

Historical Time Line: 1958 – 2018

1958

- Sam Friedland, founder of Food Fair supermarket chain, opens the 750-room Diplomat hotel on South Ocean Drive

1962

- Lawrence Welk filmed his first TV show in Florida.

1965

- Sen. Robert Kennedy, his wife Ethel, and his mother Rose Kennedy attended the John F. Kennedy Memorial Ball.
- Arthur Godfrey taped his popular CBS radio show from the Tack Room Lounge

1966

- Judy Garland played the hotel's Café Crystal.

1967

- Sammy Davis, Jr. and Liza Minnelli did their first joint concert. A record 3,200 attended.

1983

- The hotel is closed for the winter season after a series of arson fires leads to losses of \$30 million in business and \$20 million in recent renovations.

1984

- The hotel reopens
- Former President Ronald Reagan addresses the International Longshoremen's Association at the Diplomat.
- Bob Hope performs at the hotel's 1984 New Year's Eve Gala

Late 1980's

- Financial difficulties resulted in entire floors of guestrooms and suites being closed. The hotel almost runs out of operating capital and cannot pay close to 200 creditors.

1982

- Saudi Arabian Sheik Mohammed Al-Fassi rented two floors at the Diplomat and was arrested after trying to skip out on a \$1.4 million tab. He unsuccessfully sued the hotel for \$1 trillion.

1987

- Irving Cowan, son-in-law to Sam Friedland, gave up control of the hotel to a consortium of labor union pension funds, whose managers agree to bail out the hotel with a \$44 million loan.

June 1988

- Harbaugh Hotels of Palm Springs, California, a management company hired by the lenders, began renovating the hotel.

January 1990

- Financial troubles persist forcing the hotel's lenders to file a foreclosure suit only to later be dropped, creating the opportunity for new financing.

May 30, 1991

- The hotel is sold to one of its lenders, the Union Labor Life Insurance Co. The hotel was then closed for renovation, but never reopened.

July 1997

- The United Association of Journeymen & Apprentices of the Plumbing & Pipe Fitting Industry of the US & Canada (UA) announced it had reached a tentative agreement to buy the hotel.

October 1997

- The hotel is sold to the UA.

December 1997

- The Diplomat hires the Coral Gables-based architectural firm, Nichols Brosch Sandoval & Associates, to design a new 1,000-room hotel, convention center and retail complex.

April 17, 1998

- Five hundred pounds of dynamite are used to implode the historic hotel, marking the beginning of a new era for The Diplomat.

March 15, 2000

- The Country Club at The Diplomat opens to the public: Joe Lee-designed golf course, Pro Shops, Locker Rooms, 60-luxury guestrooms, 10-clay tennis courts, Grand Ballroom, The Royal Palm Room, The Links Grill and the Tack Room Lounge.

September 2000

- The Spa at The Diplomat opens to the public: 30,000-sq. ft. featuring 20-treatments rooms and complete fitness facility.

August 2001

- Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. appointed management company for the renamed The Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa, along with The Diplomat Country Club & Spa – a member of Starwood's Luxury Collection.

January 2002

- Scheduled opening of the main beachfront 1,000-room hotel, adjacent 209,000-sq. ft. Convention Center and The Diplomat Landing, a connected retail center & marina.

September 2014

- The hotel is acquired by Thayer Lodging Group (“Thayer”).

October 2014

- The hotel joins Curio – A collection by Hilton Worldwide and announces a \$100 million enhancement initiative. (Renovations began with lobby in Sept. 2015 and were finished May 2017).

April 2017

- The Diplomat Beach Resort reopens to the public under Curio – A collection by Hilton Worldwide with a \$100 million renovation including two restaurants helmed by celebrity chefs, Geoffrey Zakarian of Point Royal and Michael Schulson of Monkitaail.

November 2018

- The Diplomat Spa + Wellness launches partnership with Core Fitness Training (CFT) and opens CFT Studio at the Diplomat Landing.