



Louisville, home of the Kentucky Derby and the famous Louisville Slugger baseball bat, is also home to The Seelbach Hilton -- a lavish, turn-of-the-century hotel that has seen its share of celebrities and historic events. This beautiful, Beaux-Arts Baroque hotel began as the dream of two Bavarian brothers, Otto and Louis Seelbach, back in 1869 when 17-year-old Louis came to Louisville to learn the hotel business.

ROOMS THAT TELL A TALE

Today, you can see turn-of-the-century architecture throughout the hotel. The Rookwood-Pottery Rathskeller, a tribute to the brothers' Bavarian heritage, is a true work of art. Visit the stately Grand Ballroom, which inspired F. Scott Fitzgerald to use The Seelbach as the backdrop for Tom and Daisy's wedding in "The Great Gatsby." Or, dine at The Oakroom, a gentlemen's billiards hall Al Capone once frequented, now a five-diamond restaurant.

Walk where celebrities and legends once walked at The Seelbach Hilton, a grand hotel that has attracted the rich and famous for almost 100 years. F. Scott Fitzgerald was one of the hotel's most significant visitors, as he references the hotel in his book "The Great Gatsby." The Seelbach Hilton's storied past is filled with tales of 1920s gangsters, U.S. presidents and even ... a ghost!



The Rathskeller, built in 1907, was one of Al Capone's favorite places to do business.

1920S GANGSTERS

In the 1920s, Prohibition contributed to the wealth of underworld kingpins who were drawn to the most glamorous spots for cards and leisure. The Seelbach, as the grandest hotel in Louisville and the center of Kentucky's bourbon and whiskey country, attracted some of the most famous gangsters. Notorious figures included Lucky Luciano and Dutch Schultz -- known as the "Beer Baron of the Bronx."

THE KING OF THE BOOTLEGGERS

George Remus, a Cincinnati mobster, referred to as "King of the Bootleggers," got rich running whiskey northward during Prohibition. As a local gangster, he would spend time at The Seelbach, for business and pleasure. Writer F. Scott Fitzgerald, who also visited The Seelbach for bourbon and cigars, was taken with

the charismatic Remus. In fact, Remus became the inspiration for the title character Jay Gatsby in "The Great Gatsby."

AL CAPONE'S SECRET PASSAGEWAYS

Al Capone, probably the most legendary gangster of the 1920s, used to visit The Seelbach frequently for blackjack, poker and bootlegging. Today, you can dine in a small alcove in The Oakroom where Capone would play cards. The famous gangster even sent a large mirror from Chicago, still in the room today, so that he could watch his back! Capone's favorite room also has two hidden doors behind special panels, leading to secret passageways. If the police came on a raid, Capone could slip out the concealed passageways -- one way led down to Fourth Street -- another led to tunnels under the hotel. The room even had spring-loaded doors that would be quickly shut using a pedal by an outside guard, warning Capone of a raid. In the basement, the Bavarian-style Rathskeller was also one of Capone's favorite places to do business. During Prohibition, the Rathskeller bar was still open to its elite patrons.

A GHOST STORY: THE LADY IN BLUE



The enchanting aura of The Seelbach has made it a romantic choice for wedding events over the course of almost 100 years. Back in 1936, Patricia Wilson fell to her death in a service elevator. People say she was despondent over the tragic death of her husband. They had been separated for about a year. In 1987 Patricia was seen by two employees. The first saw her on the Mezzanine Level. The other employee saw her on the eighth floor. Both descriptions were the same—long blue dress and long dark hair. Other stories have been told about sightings since then.

ACTORS, ENTERTAINERS & SPORTS LEGENDS

Today, The Seelbach Hilton's majestic grace and Southern hospitality make it a favorite getaway for celebrities. Performers and other famous figures come for turn-of-the-century ambiance and to dine at the AAA Five Diamond restaurant, The Oakroom.

A GLIMPSE INSIDE IN "THE INSIDER"

You can even see The Seelbach Hilton featured on the big screen. Both Russell Crowe and Al Pacino visited The Seelbach Hilton during the filming of the movie, "The Insider." In the film, you can see glimpses of the hotel's elegant interior.

"THE HUSTLER" AT THE OAKROOM

The Hollywood classic "The Hustler," starring Paul Newman and Jackie Gleason, includes scenes shot in The Seelbach's former gentlemen's billiards hall. In 1996, the billiards hall was transformed into The Oakroom restaurant, serving award-winning Kentucky cuisine. Other actors that have stayed at The

Seelbach include Kevin Costner, Sylvester Stallone, Wesley Snipes, James Earl Jones, Charlton Heston, Miss Piggy, Jamie Foxx, Will Smith, and The Rolling Stones -- just to mention a few.

LIVE MUSIC WITH BILLY JOEL

While on tour with Elton John, Billy Joel chose to stay at The Seelbach Hilton for their stop in Louisville. On two nights of his visit, Joel tickled the ivories and sang his favorites at the Old Seelbach Bar -- one night for five hours straight without a break! Many other performers have stayed at The Seelbach Hilton including N'Sync, Ringo Starr, Robert Plant, Natalie Merchant, The Grateful Dead, Tony Bennett, Janet Jackson and Rod Stewart.

A MAGNET FOR THE FAMOUS

The grand surroundings of The Seelbach have drawn other notable figures such as Muhammad Ali, who was born and raised in Louisville, and Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York. The Seelbach Hilton has also been graced with visits from other personalities including Peter Jennings, Diane Sawyer, Mikhail Gorbachev, Wolfgang Puck, Vice President Dick Cheney, Julia Child and Emeril Lagasse.

ROGER DAVIS RESTORES THE SEELBACH

A Hollywood actor was even involved in restoring The Seelbach to its present-day luxury. After The Seelbach closed in 1975, actor Roger Davis and H.G. Whittenberg, Jr., president of a construction company, bought The Seelbach and another hotel in 1978 for \$1 million. Through their efforts, the hotel was reopened in '82, and has continued on to achieve four-diamond, four-star status under the Hilton flag.

FAMOUS AUTHORS

"Angeline at The Seelbach"

In the 1920s, The Seelbach was one of the country's preeminent hotels, and as such, inspired authors to use it as a setting for novels. In 1923, Louisville author Cordia Greer Petrie published "Angeline at The Seelbach," a comedy about the misadventures of a woman from the Kentucky hills when she and her husband visit The Seelbach. The book ran to 30 editions and was even made into a nationally aired radio show.

"The Great Gatsby" is Born

Another author who was drawn to The Seelbach's allure was F. Scott Fitzgerald. The famed author often visited The Seelbach to sip Kentucky bourbon and smoke expensive cigars. With a reputation for carousing, Fitzgerald was once banned from The Seelbach after he had one too many! During his visits in the 1920s, Fitzgerald encountered gangster George Remus, who became the model for Jay Gatsby in "The Great Gatsby." The hotel's charm inspired Fitzgerald, and he chose the Grand Ballroom at The Seelbach as the backdrop for Tom and Daisy Buchanan's wedding reception in his American masterpiece.

MISS AMERICA'S WEDDING

The Seelbach Hilton, with its one-of-a-kind wedding venues and turn-of-the-century mystique, has always been a popular choice for brides on their wedding day. Miss America 2000, Heather French, was no exception. On October 27, 2001, she wed Kentucky Lieutenant Governor Stephen Henry and held her lovely reception at The Seelbach Hilton. Ms. French collaborated with designers to create her white silk peau de soie gown, embroidered with crystal beads and rhinestones, and wore a \$1 million diamond tiara that once graced the head of Princess Diana. The wedding party included other notable figures, including Miss Massachusetts 2000 (a bridesmaid), three Miss Kentuckys and Kentucky Governor Paul Patton.

After the ceremony at Cathedral of the Assumption in Louisville, the couple rode a carriage to The Seelbach Hilton amidst pipers and drummers.

U.S. PRESIDENTS

The Seelbach Hilton has proudly served an astounding nine U.S. presidents over the past 100 years. These nine presidents include:

- William Howard Taft
- Woodrow Wilson
- Franklin Roosevelt
- Harry Truman
- John F. Kennedy
- Lyndon Johnson
- Jimmy Carter
- Bill Clinton
- George W. Bush