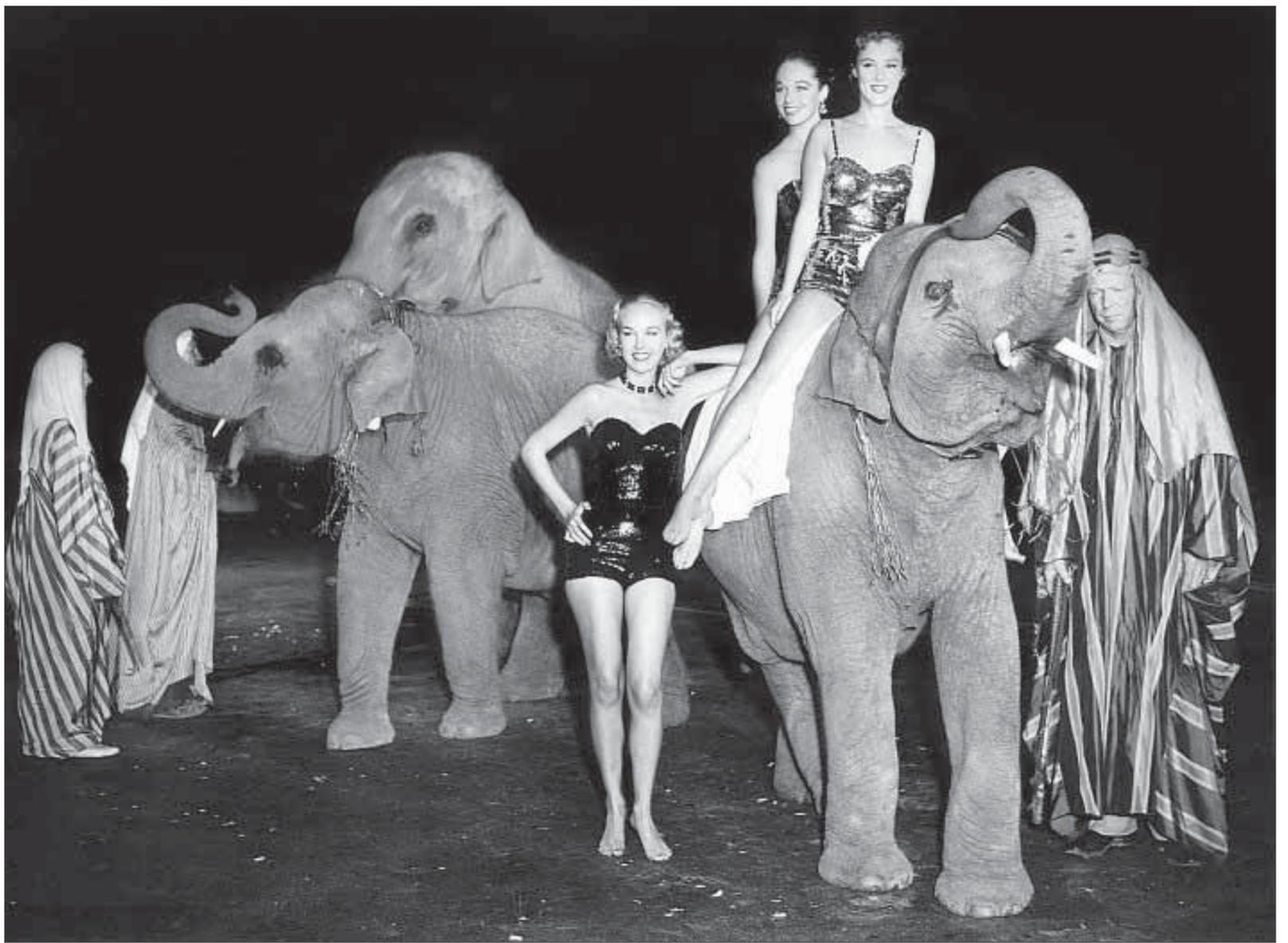
NEW YORK - The secular filmmaker Joshua Weinstein stood on a helter-skelter corner in this ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighborhood next to shops selling conservative fashions and Internet-disabled smartphones and pondered his recent guerrilla shoot.

“The strangest casting moment, let me think about that,” the director said, tilting back his head. “It might be all the times I sat through an hour of evening prayers because I happened to be talking to a potential actor and they needed a 10th man for a *minyán* [a prayer quorum]. Or maybe it was when I accompanied the rabbi to

the *mikveh* [Jewish ritual bath].” He paused thoughtfully. “It’s hard enough to cast your independent film when you’re not submerged without clothes in steamy waters.”

Weinstein experienced a series of colorful moments to craft the low-key authenticity of “Menashe,” his heartfelt gem of a scripted drama that will premiere Monday at the Sundance Film Festival in the upstart Next section. At a time when television series such as “Breaking Amish” aim to shed light on cloistered religious communities, “Menashe” harbors similar goals in a fresh context: It seeks to get behind the veil of New York’s Hasidim, people generally depicted in pop culture as enigmatic props, when they’re even seen at all.

To make the all-Yiddish-language film, the director used the kind of shoe-leather techniques and subcultural curiosity that has given Sun- [See **Sundance**, E7]



The Beverly Hilton

ELEPHANTS steal the show at the Beverly Hilton's opening in 1955. The hotel has seen many star-studded extravaganzas since, from galas to the Golden Globes.

Red carpets and razzle-dazzle

[Hilton, from E1]

rules when the two-week Television Critics Assn. press tour fills the Beverly Hilton with network stars and critics previewing the fall season.

Even after 62 years, there's no rest for the hardest-working hotel in Hollywood.

"We are the place to go for the entertainment business," hotel manager Michael Robertson said with a smile. It was just two days before the 74th Golden Globes, and he looked startlingly relaxed. The tightly secured complex, on the other hand, bustled with production crews building red carpet and party set-ups, a crackle of electricity in the air. "I think of the Beverly Hilton as the epicenter of Los Angeles. Our history is important. This is the iconic place to have your awards show."

The Beverly Hilton has long held a unique position among the region's upscale hotels. Conrad Hilton opened the Welton Becket-designed property in 1955 during a Beverly Hills development boom fueled by the motion picture industry, attracting the stars of Hollywood and Washington alike. At the hotel's official opening, luminaries were greeted with fireworks, elephants and Champagne fountains. Then-Vice President Richard Nixon raised the American flag at a buzzy opening ceremony and later returned in 1962 to give his famous "last" news conference, eventually reneging on that promise after he was elected president six years later.

A design conducive to discretion may have also helped the Beverly Hilton become a hot spot for President John F. Kennedy, who, hotel insiders like to confide, used to sneak in Marilyn Monroe through employee hallways, away from prying eyes.

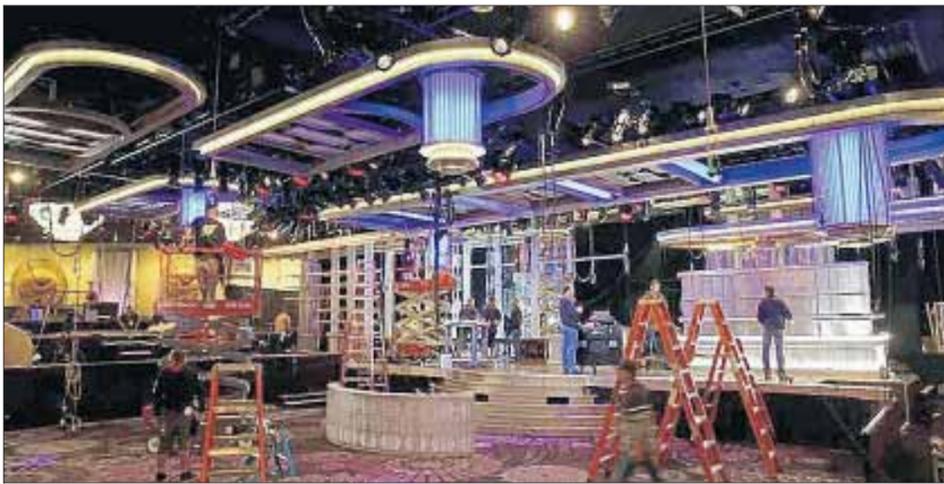
The place has had no shortage of scandal since: Sen. John Edwards' extramarital affair, exposed by tabloid reporters the night of the annual TCA Awards, Hollywood madam Heidi Fleiss' "business" dealings, Whitney Houston's 2012 death in a luxury suite bathtub the weekend of Davis' Grammys party.

The biz of show biz

But a constant in the hotel's clientele has always been the business of show business, even long before "Jeopardy!" and "Wheel of Fortune" mogul Merv Griffin bought it for more than \$100 million in 1987. (Current owner Beny Alagem snagged it from Griffin in 2003 and is constructing a Waldorf Astoria sister hotel on adjacent grounds, to open in late April.)

During his tenure, Griffin lined his office at the Beverly Hilton with his Emmy statues and lunched poolside with Hollywood friends. He kept a special place in his heart for black-tie soirees at the hotel, which "was the scene of one of the greatest nights of my life," he wrote in his 2003 memoir, recalling a bash thrown in his honor that saw the International Ballroom transformed into the old Cocomanut Grove nightclub.

There's plenty of competition angling to host the industry's most exclusive — and lucrative —



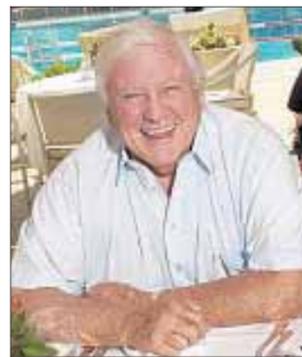
ART STREIBER

THE HOTEL'S International Ballroom is set up for 74th Golden Globe Awards this month.



KIRK MCKOY Los Angeles Times

"I THINK of the Beverly Hilton as the epicenter of Los Angeles. Our history is important," says the hotel's Michael Robertson.



LUCY NICHOLSON Associated Press

MERV GRIFFIN holds court in 2003, when he owned hotel.



KIRK MCKOY Los Angeles Times

FABULOUSLY GOWNED STARS line the red carpet for the 70th Golden Globes in 2013.

events. The Four Seasons on Doheny, an institution so fluidly ingrained into the celebrity machine that it has a downright paparazzi relationship with the paparazzi who lurk outside the valet stand, waiting for celebrities, holds a monopoly on studio press junkets on any given weekend in Beverly Hills. The dauntingly exclusive Chateau Marmont and its private bungalows, where the rich and famous party in hillside seclusion just off of

the Sunset Strip, siphons precious famous faces from the Beverly Hilton even on Globes night, away from the official after-parties.

It's part legacy, part geography that keeps Hollywood coming back to the Beverly Hilton to throw its most important events outside of the Academy Awards. Celebrity guests make use of the lavish private suites upstairs to primp and pre-party before big bashes. Three ballrooms and a wing of meeting

rooms equipped with state-of-the-art technology offer more than 60,000 square feet of interconnected event space on the ground floor, all of which is needed for sprawling events like the TV tour.

Still, the hotel's prized gala remains the Golden Globe Awards, and the feeling appears to be mutual: The Hollywood Foreign Press Assn. has re-upped every year for 42 years through several ownership changes, hotel facelifts and ex-

panding production demands.

Last year, Robertson clocked 19 miles on his pedometer as he monitored the carefully controlled chaos of Golden Globe night.

This year, it took a full week of production to put on the evening's festivities for 4,300 guests, who were hydrated Sunday night by Moët & Chandon bubbly and served a multi-course dinner for which new executive chef Alberico Nunziata flew in 400 pounds of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese from Italy.

And unlike the cavernous but boxy ballrooms in competing hotels, the Beverly Hilton's International Ballroom is artfully designed to facilitate awards show class division: A central pit for the beautiful and famous, the better to catch every tipsy tipple and shade-throwing glance for the TV audience watching at home, bounded by three tiers of table seating for everyone else, all the way to the back of the room, where journalists and plebes in borrowed tuxes have to crane their necks to watch Cecil B. DeMille Award recipient Meryl Streep anger Trump's America.

'A very hot ticket'

"First of all, it's the room," said Meher Tatna, vice president of the HFFPA and a member of the organization since 2002. "We haven't been able to find a similar room anywhere else. It's also the intimate atmosphere and the fact that because it's limited seating, it's a very hot ticket. It just works to make it the party of the year."

Thirty thousand feet of red carpet winds from the arrivals scum to the ballroom, outfitted with top-of-the-line screens projecting the stage all the way to a smoking patio overlooking the hotel pool. The geography is unrivaled at any other local venue. Walkable after-parties mean the Globes ecosystem keeps its glamorous guests on the premises longer, which means that more photos of partying stars will circulate through the media for days, weeks, months and beyond.

At an "intimate" scale of 1,300 guests, the hot Golden Globes ticket is relatively exclusive compared to the Oscars, where the film academy packs more than twice as many attendees into the 3,400-capacity Dolby Theatre. But there's no temptation to turn the Globe party into more of an Oscar event, said Tatna. "It's a dinner party, it has to be relatively small. We have no plans to expand it."

And yet, she admits, HFFPA organizers are not wedded to the venue that's been synonymous with the Golden Globes for more than a half-century. Soon, they'll hold their Globes postmortem, prepping for their 2018 show and dissecting major snafus like last year's Shuttlegate, when new security protocols left party-bound stars and studio execs stranded for hours in an unglamorous parking garage.

"We talk about it all the time, and once in a while we go and look at other hotels," Tatna says. "But we always come back to the Hilton."

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