

THE BEST ACCORDING TO...

Thierry Roch

A hotel historian checks into three fixed-up classics.

In the scramble to stay cutting edge, modern hotels tend to shed all evidence of a past. Need a history fix but can't live without your wireless? For a real learning experience, says Historic Hotels of America director Thierry Roch, book yourself into one of these newly renovated landmarks:

New Sheridan Hotel TELLURIDE, COLO.

Rebuilt in 1894 after a fire burned down the original three-story wooden structure, the New Sheridan retains the elegant Victorian sensibility of its predecessor. Beyond its staid redbrick exterior, the owners took pains to restore the art, furniture, and light fixtures inside. The wood-carved front barroom keeps a 19th-century look with mahogany wall paneling and leaded-glass room dividers. As part of the renovation, the guestrooms were also retrofitted to include wireless Internet and cable TV. newsheridan.com

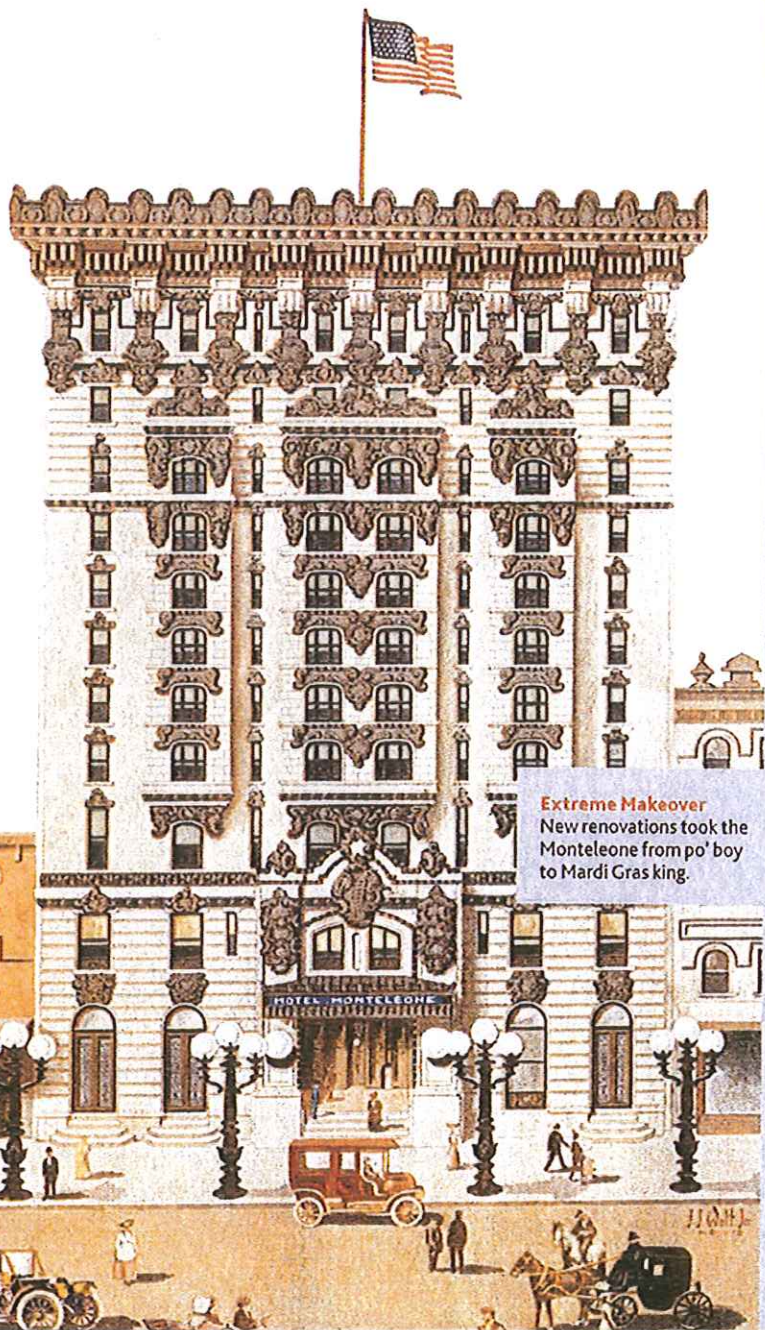
Hotel Monteleone NEW ORLEANS

Noted for its arresting beaux-arts façade, the elegant Hotel Monteleone is a landmark in the French Quarter and the largest full-service hotel in the area. A \$70 million renovation supplied guestrooms in the 19th-century wonder with marble baths, granite tile, and high-speed Internet access. Earlier improvements restored the original Italian marble in the lobby, repainted the ceiling in the Queen Anne Ballroom, and raised the room ceilings to their original heights. Meanwhile, the legendary revolving carousel piano bar received new upholstery and carpeting, while retaining its original canopy. hotelmonteleone.com

Providence Biltmore PROVIDENCE, R.I.

With its sleek, art deco exterior and distinctive V-shape, the Biltmore is a place visitors to Providence shouldn't miss. More than \$14 million in renovations have brought this member of the National Preservation Register back to its original Roaring '20s splendor. The upgrades include luxury conference rooms, a McCormick and Schmick's seafood restaurant, and the 5,500-square-foot Red Door spa—the only full-service spa in the city. The owners also brought classic artwork out of storage, including *Falstaff and His Friends*, a 6-foot by 24-foot painting from the Biltmore's early years. providencebiltmore.com

America's historic hotels are an alternative to the ordinary. They give us a sense of place and time. In many ways, the hotel is the travel experience.'



Extreme Makeover
New renovations took the Monteleone from po' boy to Mardi Gras king.