



by **Tobby Hatley**

Small Market Meetings

Passersby did double takes, smiled and nodded with approval as they watched Walt Worthy, the owner of the Davenport Hotel and Tower, roll up his sleeves and man a floor buffer in the Tower lobby as the rest of his management team scraped, cleaned and waxed the marble floor to a high gloss.

"We care to get it right, and sometimes you stumble on something that has to be done," said Lynnelle Caudill, the Davenport's managing director, perspiring as she poured on floor wax and rubbed the marble floor with a rag. "That's the way Walt works, so we have to be flexible and willing to jump in."

Opening under pressure

Hard work was not the only reason Caudill and the rest of Worthy's crew were sweating on that January day in 2007. Spokane was about to host the 2007 U.S. Figure Skating Championships, and the historic Davenport Hotel and its brand-new sister property across the street, the Davenport Tower, were the national event's headquarters.

Both downtown hotels were sold out,

competition would begin in a few days, and the 21-story tower was not quite open.

But Worthy liked playing the odds. The former Air Force survival instructor, who had made his fortune by converting old grocery stores into Class A office space, had spent almost \$40 million of his own money to restore and reopen the landmark Davenport Hotel five years earlier.

The bold move created Spokane's premier meeting and convention venue at a time when many thought the 94-year-old hotel was doomed. Now, 328 first-class rooms in the Tower waited to join 283 comparable rooms at the AAA Four-Diamond Davenport.

"Never in a million years would we have thought that we'd open up a tower across the street," Caudill said.

But after the Davenport reopened, it became apparent that more downtown hotel rooms were needed for larger groups that were being drawn to Spokane by a 100,000-square-foot convention center that had opened a few blocks away, especially when 400 of the



Courtesy Davenport Hotel and Tower

In building his hotel, it was Louis Davenport's aim to bring the world to Spokane. He did so through the use of varied European architecture. The French style is exhibited in the ornate Marie Antoinette Room, above.

rooms in a nearby hotel's annex disappeared to a condo developer.

Building the tower has paid off. The hotels' combined 611 rooms and 33,000

Courtesy Davenport Hotel and Tower

Spokane's grand downtown hotel, the Davenport, reopened six years ago, and early last year it opened a new tower across the street from the original hotel, above.

square feet of meeting space can handle up to 400; meetings from New York, Chicago, Washington and Los Angeles are a regular part of the Davenport's business.

"It's one of the nicest places we've ever met," said Paul Raeburn of the National Association of Science Writers, which chose the Davenport for its annual convention last fall. "It was the perfect size for our group of some 350 science writers and editors. The meeting rooms were nice, there was plenty of space, and they (meeting rooms) were easy to find. We looked all over the country, and this is a much nicer hotel than we're used to."

Exposing Spokane to wider world

Most of the Davenport's meeting space is in the original hotel, much of it just off a second-floor mezzanine above the sky-lit, Spanish Renaissance-style lobby, where high tea is served next to a fireplace.

In building the hotel, part of original proprietor Louis Davenport's aim was to expose guests to the wider world, and he did so by choosing decors that represent



Courtesy Davenport Hotel and Tower

The architectural mood shifts to England in the Elizabethan Room. Its chandeliers are made from sterling silver.

classical European architecture.

For example, the opulent Hall of Doges, a foyer for the hotel's largest space, the 6,235-square-foot Grand Pennington Ballroom, was inspired by Doges' Palace in Venice's St. Mark's Square.

The Pennington is a new construction, built to replace a ballroom in part of the hotel that was torn down because of deterioration. The building constructed in its place is a duplicate of the original Spanish-style portion of the Davenport which preceded the existing tower by a few years.

Saving the Hall of Doges

The Hall of Doges, part of the original building, was deemed too special to lose — it was proclaimed the most opulent ballroom north of San Francisco when it opened — so when the Pennington wing was demolished, the 2,976-square-foot Hall of Doges was lifted by crane, secured in a huge box across the street and reinstalled 18 months later as the second-floor Pennington foyer.

French Neoclassical is the design of the 4,380-square-foot Marie Antoinette Ballroom off the Pennington, lighted by three original crystal chandeliers that cost \$10,000 each when they were installed in 1914.

Next to the lobby is the 3,177-square-foot Isabella Ballroom. The Italian Neoclassical-design space was originally the hotel's dining room.

The style shifts to Tudor in the 2,200-square-foot Elizabethan Room, where original chandeliers made of 75 pounds of sterling silver light a room accented by handsome wood paneling.

The hotel's 3,000-square-foot President's Suite and 1,500-square-foot Governor's Suite are also available for meetings. Both the historic hotel and the tower have several smaller meeting rooms as well.

All meeting rooms in the historic Davenport have been restored, refurbished and upgraded to meet modern-life safety codes. Each is equipped with state-of-the-art audio and video, and wireless Internet access is available in guest rooms, bars, restaurants, lobbies,

A quick look at the Davenport Hotel and Tower

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Recognitions: The AAA Four Diamond Davenport Hotel and Tower is a finalist for 2008 *Condé Nast Johansens Luxury Hotel Guide's* "Most Excellent Hotel" and is also on *Condé Nast Traveler's* Gold List. Expedia.com named it a "Top 10" hotel.

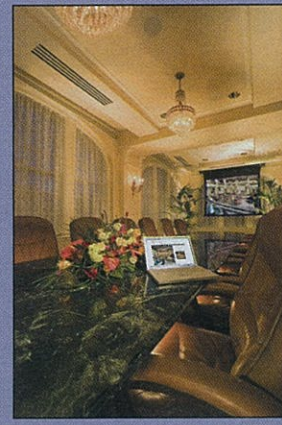
What's New: The 21-story Davenport Tower opened in 2007. The Davenport added 3,000 square feet of meeting space in 2007 and has hired a full-time food and beverage manager and a sommelier.

Rooms: The Davenport has 283 guest rooms, including the 3,000-square-foot President's Suite and the 1,500-square-foot Governor's Suite. The Tower, across the street from the original hotel, has 328 rooms.

Meeting Space: The 33,000 square feet of meeting space includes four ballrooms and four medium-size meeting rooms. The Tower has smaller rooms for breakout sessions. The President's Suite

and the Governor's Suite are also available, as is a 7,050-square-foot deck.

Amenities: A special mattress dubbed the Davenport Bed was created specifically for the hotel and is in all guest rooms. Both hotels also have large marble walk-in showers, complimentary wireless Internet access and 27-inch flat-screen televisions. Each hotel has a 24-hour business center, a 24-hour fitness center, a pool and a spa. Both hotels have full concierge services and free car service with-



Courtesy Davenport Hotel and Tower

The Davenport has 33,000 square feet of meeting space.

in two miles.

Location: The Davenport Hotel and Tower is in downtown Spokane, off Interstate 90 and a 10-minute drive from Spokane International Airport.

indoor swimming pools and the Davenport's Spa Paradiso.

An energy management system uses motion and heat sensors to automatically control heating, cooling and lights in unoccupied guest rooms. Both hotels have energy-efficient elevators, insulated glass in the guest rooms, and high-efficiency water heaters and coolers.

"The Davenport has actually been green for a long time," said Matt Jensen, marketing director. "We call it 'historically green.'"

Air-conditioning among firsts

When it opened in 1914, the Davenport became the first hotel in the country with air conditioning. Louis Davenport, who opened the eponymous hotel, also installed the country's first hotel central vacuum system. He was the

first to use air walls in ballrooms.

The Davenport, where Franklin Roosevelt danced and Spokane native Bing Crosby sang, holds a treasured place in Spokane's history and culture, but is lucky to have survived. A series of owners allowed it to deteriorate after Davenport sold it in 1945.

The hotel closed for good in 1985 and appeared headed for demolition, but ironically, it was saved by the presence of asbestos — no one wanted to deal with the health and environmental hazards the building material presented. Walt Worthly and his wife, Karen, stepped up in 2000 and spent the next 24 months painstakingly restoring the hotel.

When the Davenport's management decided to build a new tower, it chose an entirely different design theme, realizing that the Old World opulence of



Courtesy Davenport Hotel and Tower

The Davenport's elegant but convivial lobby makes it easy to understand why the historic hotel is the city's center of celebrations.

the original historic hotel could not be replicated.

A subdued African safari motif was chosen for the Tower. Tans, browns and blacks dominate guest rooms; the safari theme is subtle, confined to a few touches in each room: a leopard-print chair, zebra-stripe pillows, an African sculpture.

The tower has its own restaurant, bar, meeting rooms, parking garage, valet and concierge. But because most of the meeting space is in the original Davenport, there is no banquet kitchen.

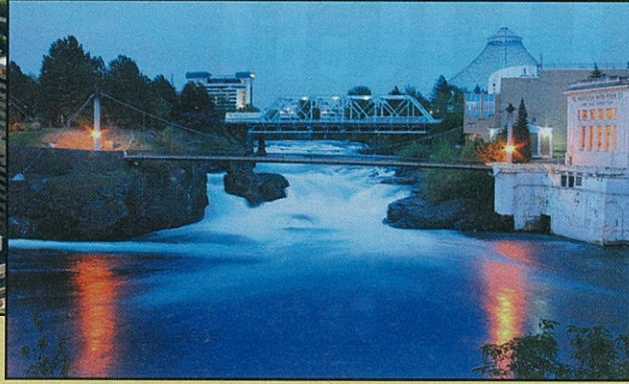
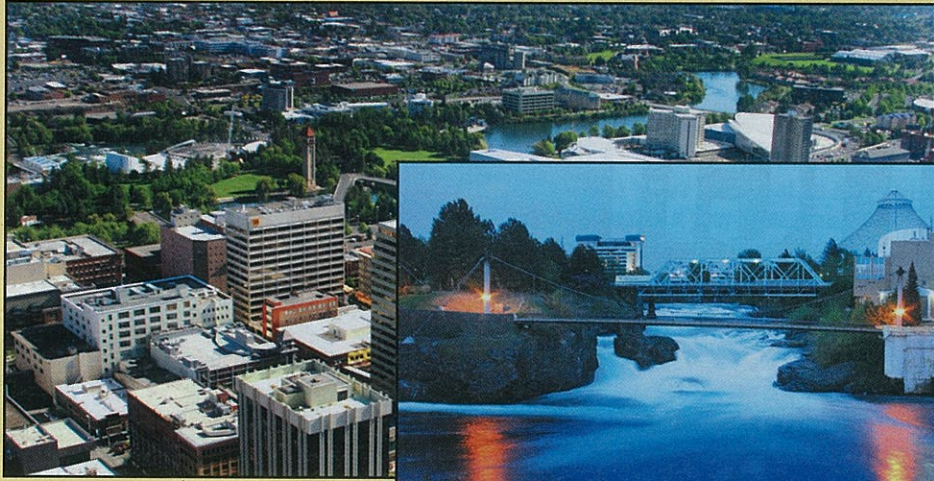
"We spent \$5 million on the kitchen in the Davenport," said Jensen. "There was no need to duplicate that just a few feet away. What works in the Davenport works in the Tower."

Caudill says the company's appetite for expansion is satisfied for the moment, but not its desire to improve. "The focus is on service instead of growth," she said.

And the effort shows. The Davenport is a 2008 finalist for *Conde Nast Johansens Luxury Hotel Guide's* "Most Excellent Hotel"; *Conde Nast Traveler* named the hotel and tower to its 2007 Gold List of the world's finest hotels.

Caudill says although much progress has been made in a few short years, the company will work even harder. "We are raising the bar to be the best hotel we can be."

A downtown packed with delights



By Alan Bison, courtesy Spokane Regional CVB

Spokane's Davenport Hotel and Tower are the center of a resurgence that has seen more than \$3.5 billion poured into downtown development in the past six years.

An upscale shopping mall, a 21-screen movie theater, art galleries, fine-dining restaurants, loft condos, boutique wineries, performance venues and the Spokane River are all within a 10-minute walk of the Davenport.

Downtown Spokane encompasses about 100 square blocks, most built after the Great Fire of 1889, which destroyed more than half the city. More than 235 downtown buildings are listed on various national and state historic registries,

The Spokane River runs through downtown Spokane, an urban center that has seen more than \$3.5 billion in development in the past six years.

among them the recently restored Fox Theater, one of the few remaining art-deco theaters in the country.

The theater opened in 1931 as a 2,200-seat movie house and also saw its share of stage performances by such stars as Katherine Hepburn, Marian Anderson, Frank Sinatra and Spokane's own Bing Crosby.

Closed since the early 1990s, the Fox reopened in November after a \$25 million resto-

ration. Its 1,600-seat Martin Woldson Theater is now home to the Spokane Symphony Orchestra.

The theater, known for its art-deco murals and grand staircase, is also available for meetings, conferences and receptions, and is developing a thriving wedding venue business.

Among Spokane's more than 4,500 acres of park space is downtown's Riverfront Park, a 100-acre urban getaway that was home to Expo '74, the first World's Fair dedicated to the environment.

The park is a popular gathering area for locals and tourists, who marvel at the Spokane River and Spokane Falls. An IMAX theater, the 1909 Loof Carousel and a gondola ride over the falls are popular family features.

And, you don't have to venture beyond the city limits to taste the wines being produced in the region. Five of the area's 10 wineries have downtown production and tasting rooms.

The Barrister Winery, for example, is located in a 100-year-old warehouse with loft condos and offices. The Barrister's tasting room is also available for parties, meetings and other gatherings. — **Tobey Hatley**

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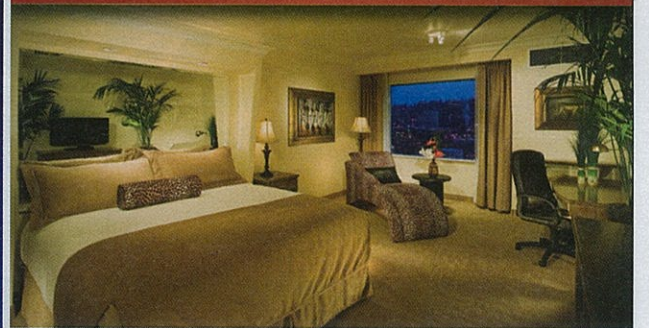
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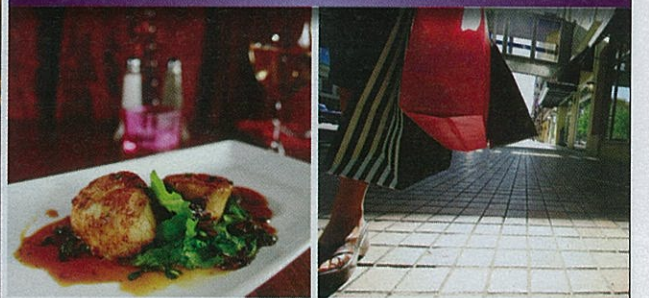
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