

NIKOLA TESLA AND THE NEW YORKER HOTEL

Nikola Tesla lived in rooms 3327 and 3328 of the Hotel New Yorker from 1933 to 1943. He was an ethnic Serbian born in Croatia, on 10 July 1856.

Tesla invented the system of AC power that we use today, including the AC generator, AC motor, and the method of transmission of power. The great hydroelectric power plant at Niagara Falls was one of Tesla's most famous projects and the largest AC power plant at the time of its construction.

George Westinghouse bought the rights to Tesla's AC power system and which prevailed over the DC system of Thomas Edison in what was known as the "War of Currents."

He was also the inventor of the first *remote control* and was posthumously awarded the patent for the *radio* establishing precedence over Marconi.

The international unit to measure magnetic flux density was named the Tesla in recognition of his achievements.

In his prime Tesla was perhaps more famous than Henry Ford, Thomas Edison or Guglielmo Marconi. He hosted astonishing demonstrations of a high-voltage apparatus known as Tesla Coils with many of the attendees leaving in terror.

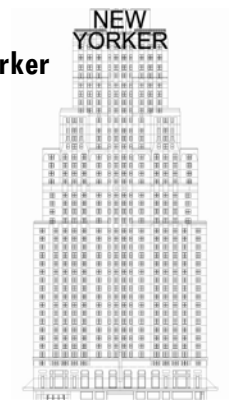
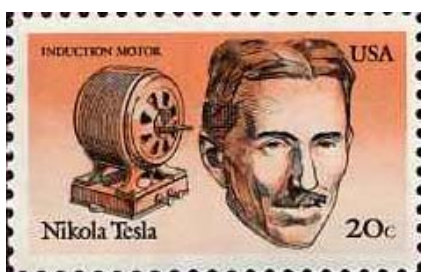
During Tesla's final ten years living at the Hotel New Yorker, he lived in relative obscurity with little means. He spent time every day in Bryant Park in the company of his beloved pigeons and was known to feed pigeons from the windows of his room.

Upon his passing, the US government's Alien Property Custodian office took immediate possession of his papers and property, despite his US citizenship. His papers were declared "Top Secret" and their contents remain a mystery until this day.

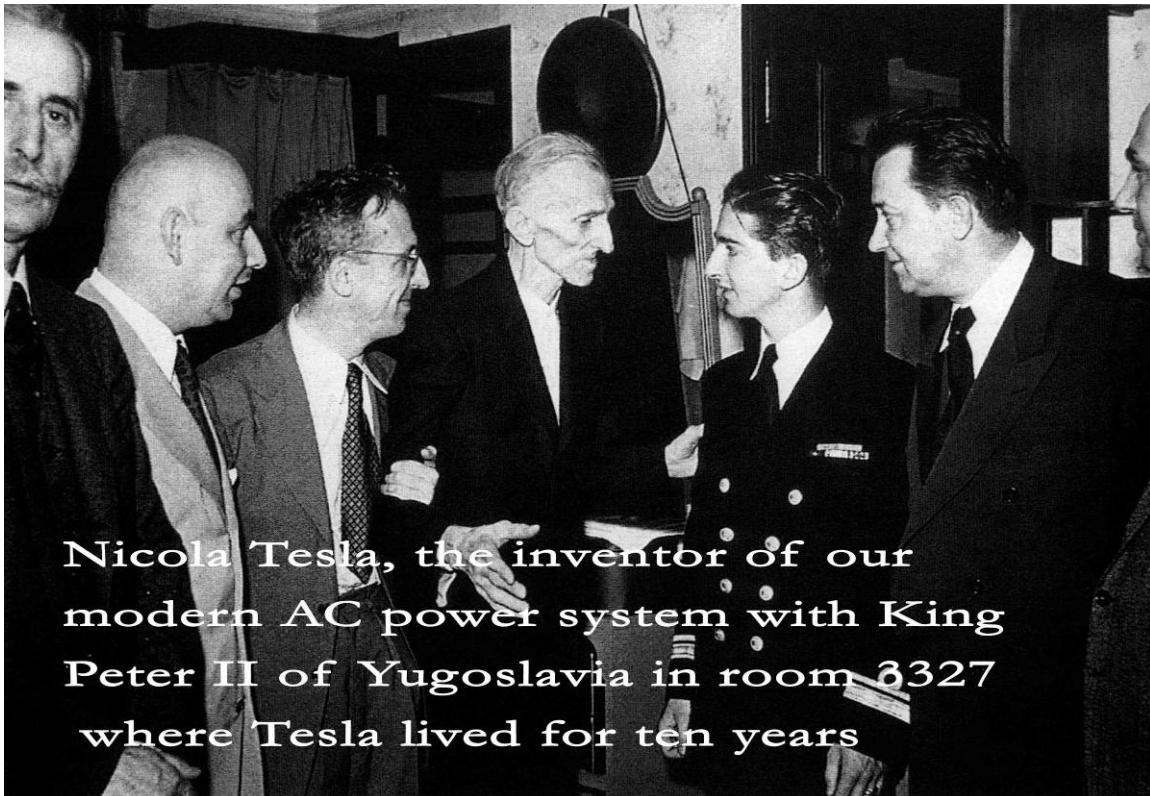
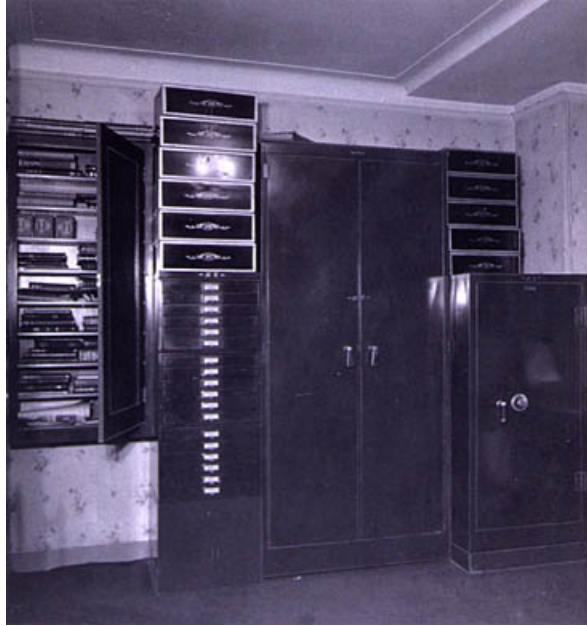
Tesla was certainly one of the more idiosyncratic guests ever to stay at the Hotel New Yorker. He required that everything he dealt with be in numbers divisible by three, whether it was napkins, towels or slices of bread. Even his room number 3327 had significance, three to the third power being twenty-seven.

Many guests from around the world request room 3327, hoping they may feel a spark of Tesla's presence during their stay.

For more information please contact: Joseph Kinney, Historian / Archivist, the New Yorker Hotel at extension 5534 or kinney@nyhotel.com.



The two photos below are of Tesla's Room just after his death in 1943.



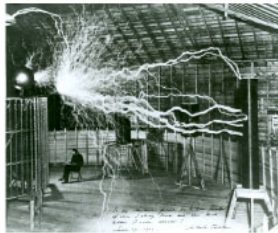
Nicola Tesla, the inventor of our modern AC power system with King Peter II of Yugoslavia in room 3327 where Tesla lived for ten years



HERE DIED, ON JANUARY 7, 1943.
AT THE AGE OF 87, THE GREAT
YUGOSLAV-AMERICAN SCIENTIST-INVENTOR,
NIKOLA TESLA, WHOSE DISCOVERIES
IN THE FIELD OF ALTERNATING ELECTRIC
CURRENT ADVANCED THE UNITED STATES
AND THE REST OF THE WORLD INTO THE
MODERN INDUSTRIAL ERA.

YUGOSLAV-AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL
COMMITTEE, JANUARY 7, 1977.

The Plaque of Tesla mounted on the 34th street side of the New Yorker Hotel



3327



The Nikola Tesla Room

The great inventor Nikola Tesla occupied this room from 1933 to 1943
He invented the system of AC electrical power that is used throughout the world today,
including the generator, motor and method of transmission .
He also holds the patent for wireless communication.
Perhaps his most famous project is the electrical powerplant at Niagara Falls, NY.

Tesla's Obituary describing the discovery of his body by a New Yorker Room Attendant.

OBITUARIES

N.Y. Times
1-8-43

NIKOLA TESLA DIES; PROLIFIC INVENTOR

Alternating Power Current's
Developer Found Dead in
Hotel Suite Here

CLAIMED A 'DEATH BEAM'

He Insisted the Invention
Could Annihilate an Army
of 1,000,000 at Once



NIKOLA TESLA
The New York Times, 1906

Nikola Tesla, one of the world's greatest electrical inventors and designers, was found dead last night in his suite at the Hotel New Yorker.

Engineers credit him with having devised the first practical application of alternating current; with the invention of the induction motor and the invention and development of numerous transformers, condensers and specialized coils. The principle of the rotary magnetic field embodied in the plants which transmit power from Niagara Falls—in fact the bases of modern hydroelectric power—are credited to Dr. Tesla.

According to the hotel staff, Dr. Tesla, who was 86 years old, had been failing in health for two years. Of vigorous temperament and with emphatic ideas on personal health as well as engineering, he had few visitors, according to the hotel management, which reported that his meals strictly vegetarian-style, were especially prepared for him by the chef.

"He made everybody keep at a distance greater than three feet," a hotel executive recalled.

A spokesman for the hotel said that Dr. Tesla died as he had spent the last years of his life alone. He was found dead in bed by a floor maid at 10:45 P. M. She called a hospital physician, who pronounced him dead.

The New Yorker management was attempting last night to locate friends of the inventor. It was believed he had a nephew living in the city.

Ideas Fantastic Toward End

Tesla's ideas bordered increasingly on what some considered the fantastic as he advanced in years. On his seventy-eighth birthday he announced in an interview that he had invented a "death beam" powerful enough to destroy 10,000 airplanes at a distance of 25 miles and annihilate an army of 1,000,000 soldiers instantaneously.

On his eighty-fourth birthday he declared he stood ready to deliver to the United States Government the secret of his "death beam" that he said would bring an invincible defense. With his defense around the country against any attack.

As were his researches and discoveries in radiations, material streams and emanations.

After his discovery of a system of transmission of power without wires and a high-potential magnifying transmitter, Tesla had been chiefly engaged—since 1903—in the development of a system of telegraphy and telephony without a plant for the transmission of power without wires, to be erected at Niagara.

As early as 1898 Tesla made it known that he was experimenting with intercontinental communication. He firmly believed that most of the planets are inhabited and that messages could be sent between the earth and Mars, Jupiter and Venus.

He also had visions of harnessing the sun's rays and of utilizing the energy of the sea.

Son of Greek Clergyman

Nikola Tesla was born at Smiljan, Lika, a border country of Austria-Hungary, on July 10, 1856. His father was a Greek clergyman and orator and his mother, Georgina Mandic, was an inventor.

His education began with one year in elementary school and then four years of the lower Realschule at Gospe, Lika. Then he went to a higher school at Gakrad, Croatia, being graduated in 1878. He studied for four years at the Polytechnic School at Graz, devoting most of his time to mathematics, physics and mechanics, and then had two years at the University of Prague, where he studied philosophy.

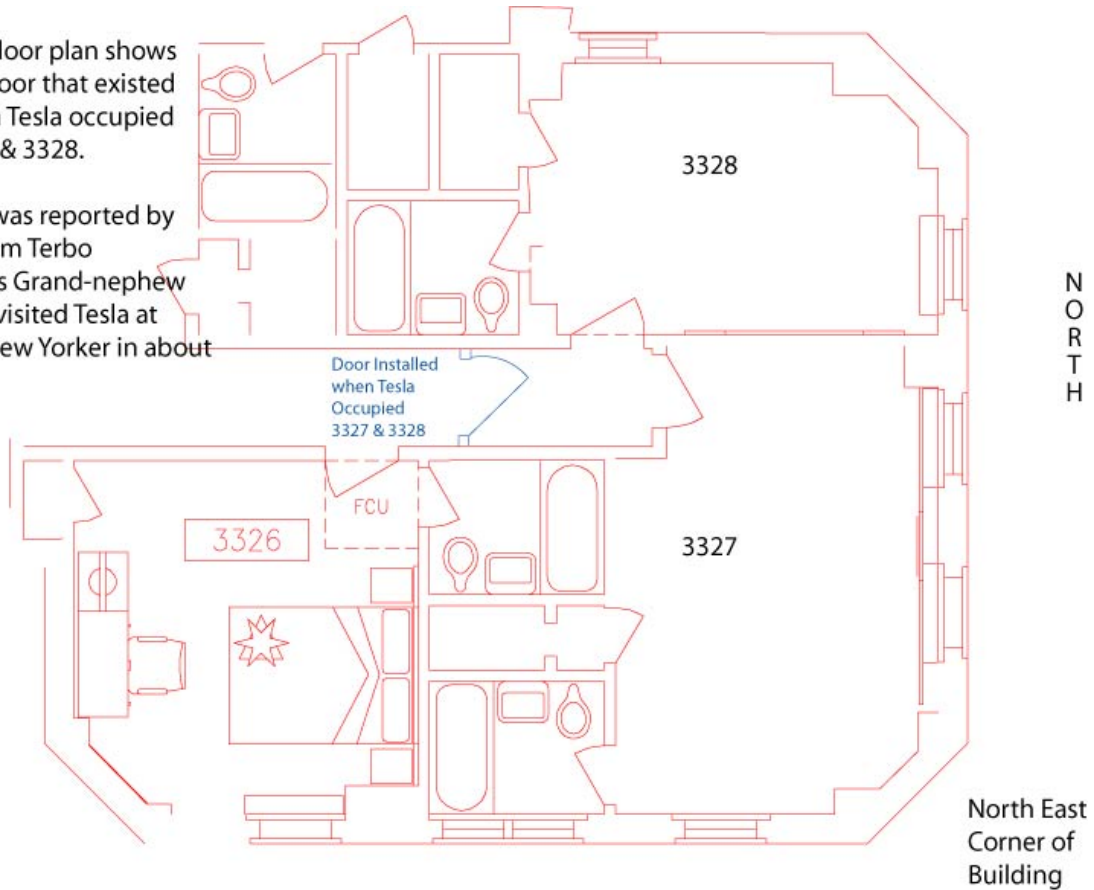
In 1881 he went to Paris, where he worked as an electrical engineer, and the following year he went to Strassburg, where he installed a mechanical plant. He was attracted to America by the remarkable progress in electrical energy, and came in this country in 1884.

For some time he worked with Thomas A. Edison at West Orange, N. J., chiefly designing motors and generators. In a short while a dispute was made to him to start his own company. He accepted the terms and began by working up a practical system of arc lighting, as well as a potential method of dynamo regulation, which became known as the "shunt-brush" regulation.

Invented Coil in 1887.

This floor plan shows the door that existed when Tesla occupied 3327 & 3328.

This was reported by William Terbo Tesla's Grand-nephew who visited Tesla at the New Yorker in about 1941



Above is a floor plan of rooms 3327 and 3328 showing the door that existed creating a two-room suite. One room was the bedroom and the other Tesla's study.

The photo to the right is allegedly of the pigeon that Nikola Loved so much. He walked from the New Yorker Hotel to Bryant Park everyday to feed the pigeons.



THUNDER MAKER NIKOLA TESLA

By JONATHAN LEWIN and JAY MAEDER Daily News Staff Writers
Monday April 19 1999

*"You may live to see man-made horrors beyond your comprehension."
— Nikola Tesla, 1898*

THE CHAMBERMAIDS at the Hotel New Yorker liked to avoid the shabby old gentleman in Room 3327. For one thing, he was forever picking up sick pigeons and bringing them back to nurse them. And he mumbled about mad things: flowering deserts, giant power stations, death rays that could melt a city radio signals from distant planets. Only his birds were with him when he died in his bed on Thursday the 7th of January 1943, age 86, just another tired old man life had used up.

But because of Nikola Tesla, there were efficient electrical transmission systems in the world, and television and radar and remote control and neon lighting and everyday household appliances, and there were technological foundations for inventions yet unimagined. A quarter-century earlier; fellow engineers had proclaimed him the father of the modern industrial revolution: "Were we to eliminate from our industrial world the results of his work, the wheels of industry could cease to turn, our electric cars and trains would stop, our towns would be dark, our mills would be dead and idle." By that time, 1917 Tesla was already sunken into embittered self-exile from the world, and he would spend the rest of his days a hermit.

"For 40 years he lived and worked in a world of fantasy crackling with electric sparks, packed with strange towers to receive and emit ever' and dreamy contrivances to give utopian man complete control of nature." The New York Times wrote of Tesla two days after he died. "It was the Jules Verne future that engrossed him ... Communicating with Mars, plucking heat units out of the atmosphere to run engines, using the whole Earth as an electrical resonator so that a man in China could communicate wirelessly with another in South America, transmitting power through space — it was to such possibilities that he devoted the last 40 years of his long life.

"It was a lonely life."

Tesla was a "poet," his rival Thomas Edison had once conceded. Yes, his ideas were "magnificent," Edison agreed. "But utterly impractical."

ELECTRICAL POWER was still a novelty in 1884, when 28-year-old Nikola Tesla, a Croatian engineer who had been working for the Continental Edison Co. in France, arrived in New York with 4 cents in his pocket and

went to see Thomas Edison with an improvement upon Edison's direct-current (DC) system. Tesla's far more efficient polyphase alternating-current (AC) system allowed much higher voltages than were possible with DC and enabled transmission over hundreds of miles, whereas DC required a power station every mile or two. But Edison brushed his visitor off; the great inventor had already committed himself to DC as the industry standard. And so Tesla formed his own company and went looking for a financial backer.

He shortly found one in Pittsburgh industrialist George Westinghouse, who bought the rights to Tesla's transformers and condensers and dynamos and coils for \$1 million, plus royalties per horsepower sold. Westinghouse and Edison dueled for commercial electrical supremacy for several years. Tesla frequently gave spectacular demonstrations of AC's power, appearing before dazzled audiences silhouetted by flames as hundreds of thousands of volts coursed through his body; he was one of the hits of Chicago's Colombian Exposition in 1893. Edison lost the war: Late in 1893, it was Westinghouse who was awarded the rights to build the generators that would harness Niagara Falls and give birth to modern hydroelectric power: At his death in 1931, Edison viewed as his largest mistake his failure to back AC.

BY THIS TIME, Tesla was deeply involved in experiments with wireless telegraphy. As early as 1890, he was beaming radio signals from his Houston St. laboratory to a boat on the Hudson River: In 1898, he astounded military observers at Madison Square Garden when he showed off a remotely controlled ship model and offhandedly predicted radio-guided torpedoes. That was three years before Guglielmo Marconi sent a demonstration SOS out to sea and became world famous as the "Father of Radio."

Much of what else Tesla was up to was always shrouded in secrecy. One night in August 1896 there was a terrific thunderclap that burst water mains and shattered windows across Little Italy. The ground rattled for 10 minutes as police converged on Tesla's laboratory. Inside, as the earthquake subsided, they found Tesla shutting down what he called a telegeodynamic oscillator: It created vibrations, he explained to reporters; it could easily shake apart the Brooklyn Bridge.

In the wake of this incident, Tesla found it necessary to move his mysterious lab to rural Colorado for a while. There he built a 200-foot magnifying transmitter and went to work simulating electrical storms, throwing his switches and spewing out great blasts and fireballs that rocked the night for miles around. On one occasion, he blacked out the entire town of Colorado Springs.

WHEN HE GOT back to New York in 1900, he was heavily in debt, having some years earlier chosen to release Westinghouse from the royalty agreements that would otherwise have made him very rich, and he also was under increasing attack from scientists who found him, frankly, disturbing; a practitioner of the black arts, some were calling him. Still, he won financial backing from J.P. Morgan for a huge radio tower at Shoreham, L.I. with which he intended to beam signals around the entire world — and beyond.

But the Shoreham "world wireless station" did not long survive the emergence of Marconi — who had used a Tesla patent to send his 1901 SOS, and had indeed been backed by Thomas Edison. And by 1903, as it became clear that Tesla had lost the radio race, Morgan stopped investing. There were no other backers forthcoming, not even Westinghouse.

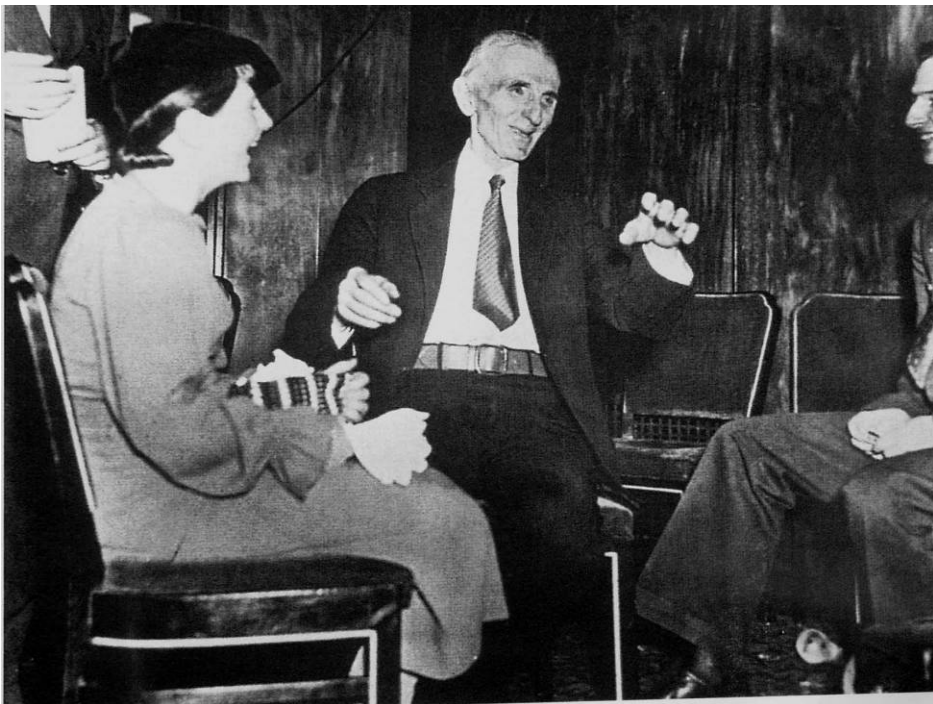
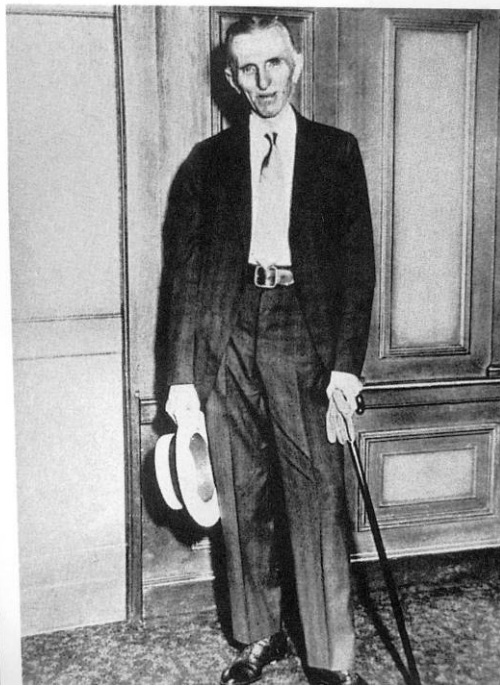
This was now the end of Nikola Tesla's moment in the practical sciences. He retreated from the world and, as his financial woes mounted, often used his nightmarish electrical machines to frighten away bill collectors.

MARCONI WON the Nobel Prize in 1909; an enraged Tesla sued for patent infringement; Marconi counter-sued; the court battle would drag on for decades. A few years later it was reported that Tesla was refusing a Nobel of his own. Privately and independently, he pursued his experiments in cheap hotel rooms, no longer able to afford a laboratory. He talked of wireless transmission of power and sought to build a great plant at Niagara Falls. He talked of harnessing the sun. He talked of turning deserts into verdant fields and lighting up the night sky so that ships and airplanes would never collide. In 1931 he said he was sending messages to Mars. In 1937, he said he was getting messages back.

Late in 1940, with Europe at war; he offered the U.S. government his death beam, based on "entirely new principles of physics that no one has ever dreamed about," he said, a ray that could annihilate armies and destroy fleets of enemy aircraft. He proposed a network of transmitting plants that would send up a 50-million-volt American defense wall no invader could penetrate. Officials chortled at this and declined him. "Again and again they jeered at ere," he snapped late in his life, "and then years later saw that I was right."

UPON HIS DEATH, surrounded by his pigeons, Nikola Tesla left behind more than 700 patents and an incalculable number of visionary notions never set-to paper. To the end, he raged that Guglielmo Marconi was a common thief. Eight months after he died, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed with him, overturning Marconi's radio patents.

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Photos of Tesla in the lobby of the New Yorker Hotel



President Boris Tadić of Serbia (Tall with white hair) President Stjepan Mesić of Croatia (With grey hair and beard) Shake hands at the New Yorker Tesla Plaque and at a press conference in the New Yorker's Sky Lounge on 21 September 2006.



Božidar Đelić the Vice President of Serbia presents Joseph Kinney an autographed copy of his book. Serbia: Things Will Get Better on 17 October 2007.

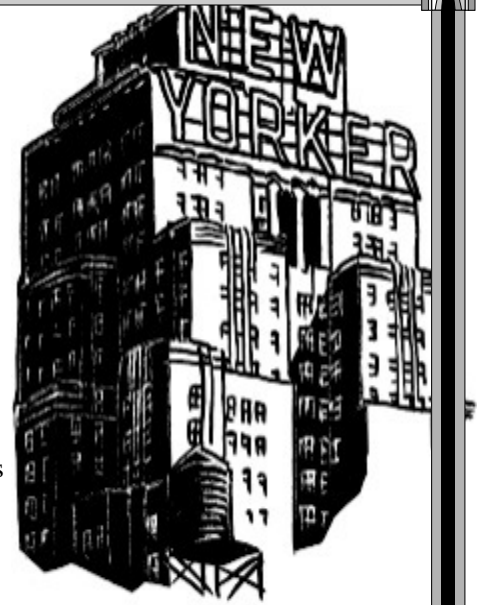
Kinney is presenting Vice President Đelić a copy of Samantha Hunt's book The Invention of Everything Else which is a novel about Tesla's last days in the New Yorker Hotel.

THE NEW YORKER

TESLA SLEPT HERE

by Mark Singer, *The New Yorker Magazine*, January 14, 2008

According to Joseph Kinney, the chief engineer and unofficial archivist of the New Yorker Hotel (an ancillary enterprise not of this magazine but of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church), three types of inquisitive visitors regularly make pilgrimages there: (1) electrical engineers and technology enthusiasts; (2) people interested in U.F.O.s, anti-gravity airships, death-ray weapons, time travel, and telepathic pigeons; (3) Serbs and Croats. (A guest last year, Bozidar Djelic, the deputy prime minister of Serbia, inscribed for Kinney a copy of his book "Serbia: Things Will Get Better.")



What these callers have in common is a wish to pay homage to Nikola Tesla, the tragically underappreciated Croatian-born ethnic-Serb immigrant visionary who lived at the hotel, at Thirty-fourth Street and Eighth Avenue, for ten years and, in 1943, died there, at the age of eighty-six. Despite having conceived—but, inconveniently, not necessarily having perfected patents for—dozens of revolutionary devices, Tesla during his lifetime failed to receive proper credit, or royalties, for theoretical work that made possible wireless power transmission and X-rays. It's generally agreed that Tesla was an earlier inventor of radio than Guglielmo Marconi, who won the patent and a Nobel Prize. At the time of his death, Tesla was nearly destitute, having been bamboozled by, among others, Thomas Edison. He was undone as well by his own impracticality, deficient business acumen, and a predilection toward delusion.

The Tesla saga has provided fodder for an opera, a play, and several biographies. Standing in the lobby the other day, Kinney mentioned that he had been contacted not long ago by a woman named Natasa Drakula (from *that* family), who was interested in making a film about artists who were inspired by Tesla. Among the most recent is Samantha Hunt, whose novel "The Invention of Everything Else" will be published next month. Its plot, not easily condensed, involves Tesla, a hotel chambermaid named Louisa, her father and his best friend, a semi-functional time machine, a mysterious visitor from the future, and a white pigeon who is the object of Tesla's most ardent affection. The book's apposite title is a play upon its epigraph, "Everything that can be invented has been invented"—an 1899 statement attributed to a U.S. patent commissioner (which, if not apocryphal, might rival "Major combat operations in Iraq have ended" as the Least Accurate Remark Ever Uttered by a Senior Government Official).

Among Hunt's inventions is the transformation of the hotel itself into an endearing character: "The tallest building in New York City when it was built in 1930 . . . forty-three stories high . . . its own power generator, producing enough energy to support thirty-five thousand people . . . kitchen is an entire acre . . . a hospital with its own operating room . . . an indoor ice-skating rink. . . Each room has its own radio broadcasting on four hotel channels. . . Twenty desk clerks . . . twenty-three elevator operators . . . a personal secretary for each floor . . . a gentle monster, a sleeping giant. . .

Art-deco designs make the eyeballs pop. . . . Everywhere is the world of tomorrow. Efficiency! Hurry! Chrome and glass!”

As proof, on New Year’s Eve day Kinney and Hunt led a private tour through the hotel’s innards: up to the forty-third floor (where the original exhaust fans and elevator hoists still function); a walk down to forty-one (“Right here was the largest switchboard in the world—or the most telephone operators, anyway,” Kinney said); an elevator ride and hike three levels into the subbasement, where a now sealed subterranean passage, still lined with the original Art Deco tiles, led to Pennsylvania Station. An obligatory stop along the way, naturally, was the thirty-third floor, where Tesla occupied Rooms 3327 and 3328, which the government of Serbia would like to see turned into a museum. For the time being, the space, somewhat reconfigured, still accommodates paying guests. Kinney knocked before using a passkey to open one door, then quickly closed it when he realized that the guest hadn’t yet checked out. He didn’t even try the other, which had a “Do Not Disturb” sign hanging from the knob.

After passing through the laundry facility (where a crew of uniformed women were pressing bed linens with a seventy-five-year-old steam-ironing device) and the machine shop, Kinney proposed a detour to the boiler room. “I don’t know if Tesla came down here, but it’s one of the places he would have considered fun,” he said. “If I go to a hotel, I’d rather see the boiler room than the pool.”

“I’m in your camp, Joe,” Hunt said.

Back upstairs, in Kinney’s office, on the sixth floor, Hunt, who is thirty-six, said, “Until I was twenty-five years old, I’d never heard of Nikola Tesla. And when I first started the novel I really knew nothing about him. Eventually, I encountered the problem of having too much factual information. I didn’t want to lie. I felt, This poor man, he’s been so maligned. I had to leave things out that were true that I thought nobody would believe. The pigeon, which I didn’t leave out, was true.”

Hunt was drawn to Tesla, she said, by the appeal of “looking at the imagined future from the known past.” She added, “I guess it might also enable me to look at what’s happening now and imagine the future. Though part of what I liked about studying Tesla is that I consider myself something of a Luddite. The house I grew up in was built in 1765. Four of my closest friends are in their eighties. My mother never throws anything out, so everything in the house looks as it did forty-five years ago. Actually, I guess I’m not a very future-forward person.” ♦

ILLUSTRATION: TOM BACHTELL

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