



Retired Business Traveler Contributor LKL, Oklahoma City OK: Over nearly five decades, I had the pleasure of visiting some of California's most outstanding hotels. Sometimes the room rates were sky-high (and even higher today), but once I experienced the posh surroundings, I always believed the price was well worth the enjoyment. These are my favorites:

The Fairmont (950 Mason St., San Francisco CA 94108, fairmont.com/san-francisco) Current rate from \$250. Under construction when the 1906 earthquake devastated the city, the Fairmont survived. Since then, the magnificent hotel has stood like a proud sentinel on Nob Hill, offering sweeping views of the city to its guests.

My first visit to the hotel was in early 1944 when assigned to the nearby Treasure Island Navy Base. While awaiting sea duty, a shipmate and I treated ourselves to a night and dinner at the Fairmont. Costs then were \$8 for the room and \$5 for a steak dinner, dessert and drinks.

Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel (7000 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles CA 90028, www.thompsonhotels.com/Roosevelt) My first visit to the Hollywood Roosevelt was in 1980, when my family joined a group trip and tour. Our room rate then was \$50, compared to today's \$350.

The Roosevelt is still an elegant reminder of Hollywood's glamorous past, when guests included Marilyn Monroe, Clark Gable, Carole Lombard, Errol Flynn and other movie stars.

Hotel Del Coronado (1500 Orange Av., Coronado CA 92118, www.hoteldel.com) Current rate from \$400. Just a scenic 15-minute scenic bridge journey across the bay from San Diego, the beautiful, red-roofed beachfront hotel has welcomed guests since 1888. I've visited several times over the years, with my most memorable one in 1959.

I won a free luxurious three-nighter at a quiz show just a couple of years after "Some Like It Hot" was filmed at the hotel. The movie starred Marilyn Monroe, Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis, and there were still furnishings, photos and props available for visitors to see.

Chateau Marmont (8221 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood CA, 90046, www.chateaumarmont.com)
Current rates from \$450. Built in 1927, it's where stars, kings, princes and princesses have lounged, dined, wine, sunned and sometimes sinned in luxury since silent movie days. I've never been an overnight guest at the French-themed hotel and cottages, but have had lunch several times at the great terrace restaurant, al fresco.

I usually ordered its famous lamb shepherd's pie with a glass of wine. I enjoyed it at a table that once could have been occupied by Greta Garbo, James Dean, Leonardo DiCaprio, Elizabeth Taylor, Robert DeNiro, Scarlett Johansson or Lindsay Lohan.

Beverly Hills Hotel (9641 Sunset Blvd., Beverly Hills CA 90210, www.beverlyhillshotel.com)
Rooms from \$450. Perched amid multi-million-dollar mansions on famed Sunset Boulevard, the century-old hotel and bungalows still rank among the most luxurious in California. My first visit were in 1953. I was a staffer at the Beverly Hills Citizen, a long-gone daily afternoon newspaper owned by Will Rogers, Jr.

I covered events at the hotel's famed Polo Lounge. One I remember most was a 1955 luncheon when director Cecil B. DeMille introduced young star Charlton Heston of the soon-to-be-released movie, "The Ten Commandments."