



Tour the Hotel


A HISTORY OF THE AMWAY GRAND PLAZA HOTEL





*The Amway Grand Plaza Hotel invites you to
tour the hotel and experience days gone by.*




Look for this symbol  for
points of interest.



Grand Plaza East Tour




Begin your tour facing the **REGISTRATION DESK** in the Main Entrance off Pearl Street. The focal point is the  painting behind the desk of a panoramic view of the city skyline from the Grand River.

This painting is entitled “Grand Reflections” by local artist Mark Wilkens.

The graceful mahogany arches and vaulted gold leaf dome ceiling were added during a renovation in 1998 to mirror the beauty of the original Pantlind wing with its English Adams Architecture.



If you turn around to your left, you'll notice that behind the Concierge Desk, there is a  Howard Miller clock made of brass and acrylic and designed by Arthur Umanoff Associates.

Across from the Registration Area, the inviting **GRAND STAIRWAY** rises above the airy setting of the **GARDEN COURT LOUNGE**.


So, start your walk with a climb!


At the head of the staircase, look over the impressive lower level. Thousands of seasonal plants, flowers, and trees are constantly maintained throughout the hotel to create a year-round, natural environment.

Head to your right toward the original, more traditional wing of the hotel.



SPLENDOR AND DRAMA

Continue on into the original **PANTLIND HOTEL** structure to the **SOUTH CONCOURSE LEVEL**, which overlooks the Pantlind Lobby. At the railing, you can enjoy a spectacular view of the reconstructed portion of the original hotel. The  three magnificent chandeliers came from Czechoslovakia and are made of Austrian crystal—a type that retains its brilliance, color, and luster. The two end chandeliers are 11.5 feet in length and 8.5 feet in diameter; the center chandelier is 10 feet long and also 8.5 feet in diameter. Each chandelier weighs approximately 4,000 pounds! Support chains and automatic lowering devices are concealed beneath the velvet caps. Incidentally, all the heating and air conditioning ducts are hidden in the ring between the chandelier and the ceiling.

Look at the domed ceiling and you'll note the  meticulously hand-applied, tissue-thin gold leaf. More than 7,000 square feet of ceiling area is covered, making this the largest gold leaf installation in the United States!



REMINDERS OF THE PAST



Looking down, you will see a tiered fountain which is made of copper and has an ornate 🖐️ pineapple spigot—rather quaint today, but before 1920, the pineapple was a popular symbol for hospitality in the United States.

Beyond on the far wall, is a wooden-gilded 🖐️ “sunburst” which hung for more than 150 years in the ballroom of the Palazzo Moroscini, the palace of a wealthy merchant in Venice, Italy.

Dana Reeve, wife of Christopher Reeve, is a descendant of the Moroscini family.



Moving on, make a sharp turn to your left and follow along the **EAST CONCOURSE**.



Two  turn-of-the-century gaslight torchieres—since wired for electricity—stand sentinel on either side of the observation/conversation area at the railing. The  four large oil paintings that flank the concourse are by Armand Merizon, a Grand Rapidsian noted for his seascapes and sand dunes. The Queen Anne, Duncan Phyfe, and English Adams furniture, from 1916 to 1920, add to the charm of the concourse.



A BIT OF HISTORY

The Sweet's Hotel was the first hotel on this site, which is now the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel. In the early 1900's it was purchased by J. Boyd Pantlind, who renamed it the Pantlind Hotel. Renovated and reopened in 1916, it was fashioned after English Adams Architecture by its designers, Warren & Westmore of New York City, who also designed that city's lavish Grand Central Station and Biltmore Hotel. The Pantlind Hotel was known far and wide for it's warm hospitality and exquisite cuisine.

By 1925, the Pantlind was termed "One of the Ten Finest Hotels in America."

Note the  small chandeliers overhead: each are made of Oriental crystal, which tend to gray with age—readily apparent when compared to the brilliance of the three central chandeliers above the lobby. Ahead are the  guest elevators with their carefully refurbished original period cabs.




NAMES AND PLACES

Various meeting rooms named for people who were influential in the history of Grand Rapids and our nation occupy the concourse perimeter. The **ROBINSON ROOM** is named for Rix Robinson, the founder of Ada, Michigan, site of the Amway Corporation world headquarters; the **CAMPAU ROOM** is named after the city's founding father, fur trader Louis Campau; and the **LYON ROOM** is named in honor of Lucius Lyon, a U.S. Senator from 1836-1840 and a prominent surveyor and early land developer.

Now, veer to your left at the juncture of the **SENATOR ARTHUR VANDENBERG ROOM**, named for the native son and great statesman who served in the U.S. Senate from 1928-1951. The **NORTH CONCOURSE** features more period furniture and an avenue of six oil paintings depicting early Grand Rapids. The **GOVERNORS ROOM** is next, named in honor of all Michigan Governors. Make another sharp turn to the left to one of the more aesthetic and comfortable stops on your tour.



THE QUIET ZONE

This quiet **BALCONY AREA** is a perfect place to view the intricacies of the gold leaf ceiling. Whether you sit or stand alongside the  balcony's ornate cast brass railing, this is a delightful place to quietly "watch the world go by." The railing itself is noteworthy. Prior to renovation, many of its original antique moldings and finials were lost or broken. Fortunately, in this city of artisans, a die caster was discovered who was able to recreate the original missing pieces, thus retaining the charming ambience of this art-deco accent.

LOOK AROUND YOU

Pleasant 🖐️ art-deco wall sconces flank the short flight of steps as you descend to the **LANDING OF THE PANTLIND BALLROOM** behind the mirrored doors. This is the hotel's original ballroom and features 🖐️ unique and highly decorative plaster work moldings. The 🖐️ domed ceiling is also gold leaf and the magnificent chandelier is of the original period. If a door is open, and the ballroom is not being used, peek inside; the room speaks for itself.

The **DUAL STAIRWAY** leads to the **ORIGINAL MAIN LOBBY** and is flanked by a pair of 🖐️ floor lamps whose ornate-footed stanchions and draped chains are delightfully outlandish! The 🖐️ Verde Antique Italian marble floor is original to the hotel, and the 🖐️ wainscoting is typical of the English Adams period, as is all the furniture. The hotel's original renovation was under the direction of the New York City interior design firm of Dorothy Draper, Inc.

At the **FOOT OF THE STAIRS** to your left stands a stately old 🖐️ grandfather clock with an unusual story. Like the old hotel itself, the clock was in dire need of repair and refurbishing. It was sent to the Howard Miller Clock Co. where the craftsman assigned to repair the piece was astounded to discover, by an interior plaque, that the grandfather clock had been originally built by his grandfather!

The former **LUMBER BARON BAR**, now the dining area of GP Sports, holds a special place in history as site of the 🖐️ First Trilateral Summit Meeting held in the United States by the North American heads of government. **GP SPORTS**—specializing in burgers, wood-fired pizzas, and specialty drinks—is the place to catch all of your sports action.



A BRILLIANT EXAMPLE OF THE
LOST ART OF "FAUX MARBLE"

UNDER THE "SUNBURST" is an elegant
👉 Sheraton sideboard from the late 1800's
along with numerous other Duncan Phyfe
and English Adams period pieces.

Ready for a genuine surprise? See that 👉 lovely
black green marble railing which encompasses this
area? Touch it. You'll discover that it is not cold like
marble. Why? Because this balustrade is actually
marbleized wood; a beautiful example of a lost art
called "faux marble." This masterpiece was hand
painted by Harvey Bolkema, a local artisan
originally from the Netherlands.

MORE PANTLIND LOBBY DELIGHTS

All the large 🖱️ jardinières and their hand-carved teak wood bases are more than 300 years old. Although extremely rare Chinese antiques, they are not from the Ming Dynasty ... they just look that way!

Move **PAST THE ELEVATORS** which delineate a marvelously ornate, still functional, 🖱️ brass mailbox and come to the canopied portal of the former location of The 1913 Room and today, **RUTH'S CHRIS STEAK HOUSE**. Originally founded by Ruth Fertel of New Orleans, Louisiana, Ruth transformed a modest steak house into the world's largest fine dining company.

Consider other milestones of the year 1913: President Gerald R. Ford's birth date, the year women first publicly wore silk stockings, and the first year of the income tax. It was also the year that the cornerstone of the hotel was laid and, thus, the inspiration for the name of The 1913 Room. The dining facility was designed to recapture the elegance and grace of that era and was the first and only restaurant in all of Michigan to be a recipient of the AAA Five Diamond Award for ten years.

Retrace your steps to the **PANTLIND LOBBY**. The large 🖱️ Oriental screen on the south perimeter wall, while looking like an antique, was hand painted with gold in China specifically for this space!

View the Victorian elegance of the **IMPERIAL BALLROOM** and especially look at the 🖱️ walnut ceiling with its unique gold leaf design. It was formerly known as the Old National Bank from 1853-1953. It was then changed into the National Bank until the renovations took place in 2000 to make it the regal ballroom that it is today.

Ahead, on your left, is the **GERALD R. AND BETTY FORD BALLROOM**, named for the 38th President and Grand Rapids' most illustrious citizen.

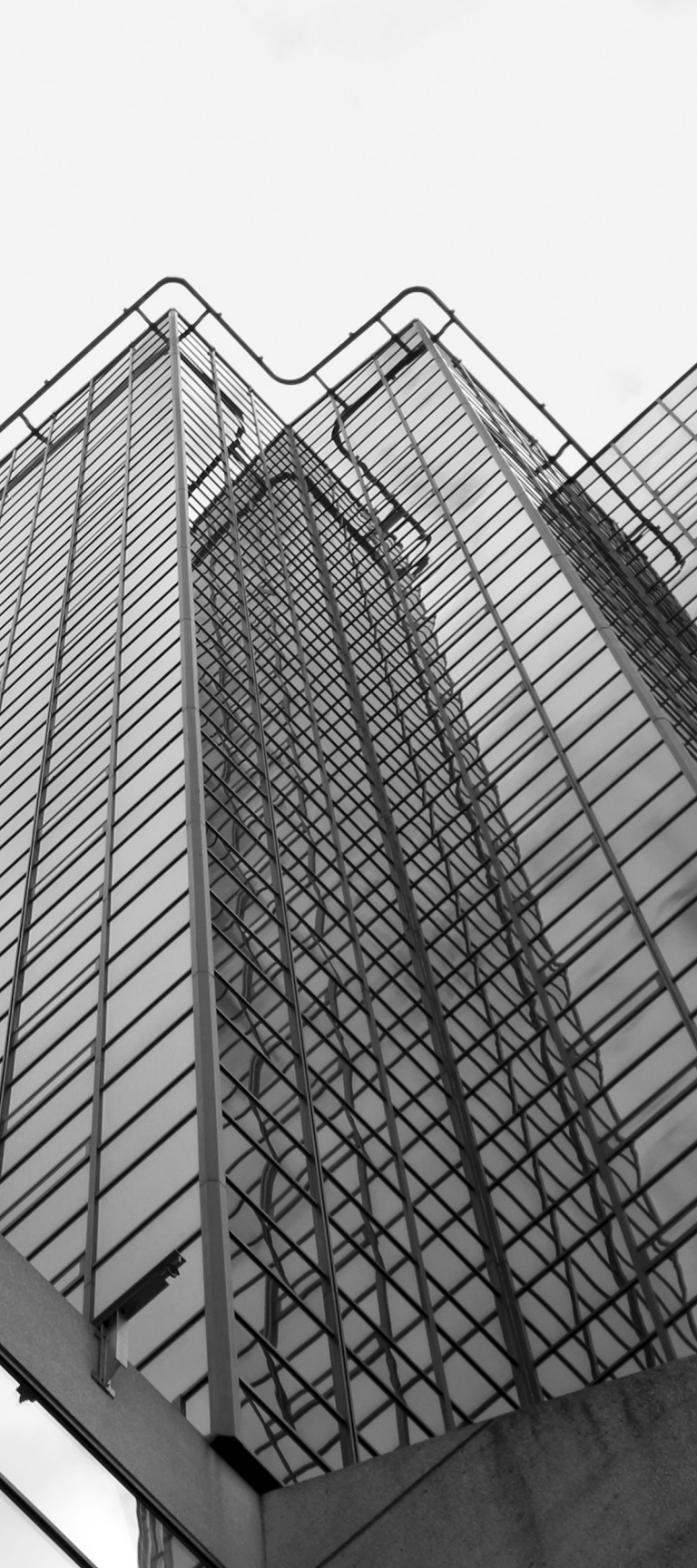
Sometimes thought of as the Wedgewood Room because of its obvious resemblance to the renowned blue English china. This room, with its original chandelier, underwent an enormous reconstruction, involving remodeling the ornate plaster work, rebuilding the pillars, and even leveling the floor. Visitors often comment on the 🖱️ illusion created by the round ceiling ... it makes the entire room seem round, even though it is perfectly square.

You have nearly completed your tour through the original, traditional-styled hotel. All that remains is to saunter down the ramp ahead which links the "original" and the "contemporary" wings of the hotel. The 🖱️ portraits on your right are of Richard DeVos and Jay Van Andel, co-founders of the Amway Corporation and owners of the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel.

Finally, the 🖱️ plaque on your left lists some of the prominent dignitaries who have stayed at the Hotel since its reopening in 1981. And with that we are back where we began at the **REGISTRATION AREA**.








Grand Plaza West Tower Tour



If the weather is nice, take time to leave the **REGISTRATION AREA**. Step outside for a breath of fresh air and look at the  clay sculptures that adorn the outside walls of the motor lobby on Pearl Street. This intriguing artwork is by Don Reitz, former Professor of Art at the University of Wisconsin from 1962–1988.

Back inside, begin by touring to your left as you approach the Grand Plaza's shops from the motor lobby. On your left is **CORNUCOPIA**. If you have the time, stop and enjoy this casual deli featuring delicious sandwiches and specialties.



THE HOTEL'S TOWER SECTION


Before you begin the more extensive tour through the **WEST CONCOURSE** and **EXHIBITOR'S BUILDING**, here is a bit of information about the hotel's Tower Section.


The 29-story Tower is one of the tallest structures in Western Michigan. It is topped by **CYGNUS 27**, a glass-roofed restaurant/lounge which features exquisite dining and a stunning view of the river and city below. Cygnus 27 is reached via a glass-walled express elevator that offers an exhilarating rise and its own dramatic view of downtown Grand Rapids.

The view from Cygnus 27 is reserved strictly for patrons of the restaurant and lounge. Our Concierge will be happy to make dinner reservations for you.

All the remaining Tower floors accommodate our 287 guest rooms, the Tower Club and Tower Club Lounge for our guests, plus two private dining rooms.

SUBTLE ARTWORK


ACROSS THE TOWER LOBBY is our seven-story Atrium with  a coy triptych mural painting by local artist, Mark Wilkens.

Immediately behind you, on the **SOUTH LOBBY WALL** is more  artwork by Mark Wilkens depicting two of the many bridges that cross the Grand River. This atrium area connects the Exhibitor's Building with the Tower section of the hotel.

At the **END OF THE TOWER LOBBY** is **BENTHAM'S RIVERFRONT RESTAURANT**, created on the site of an original restaurant and trading post by that name. Bentham's has a vast display of  watercolors depicting life and views along the Grand River by Mark Wilkens.

Immediately to your left after leaving Bentham's, is a doorway leading outside to the **RIVER TERRACE PROMENADE AND THE FOOTBRIDGE** which crosses the Grand River to the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum.



Now proceed up the **ATRIUM STAIRWAY**; keeping to the right you arrive at the **WEST CONCOURSE LEVEL**. Near the elevator bank on the left, you'll see a  large painting by Paul Collins, a local artist with an international reputation.

From the **WEST CONCOURSE**, head right to the **CROWN FOYER**.




Once inside the **CROWN FOYER**, you'll see another  large painting from Paul Collins on the right. Through the foyer on the left, is the **AMBASSADOR BALLROOM**. It is the  largest ballroom in the hotel, equipped with state-of-the-art audio/visual presentation facilities, eight simultaneous translation booths, and overhead security observation panels.

Turning to your left, cross the Center Concourse and approach the Fine Arts Building, currently known as the **EXHIBITOR'S BUILDING**.







REMINDERS OF HALCYON DAYS

In the halcyon days of Grand Rapids' reign as "Furniture Capital," this building was the nation's major exhibition center for the world's leading furniture companies. Notice how the architect cleverly united the hotel to the **EXHIBITOR'S BUILDING** while preserving its  beautiful Italian Renaissance-style façade.

Today, the hallway leads straight to an enclosed skywalk that connects with the DeVos Place Convention Center and DeVos Performance Hall. Turn left and go down the short stairway and walk toward the stairway ahead, which leads to the Plaza's Third Level.



Lining the halls are  portraits by Paul Collins along with  historic photographs of downtown Grand Rapids from the mid-1800's on. Included are photos of the original Pantlind Hotel, starting with its initial construction in 1913 and how it has evolved through today.

Then you pass the **THORNAPPLE ROOM** on your right, the **HERITAGE HILL ROOM** on your left, and the **GRAND VIEW ROOMS** straight ahead. At the end of the hallway, a short turn to your left brings you to the arched doorway and upper landing of the familiar **ATRIUM STAIRWAY**. The  view straight down from the landing to the waterfall and reflecting pool is interesting but the  view out the window across the Grand River to the Gerald R. Ford Museum is indeed, a grand view!

What's Next?



Retrace your steps to the stairway in the central corridor and descend to the second floor. Additional shops and the Spa & Salon at the Amway Grand Plaza occupy this second floor **CONCOURSE LEVEL**. At this point the tour is completed. All that remains is your choice of three optional routes to return to your “starting point” at the **REGISTRATION AREA**.

1. YOU CAN PROCEED STRAIGHT AHEAD, up the steps of the “half-moon” which connects with the Center Concourse. Turn to your right and you’re soon in familiar surroundings at the Grand Stairway over the Garden Court Lounge. The Registration Area is directly across from the base of the stairway.

2. YOU CAN TURN IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION and follow the hallway. Walk down to the Tower Lobby, and turn left. The Registration Area is just a few steps beyond.

3. GO DOWN ONE MORE FLIGHT OF STAIRS FROM WHERE YOU ARE NOW. At the bottom, turn to your left, then pass between the Plaza Essentials Gift Shop and Modern Day Floral and Events as you head toward the motor lobby. A turn to your left and you’re back to where you began.

*You are now on your own to explore some more.
We sincerely hope you had an enjoyable tour!
If you have questions, contact our Concierge.*





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