

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Four A.P.

April

2009



\$3.99

04>



0 71486 02822 2
saturdayeveningpost.com

Natalie Cole • Hybrid Plug-In Cars
Working Past Retirement • Living with Autism
Sara Snow, Green Advocate

Lobbying Efforts:

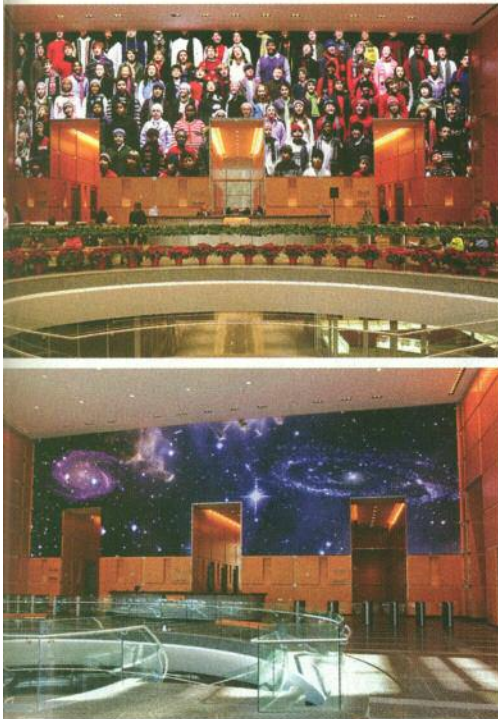
Inside the Grandest Entrances in America

Call it the “surprise inside.” Sometimes the most unassuming buildings conceal the most astonishing lobbies—whimsical, wonderful, and completely unexpected. Here are nine show-stoppers worth a special trip.

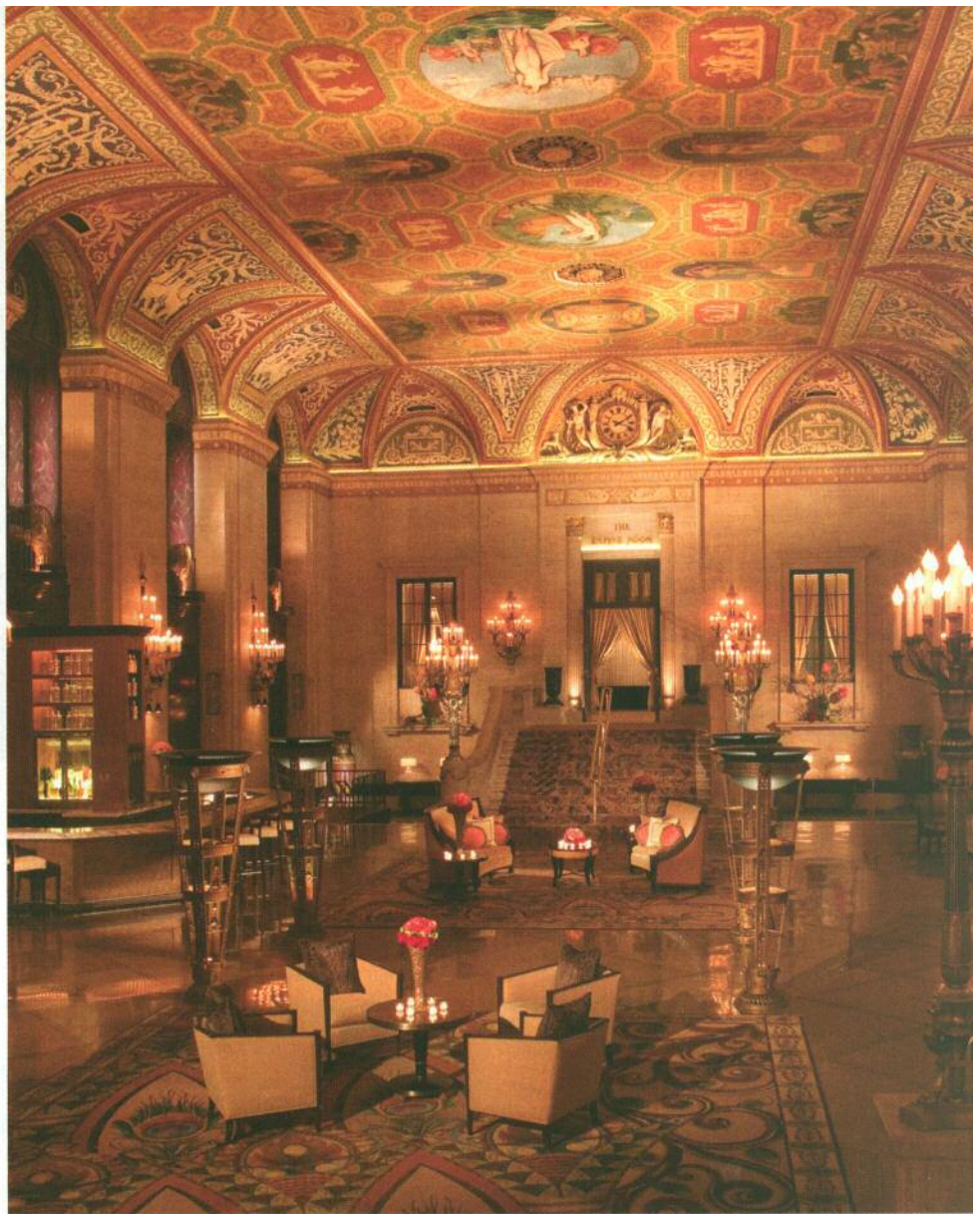
BY IYNA CARUSO



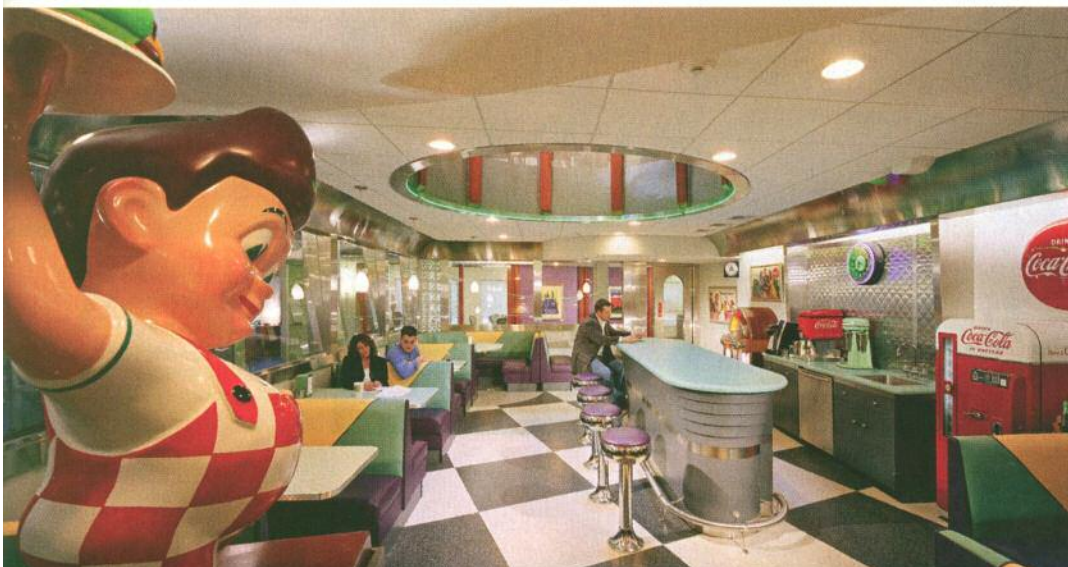
CURTIS CENTER Philadelphia's art collections stack up with the best of them, but one of the city's most prized art treasures isn't in a museum or gallery. Instead, it graces the lobby of the Curtis Center office building—once home to *The Saturday Evening Post* magazine. *Dream Garden* is the brilliant mosaic based on a painting by Maxfield Parrish and reinterpreted by artisans of Tiffany Studios. The 15-by-49-foot mosaic, which took six months to install, is comprised of more than 100,000 hand-fired glass pieces. Its iridescence renders it almost jewel-like in appearance.



COMCAST CENTER Gawk this way. The headquarters of the Comcast corporation, the newest and tallest addition to the Philadelphia skyline, is turning heads not only for its soaring glass-curtain exterior, but also for its stunning public art video installation in the main lobby. Dubbed the Comcast Experience, the LED display screen is massive—83 feet by 25 feet—and five times the resolution of a high-definition screen. Visitors can be forgiven for stopping in their tracks at the computer-generated images. Those 10 million pixels mean the constantly changing videos, ranging from NASA satellite images to historical sites and nature footage, look downright real. The technology was created by David Niles and presented to the city as a gift by Comcast and building owner Liberty Property Trust.



THE PALMER HOUSE There's a lot of competition for the eye's attention in the lobby of The Palmer House in Chicago, but it's the majestic scene above visitors' heads that causes jaws to drop. It's not exactly the Sistine Chapel, but it may be as close as it gets on U.S. soil. The ceiling is a seamless panorama of 21 murals portraying figures from Greek mythology. Art Deco artist Louis Pierre Rigal painted the canvases in his native France, which were then shipped and installed in the hotel's lobby in 1926. Seventy years later, Italian artist Lido Lippi, who had worked on a restoration of the Sistine Chapel, was tapped to clean, restore, and apply a polymer to The Palmer House ceiling, ensuring the murals would continue to astonish visitors into the next century.



ADAMS & KNIGHT OFFICES

The almost ho-hum brick-and-mortar facade housing the offices of communications firm Adams & Knight doesn't begin to prepare visitors for what awaits them inside: a time warp back to the 1950s. The lobby features a functioning retro diner complete with booths, a milkshake machine, authentic memorabilia, and a refurbished Wurlitzer jukebox. *Mr. Sandman*, anyone? The lobby sets the stage for the agency's playfully offbeat offices that spotlight co-owner Bill Knight's collection of vintage advertisements and original travel posters.

Visitor's Guide

Some lobbies are open to the public. Others are private but available for tours. Call in advance.

Adams & Knight Offices

80 Avon Meadow Lane
Avon, CT 06001
(860) 676-2300

Comcast Center

1701 John F. Kennedy Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 286-1700

Curtis Center

601 Walnut St.
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 238-6450

Hyland Software Headquarters

28500 Clemens Road
Westlake, OH 44145
(440) 788-5000

Icon Brickell

495 Brickell Ave.
Miami, FL 33131
(305) 371-1411

Liberty Hotel

215 Charles St.
Boston, MA 02114
(866) 507-5245

McRae Offices

100 Peachtree St.
Suite 3200
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 917-0620

The Palmer House

17 East Monroe St.
Chicago, IL 60603
(312) 726-7500

Riverhouse Condominiums

One Rockefeller Park
New York, NY 10282
(212) 587-1200



ICON BRICKELL If Alice found herself thrust into a futuristic Wonderland, it might look something like the fantasy lobby dreamed up by Philippe Starck for the Miami condominium Icon Brickell. Starck, known for his dramatic interiors, took his cue from the ancient stone-carved statues of Easter Island. A pair of 22-foot-tall fiberglass moai-inspired statues rules over the lobby, surrounded by dozens of golden moai miniatures and frameless portraits. Enveloping it all is an acid yellow tint on the floor-to-ceiling windows that gives the lobby space an otherworldly hue.



RIVERHOUSE CONDOMINIUMS Visitors can practically feel ebb and flow in the lobby of Riverhouse, a luxury Manhattan condominium overlooking the Hudson River. Credit designer David Rockwell, whose vast portfolio includes the set for *Hairspray* on Broadway and the Cirque du Soleil building at Walt Disney World, for a theatrical interpretation of a nautical theme. A "water wall" of twisted aluminum spirals looks like an ocean wave. Nearby, lounge seats dubbed "chocolate whales" for their shapes have been hand-carved from poplar trees. They're functional and sculptural. And then there's the fantastical staircase—more twirl than spiral, as if caught in a soft breeze.



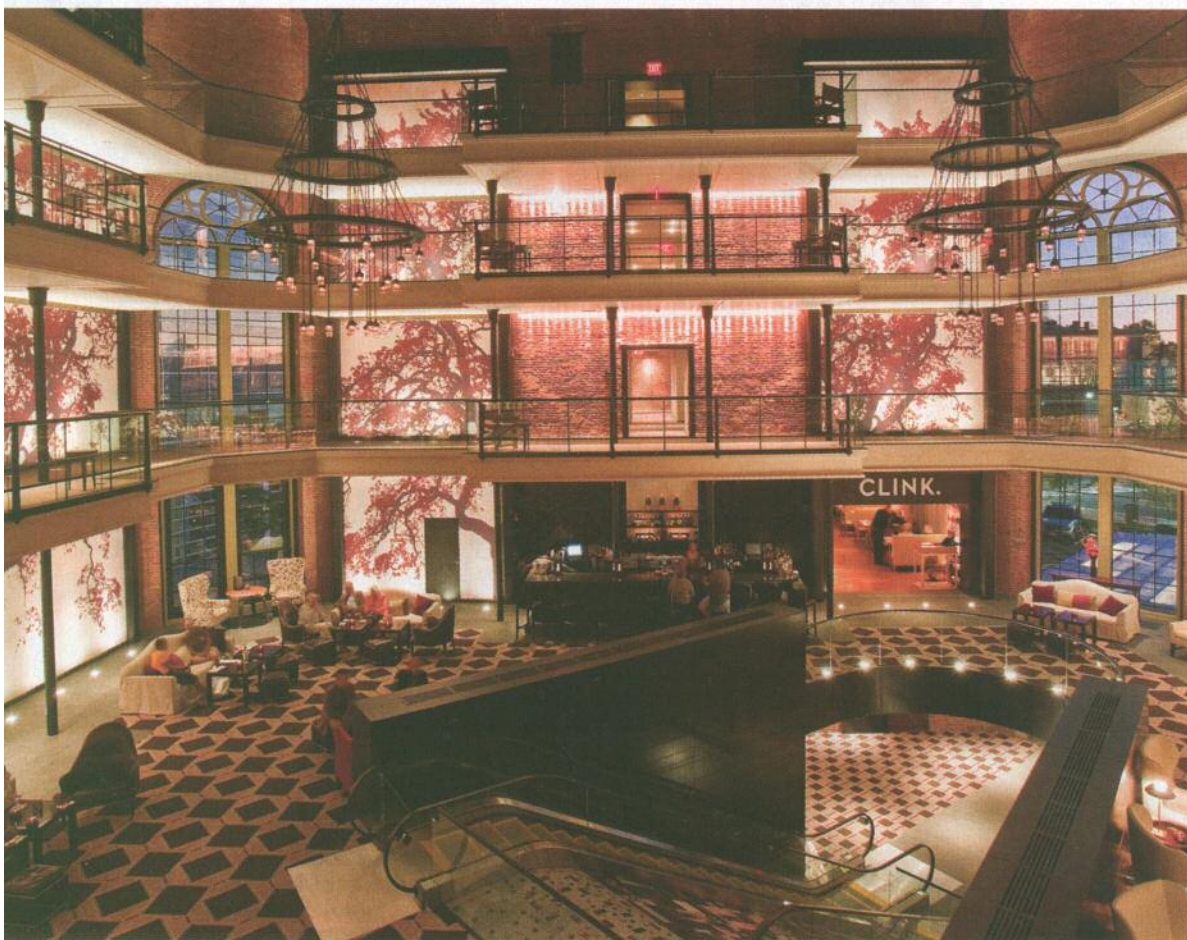
HYLAND SOFTWARE HEADQUARTERS

The lobby of Hyland Software is minimalist and industrial—what you might expect of a technology company. But there's one thing you wouldn't expect, and that's a giant stainless steel slide. It's no prop. Employees actually bypass the staircase and elevator and take express rides down to the main floor. It was a first for the design and architectural firm of Vocon, but not Hyland. A plastic spiral slide was already set up in an employee-only section of the headquarters.



MCRAE OFFICES

Gray cubicles and industrial carpeting? Not in the offices of McRae, a marketing agency on the top floor of the Equitable Building in downtown Atlanta. The firm reached for the brass ring when it hired local artist Dianna Love Snell to hand paint an astonishing 40-foot mural of the Six Flags Over Georgia carousel. You can almost hear the pipe organ music. The *trompe l'oeil* rendering of this century-old merry-go-round is a nod to company president Joe Snowden's native Atlanta roots and a conversation starter that immediately puts visitors at ease.



LIBERTY HOTEL

Call it "jailhouse shock." The conversion of Boston's historic Charles Street Jail into a \$150-million luxury hotel resulted in one of the more inspired lobbies around. The jail's central atrium forms the nucleus of the hotel's lobby, bar, and restaurant. Original catwalks, once trod by prisoners ranging from protesting suffragists to noted imposter Frank Abagnale of *Catch Me If You Can* movie fame, have been restored and relocated. Other architectural elements, such as the cupola, were painstakingly rebuilt. A focal point is a specially commissioned mosaic by artist Coral Bourgeois that depicts historical scenes and personalities from penitentiaries and true-life crimes. The jail was decommissioned in 1990, and the property is now on the National Register of Historic Places.