

NEW YORK'S MOST ROYAL SUITE

NEW YORK, NY – One of Manhattan's most majestic Park Avenue apartments is the two-bedroom The Royal Suite at The Waldorf Towers occupying the entire 50th Street length of the top floor of the building.

With its commanding cityscape and river views, the former New York City residence of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor has been a hideaway for Hollywood to pop culture royalty – Elizabeth Taylor to Britney Spears – and its allure is second only to The Waldorf Towers' Presidential Suite, which has housed every U.S. President since Herbert Hoover and countless other heads-of-state, in terms of the grand lineage of its guest roster.

Ironically, considering the family dynamics of the British Royal Family, the suite was created in 1957 for Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip who had been assigned The Presidential Suite. However, a Saudi prince who had been staying there took ill and his departure was delayed. Hence, the hotel had to scramble to assemble appropriately lavish accommodations for the Queen of England and her consort. The result was The Royal Suite. When the Windsors, who had maintained a residence in The Waldorf Towers since shortly after his abdication (which had made Elizabeth the heir to the throne), heard about the suite created for the duke's niece, they claimed it as their own.

Today, the Royal Suite, which has also accommodated the likes of Imelda Marcos and Van Cliburn, is as regal as its provenance, and commands \$10,000 per night. Drawing inspiration from their decade-long occupation of the suite, Ken Hurd of Boston-based Kenneth E. Hurd took on the task of a \$1 million refurbishment of the suite in 2004, using the Windsors' decorative style, and their manor outside Paris as a design model.

“Entering the suite is like traveling back in time to the Windsors' private estate,” notes Hurd. “Opulent details such as gold-embellished woodwork, layers of champagne-colored Italian silks, antique mahogany moldings and carefully selected artwork and accessories reinforce the sense of a well-traveled, sophisticated and international elegance. The overall effect is that it is as if the Duke and Duchess themselves have graciously consented to the loan of their personal quarters.

According to Hurd, who has overseen the \$400 million master planned Art deco restoration of the Waldorf Astoria and The Waldorf Towers over the past 15 years, the biggest challenge of The Royal Suite project was to reappportion the two bedrooms, which were similar in size, into one grandly scaled master suite and another smaller, but equally appealing bedchamber, and in the process, maintain the historical integrity of the suite.

Hurd's solution was to create a master bedroom very much in keeping with the Duchess's style with the furnish colorations in soft blues and silvers. The case goods are painted in white and gold, and over the new fireplace is a hand-painted trumeau. A custom designed needlepoint carpet covers the floor of this gracefully feminine room and needlepoint pillows featuring the Duchess's beloved Pugs accent the chairs in the seating area.

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The second bedroom received equal attention to detail albeit in a more masculine vein. Antique mahogany case goods against a backdrop of light gold wall covering within painted panel moldings are complimented by upholstered seating in rich saddle colored chenille fabrics. A custom silk tapestry hangs over the bed on a decorative rod. Bronze silk drapery on mahogany rods, with brushed gold leaf finials, frame the windows. Hurd also introduced a four-fixture bathroom and a built-in bar to give the room some 21st century élan as the built-in plasma screen televisions do in the both bedrooms.

The parlor and dining room were kept architecturally intact, although the oval entry foyer benefited a new custom-designed decorative stone floor utilizing four different marbles. In keeping with the essentially French design vocabulary, its ivory walls are capped by a dome ceiling in light blue and the foyer is furnished with a pair of Empire benches and a stunning French vitrine in highly figured mahogany with pear wood inlays.

Entering the living room is like entering the Windsors' French manor house salon with its Aubusson-inspired custom designed hand-woven petit-point floral carpet on an ivory ground with a blue border and Tiffany blue walls accented with gold leaf panel moldings. European fabrics in ivory, light blue and gold adorn plushly upholstered seating and drapery treatments in layers of champagne-colored Italian silks complete the look of quiet luxury. Lighting this understated opulence are eight new antique gold candelabra sconces and a Venetian chandelier.

The dining room conveys a sense of elegant intimacy encased in lush fabric upholstered paneled walls above newly installed wainscot panels. Shades of bronze tinted gold fabrics with blue accents provide a backdrop for a mahogany Empire dining table that can accommodate up to sixteen people for formal dinners.

The Waldorf Towers, the exclusive boutique hotel occupying the 28th through 42nd floors of the Waldorf Astoria, offers a residential ambiance distinguished by exceptional privacy and highly personalized service. While it benefits from a separate, dedicated entrance on 50th Street and lobby, The Waldorf Towers affords guests convenient access to all the restaurants, shops and services of the adjoining Waldorf Astoria, a member of The Waldorf=Astoria Collection™, Hilton Hotels Corporation. It is the preferred New York residence of heads-of-state, royalty, celebrities and corporate moguls. A Guerlain Boutique recently opened in the hotel's main lobby and precedes the debut of a multi-million dollar Guerlain Spa in Summer 2008. For more information or for reservations, please call The Waldorf Towers at (212) 355-3100 or (888) WATOWER or visit www.thewaldorftowers.com.

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