

2011 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

Restoration and Reconstruction of the Cosmopolitan Hotel



The fully restored Cosmopolitan Hotel.

Restoring the former Casa de Bandini restaurant to its operation as the 1869-1874 Cosmopolitan Hotel was remarkable because of the building's long history, adobe walls that dated back to 1829, second floor wood-frame construction, historic integrity, and association with significant people and events. The project utilized the Secretary of the Interior's Standards in preserving, rehabilitating, restoring and reconstructing the building.

The hotel is significant because its 180-year history reflects key cultural shifts, architectural and constructional changes, and new uses as San Diego evolved from a Mexican pueblo to an American frontier community. Built originally as a single-story adobe home by Don Juan Bandini between 1869 and 1829, the building became a hotel and stage stop when a second-story wood-frame addition was added in 1869. After the hotel closed, it became a boarding house and olive-curing factory before undergoing two major renovations in the 20th century.

The many partners involved in this project made a concerted effort to preserve as much historic material as possible and to restore or reconstruct historic features, so roughly 80 percent of the restored hotel's original fabric and features have been preserved or accurately reconstructed. Because the building's construction is unusual, State Parks and its partners often followed unconventional rehabilitation and restoration treatments. A generous grant from the California Cultural and Historical Endowment and a dedicated and talented team of consultants and artisans were all major components in the project's success. The three-year, \$7 million remodeling effort by concessionaire Chuck Ross

turned the property into an accurate recreation of the original, with 10 rooms featuring wood clawfoot and copper basin bathtubs and pull-chain toilets.

Special contributors to the project: ASM Archaeology, in partnership with IS Architecture, did the vertical and horizontal explorations and documentation. Soltek Pacific, the primary contractor, smoothly accommodated work order changes such as moving drain lines to protect original footings, reusing historic fabric, and finding creative routes for electricity and plumbing. Historical Consultant Bruce Coons (SOHO) helped with balcony railings, wall treatments, furnishings, faux painting and lighting. Chuck Ross of Old Town Family Hospitality Corp shared oversight for the construction, renovation, and landscaping along with supervising the purchase of interior furnishings and artwork, authenticated to date back to the 1870s.

Learn more about the history of the Cosmopolitan Hotel:

<http://oldtowncosmopolitan.com/history/>