

# The Ahwahnee Fact Sheet

<b><u>ORIGIN:</u></b>	Prior to the construction of The Ahwahnee, the two largest concessioners in the Park were the Curry Camping Company and the Yosemite National Park Company. The National Park Service ordered the two companies to merge in 1925, forming Yosemite Park and Curry Co. As part of the company's new contract, they agreed to construct a modern luxury hotel. This was particularly important to Stephen T. Mather, director of the National Park Service, who knew Yosemite needed the support of influential lawmakers – and thus a suitable place to accommodate them.
<b><u>LOCATION:</u></b>	In Yosemite Valley, approximately one mile east of Yosemite Village. Surrounded by the world famous scenery of Yosemite National Park, the hotel offers views of Half Dome, Glacier Point, Royal Arches and Yosemite Falls.
<b><u>CORNERSTONE LAID:</u></b>	August 1, 1926
<b><u>OPENING DAY:</u></b>	July 14, 1927
<b><u>NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK:</u></b>	June 2, 1987
<b><u>OPERATED BY:</u></b>	DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, Inc., an authorized National Park Service concessioner.
<b><u>ARCHITECT:</u></b>	Gilbert Stanley Underwood of Los Angeles. Supervisory Architect, Perry Gage
<b><u>CONTRACTOR:</u></b>	James L. McLaughlin of San Francisco
<b><u>GENERAL MANAGER:</u></b>	Roger Young
<b><u>EXECUTIVE CHEF:</u></b>	Terry M. Sheehan
<b><u>ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:</u></b>	<p><b><u>Exterior</u></b> – A massive, six-story structure with three wings, faced with native granite and carefully dyed concrete, which was poured and specially formed to resemble redwood boards and beams. The hotel blends in with its backdrop of the Royal Arches. Restored by architect, Walter Sontheimer, from 1976-1979. The hotel was re-roofed in 2004 using slate from the same quarry that provided the original roofing.</p> <p><b><u>Interior</u></b> – The main floor is characterized by high ceilings, large rooms and big square columns. Floor-to-ceiling windows bring the dramatic scenery indoors.</p> <p><b><u>Landscaping</u></b> – Designed by Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., planted by Carl Purdy and maintained by Diana Marchese.</p>
<b><u>REFURBISHMENT:</u></b>	In 2004, The Ahwahnee completed a three-phase, \$2.25 million remodel project that encompassed nearly every aspect of the hotel, from the historic slate roof to the guest, meeting and public rooms.

**Guest Rooms** – Guestrooms feature specially designed headboards, storage chests and armoires. Window treatments frame the spectacular scenery visible from most rooms. New carpeting, mattresses, in-room coffee makers, case goods and soft goods were installed in the hotel's 99 main hotel rooms in 2004, brightening the overall appearance of the rooms.

**Public Areas** – The magnificent Great Lounge features fabrics with designs, colors and patterns reflecting the Native American heritage found in the hotel's original décor. Comfortable sofas and chairs, which were reupholstered in 2004, beckon to guests, inviting them to sit and gaze at the beauty of the hotel and its exteriors. Two massive, wrought iron table lamps, inspired by the hotel's original chandeliers, add additional light and ambiance. Large black and white photographs feature scenes of Yosemite life in bygone eras. Some are rare works by famed photographer Ansel Adams.

**Meeting Rooms** -- The Ahwahnee's three main meeting spaces – the Tudor, Colonial and Tressider rooms – received an update in 2004 that included new carpet, paint, and executive tables and chairs. Wi-Fi Internet access was also recently introduced into the meeting rooms, and state-of-the-art presentation and meeting equipment is scheduled for installation in early 2005.

**Gift Shops** – Utilizing materials and designs historically found in the hotel, San Francisco designer Linda Wong, transformed The Ahwahnee Gift Shop into a beautiful, bright facility that mirrors The Ahwahnee's historic décor and the park's natural and cultural history. Along with the original iron and glass pendant light fixtures, small, low wattage halogen lamps give the entire shop a brighter, friendlier appearance. The shop sells a "signature" line of Ahwahnee merchandise, including beautiful and distinctive apparel, monogrammed with the unique Ahwahnee logo, and original art works and photographs by nationally recognized artisans. Across from the Gift Shop, The "**Sweet Shop**" sells books, periodicals, snacks and gourmet chocolates.

**PUBLIC ROOMS:**

**Great Lounge** – A study in size and grace, the Great Lounge is 77 feet long, 51 feet wide and 24 feet high and is flanked by grand fireplaces on each end. There are ten floor-to-ceiling windows, each with a top panel done in an original stained glass Indian design. The Great Lounge is a delightful spot for afternoon tea, evening demitasse or an intimate conversation with friends. The hardwood floors, wrought-iron chandeliers (a combination of German Gothic and Indian designs) and hanging rugs further enhance the room's appeal.

**Mural Room** – On the hotel's west side, the Mural Room is an ideal spot for guests who want to read a good book or write in their journal. Dark wood paneling, a mural of Yosemite's natural inhabitants, a copper-hooded fireplace and French doors add atmosphere to the room.

**Solarium** – At the south end of the hotel, the Solarium has tall windows facing Yosemite's mountain grandeur, including a superb view of Glacier Point. A fountain of local Jasper is surrounded by ferns and plants.

**Winter Club Room** – Deep leather chairs appeal to those seeking total relaxation. History and sports buffs will be delighted with the collection of winter sports photos from the 1920s and 1930s. The Yosemite Climbing Archives, featuring memorabilia and historic artifacts, are headquartered here.

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Other areas of special note are the **Tudor**, **Colonial** and **Tresidder** rooms, accessible by the stairway behind the Solarium; the **Mezzanine**, which overlooks the Great Lounge; and the **Elevator Lobby**, which features a basket-swirl mural over its fireplace.

**INTERIOR DESIGN:**

By Drs. Phyllis Ackerman and Arthur Upham Pope, art historians and experts who collected the Kilim rugs and Asian pottery that decorate the hotel's public areas. Associate consultants were Dorothy Simpson and Jeanette Dyer Spencer. Marian Vantress led refurbishment projects from 1975 to 1994. Stencils, mosaics, stained glass, rugs and wall hangings reflect The Ahwahnee's Native American design theme.

**ART:**

The entrance lobby features watercolor paintings by Gunnar Widforss and many hand-woven rugs from Asia grace the walls and floors. Jeannette Dyer Spencer painted the basket swirl in the elevator lobby and created the stained-glass mosaics on the Great Lounge windows. Robert Boardman Howard painted the Yosemite flora and fauna work in the Mural Room. Hand-woven Indian baskets of the region are on display by the Winter Club Room.

**GUEST ROOMS:**

The Native American motif is carried into the guest rooms. Above each door is a header stenciled with an Indian design used to decorate traditional baskets. Hand-blocked bedspreads and borders at the top of the walls also reflect the Indian décor.

Besides the 99 rooms in the main hotel, 24 "cottage" guest rooms are located on the hotel grounds and offer a more secluded retreat. These, too, reflect the Native American heritage of the hotel.

**DINING:**

A 34-foot high ceiling with large sugar pine trestles complements the granite pillars in The Ahwahnee's Dining Room.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served on The Ahwahnee's own unique china and are placed on linen tablecloths woven with The Ahwahnee's motif. Light and airy by day, the Dining Room is romantically lit for evening meals by tall, slim tapers set in wrought-iron holders.

Breakfast is available from 7 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and dinner from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

**KITCHEN:**

The Ahwahnee kitchen was originally designed for a 10-story hotel containing 350 rooms (200 hotel rooms plus 150 cottages) and a dining room to seat one thousand. Subsequent construction was never completed due to the Stock Market crash of 1929 and resulting Depression. The hotel boasts an enormous 6,500-square-foot kitchen with its own pastry and bake shop. With a staff of 50-plus, the kitchen serves an average of 1,200 meals per day, including breakfast, lunch and

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dinner service, room service, special functions and banquets, and employee meals. The storeroom still houses original icebox freezers, where slabs of ice cut from Mirror Lake functioned as cooling in pre-electric days.

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**COCKTAIL SERVICE:**

Available from the Main Dining Room or The Ahwahnee Bar.

**GIFT SHOP:**

The Ahwahnee Gift Shop, open daily, offers a range of merchandise from fine china and jewelry to gorgeous full-color coffee-table books and handsome leather goods.

**OTHER SERVICES:**

Outdoor heated pool (summer only) and two tennis courts. Complimentary afternoon tea and demitasse, morning coffee, robes, refrigerators and closed-circuit TV showing nature programming. Concierge on duty daily.

**NEARBY ACTIVITIES:**

Guided tours, horseback riding, bicycling, hiking, fishing, rafting, nature programs, photography, downhill and cross-country skiing, ice skating and snowshoeing (weather permitting).

**TRANSPORTATION:**

Free shuttle bus service to various locations in Yosemite Valley is offered daily. During winter, complimentary bus service to Badger Pass Ski Area is also available. Public transportation, provided by VIA Bus Lines, connects The Ahwahnee hotel with the city of Merced.

**PARKING:**

Free parking is provided on the premises for approximately 130 cars.

**RESERVATIONS:**

DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite Central Reservations Office  
6771 North Palm Avenue, Fresno, CA 93704  
Phone: 559-252-4848 or book online at: [www.YosemitePark.com](http://www.YosemitePark.com)

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