

HISTORY

BY MARTHA-PAGE ALTHAUS

The Westin Poinsett, Greenville: Fabric of the community



Get swept away by the elegance of The Westin Poinsett's lobby, fully restored to its 1920s grandeur.

The handsome brick building on Main Street is more than just a hotel: From its opening in 1925, and with its major renovation in 2000, The Westin Poinsett, Greenville, has played an important role downtown.

Built in 1925 for a cool \$1.5 million, the 200-room hotel opened during the heyday of the textile industry. Named for Greenville statesman Joel R. Poinsett (who brought the poinsettia plant to the U.S. from Mexico), the hotel was one of the South's grandest. Big names checked in, from Amelia Earhart to Cornelius Vanderbilt III, and the hotel stayed afloat during the Great Depression by charging \$3 a day.

After decades of being synonymous with elegance, the property underwent a \$25 million makeover in 2000 and reopened as a Westin. Today, it's the only AAA Four Diamond hotel in the Upstate. Features include signature Heavenly Beds, and some guest-rooms, called Workout Rooms, come with a treadmill and weights — or just head to the fitness center. Then

enjoy a leisurely lunch at Spoonbread Restaurant, and in the evening, the lobby's Piano Bar and Lounge is a relaxing spot for drinks.

Most notably, you'll experience all this in the Poinsett's original 1920s setting. Named one of the Historic Hotels of America, the property glistens with crystal chandeliers, intricate mosaic tile and terrazzo floors, marble stairways, and elaborate crown molding. Even the wooden dance floor in the Gold Ballroom is just as it was in 1925.

"We picked up right where we left off," says Tim Paulus, sales and marketing director, adding that the hotel hosts more than 70 weddings a year. "Everyone's got a story about this place, from the gas station attendant to the CEO. It's such a fabric of our community."

A concierge since the 2000 reopening, Janice Smith says even locals stay at the Westin during the weekends of big festivals or events. "They want to stay downtown," Smith says, "in the middle of everything." westinpoinsettgreenville.com



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