

[Television personality](#) and AZfoothills.com columnist [Nadine Toren](#) is scouring the area, finding savvy Valley features, bringing readers “on the scene.” Every day she’ll introduce you to [celebrities](#), [athletes](#), and give you an inside look into local events and hot spots. She’ll touch on topical issues, and keep AZ fans posted on all the big talkers [around town](#).



Planning an East Coast getaway? Get the royal treatment at NYC's Palace Hotel.

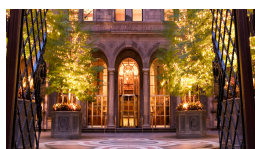
It was a December evening in Manhattan when we arrived at The New York Palace. I felt totally *Sex in the City* as we checked into the swanky hotel on the iconic 50th and Madison Avenue corner. The fiancé and I walked into the elegant building flaunting such splendor, greeted by a luxurious chandelier hanging from the grand Fourier, surrounded by dual staircases. There we were in New York City among architectural authenticity—The Palace boasts a beautiful courtyard incorporating motifs from several 15th-century Italian cathedrals, and it serves as the entranceway to the historic Villard Mansion since 1882.

But before learning about the hotel's rich history, the fiancé and I got a drink...on the 39th floor.

See, The Palace offers two types of rooms (excluding its 7 types of fabulous suites). In addition to its stunning generic accommodations, The Palace has an elite area called *The Towers*; basically, a hotel within the hotel. The 176 spectacular guestrooms offer the ultimate views, plus exclusive entry to the Tower Club, located on the 39th floor. Consider this chic club your personal lounge equipped with fresh food, an on-site concierge, and top-notch premium liqueur, wine, beer, and bubbly. So there's no surprise that's where the fiancé and I kicked off our night at the hotel.

Seriously, you wouldn't believe the views from this lounge. Tall floor-to-ceiling windows give you a birds-eye look of the energetic city—mesmerizing sites of St. Patrick's Cathedral (stunning!) and Rockefeller Center. They were views I had previously only seen in movies...views I dreamt of seeing for real. As my Manhattan cousin says, New York is the nation's homeland. And honey, I was home.

We toasted over champagne to a wonderful night ahead. And after our pre-dinner snack, we headed to our Tower room.



Our overnight accommodations were on the 43rd floor overlooking just as amazing views as the Tower Club lounge. (Just when I thought things couldn't get any better!) After checking out the marble bathroom, flat screen, and fabulous amenities (like my personal Palace robe), I took a seat on the plush king bed, staring through the window at the city lights.

It's hard to believe, but more than a century ago in 1882, Henry Villard, one of the nation's most prominent financiers, teamed up with an outstanding architectural firm spearheaded by Stanford White, to create a residence of singular style. At that time, neo-Italian Renaissance style was totally “in,” so Villard and his team conceived The Villard Mansion—a magnificent home fit for a king. However, this place wasn't in the heart of Rome; rather, in midtown Manhattan.

Today, the mansion boasts exquisite interiors coated in green marble, bronze décor, coffered ceilings, gold touches, and romantic mosaics. The Madison Room, recognized as one of the most beautiful preserved rooms in history, is available for private parties...of course, for a price. (The Palace sees a lot of celebs.)

There is also a dramatic two-story Renaissance-style Gold Room, fittingly named, as the room is almost entirely gold. It was originally Villard's music room, equipped with a balcony for an ideal performance stage.

Also in the mansion, is a Drawing Room featuring Italian marble fireplaces, and a cozy library—also popular for party rental space.

The best part of all: the mansion's magnificent rooms are accessible from The Palace Hotel.



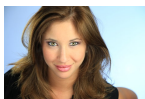
It just so happens the Archdiocese of New York owns the land, so in the mid-seventies, they cleared the way for hotel development. And so began the creation of the magnificent towers.

The hotel opened in 1980, flaunting a bi-level lobby uniting The Villard Mansion with the Towers. Go up the grand staircase, and you'll find the royally charming oval Villard Ballroom, perfect for a classic NYC wedding.

Now, The New York Palace is home to GILT, a Michelin Two-Star fine dining restaurant. The Modern-American eatery is inside the Villard Mansion, with vaulted ceilings and 19th century design. However, the atmosphere has a chic contemporary feel, offering a perfect combination of past and present décor. (And you must check out the neighboring bar. It's totally cool.)

No doubt, you'll feel part of New York's esteemed history splurging at The Palace. And if you're anything like me, simply seeing the city lights from a rare perspective made our Palace overnight well worth it. Do check it out, and definitely opt for a Tower Room.

To book your stay, visit: www.newyorkpalace.com.



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