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An Artful Renaissance for Chicago's Blackstone: Reclaiming the Architecture and the Memories with a Contemporary Twist

An extraordinary \$118 million showcase renovation transforms a Chicago legend into The Blackstone, A Renaissance Hotel.

/24-7PressRelease/ - CHICAGO, IL, January 24, 2008 - An extraordinary \$118 million showcase renovation transforms a Chicago legend into The Blackstone, A Renaissance Hotel.

A prominent Chicago architectural icon, the former [Blackstone hotel](#), once a symbol of economic progress and civic pride that was celebrated as the "Hotel of Presidents" and played host to countless celebrities including Katharine Hepburn, Tennessee Williams, Paul Newman and Lena Horne will open soon as The Blackstone, a 332-room luxury Renaissance-brand hotel.

The \$118 million showcase renovation of the long dormant, 23-story, Beaux-Arts Blackstone hotel by Sage Hospitality Resources, the Denver, Co based hospitality company that is also managing the hotel, is expected to be complete in early 2008. Located at 636 South Michigan Avenue, in the heart of the City's arts and theater district -adjacent to the world class Millennium Park, The Blackstone represents yet another significant development milestone in the renaissance of Chicago's downtown South Loop.

The luxury [Chicago hotel on Michigan Avenue's](#) ambiance will invoke an imaginative, distinctly Chicago experience with a dynamic mix of historic architecture and innovative design elements combined with luxury amenities and thoughtful guest services.

A specially curated collection of over 1400 original artworks exclusively by Chicago artists, promises to lend a decidedly contemporary twist to the character of the hotel. Guests entering the lavishly restored, historic Blackstone lobby will be treated to an exciting visual counterpoint with an avante garde video-generated computer art piece that will present exquisitely composed and perpetually changing views of Chicago's lakefront displayed on plasma television screens.

The Blackstone will feature 332 stylish guest rooms, 12 sumptuous suites, 13,230 square feet of meeting space, a health club and business center. A street level Starbucks Caf with outdoor seating will serve hotel guests, the local business community and neighborhood residents. The Sage Restaurant Group will also open and operate an independent destination restaurant at the Michigan Avenue location, Mercat a la Planxa, offering a modern [Chicago loop restaurant](#) specializing in Catalan cuisine.

The Blackstone is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In order to preserve its architectural integrity, the Blackstone Hotel is being renovated as a "certified historic rehabilitation" in accordance with preservation guidelines established by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. Whenever possible, The Blackstone's significant historic and architectural elements are being preserved, refurbished and incorporated in the renovation design. The primary historic facades of the 23-story landmark have been fully retained and restored including the hotel's ornate terra cotta cladding that embellishes the hotel's exterior.

As part of The Blackstone renovation, Sage sensitively redesigned all the guest room floors to reconfigure and dramatically enlarge the hotel's [downtown Chicago lodging](#) spaces. A previously unfinished space under the porthole-accented mansard roof is being transformed into a series of luxury suites overlooking Lake Michigan. The interior design pays homage to Chicago, incorporating modern finishes and an eclectic mix of elegant furniture styles and fabrics while embracing the classical architecture of the landmark hotel.

Built by prominent hoteliers Tracy and John Drake between 1908 and 1910, the Blackstone is considered Chicago's finest example of a turn-of-the-century luxury hotel. The Beaux-Art architectural landmark was designed by the architectural firm Marshall & Fox and named for Timothy Blackstone, the president of the Illinois Central Railroad, whose mansion had stood on the site. For many decades, The Blackstone was considered to be Chicago's premier luxury hotel playing host to numerous celebrities including Enrico Caruso who was present at its opening, Rudolph Valentino, Joan Crawford, Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn, Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote and Carl Sandburg who celebrated his 75th birthday there.

Declared a Chicago Landmark on April 28, 1998, the Blackstone was briefly owned by the Beatles' spiritual advisor, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi but had lain dormant since 1999, before Sage Hospitality acquired the property in 2005.

About The Blackstone, A Renaissance Hotel

Discover a legend with the remarkable revival of The Blackstone, A Renaissance Hotel in Chicago, Illinois. Indulge in a distinctly historic Chicago hotel ambiance, which has been a favorite retreat to movie stars, sports legends, royalty and presidents since 1910. Meticulously restored to its original grandeur, the acclaimed Chicago Blackstone Hotel houses a seamless mix of traditional architecture and modern design, highlighted by contemporary video art and over 1,400 works by local artists. Luxurious accommodations and amenities enhance each of the 332 stunning guest rooms and 12 stately suites, while 13,230 square feet of lavishly preserved event space carry on the tradition of opulent affairs at this [luxury hotel in Chicago, Illinois](#). A convenient location near Grant Park, Soldier Field, Field Museum, and Shedd Aquarium positions this Chicago Loop hotel in the heart of the Windy City's top attractions. Experience the renowned Chicago Blackstone Hotel, where memory meets reality in a legendary way. For more information or to make a reservation, call 312-447-0955 or visit <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/chirh-the-blackstone-a-renaissance-hotel/>.