

Today



Courtesy of Augustus Mayhew

Off the beaten path

In May, The Colony hotel will host the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation's 31st annual statewide preservation conference. Referring to itself as 'The Essence of Palm Beach,' The Colony is regarded worldwide as a landmark. Everywhere, apparently, except in Palm Beach, where the chic hotel is not designated among the town's historic landmarks or listed in the National Register of Historic Places, unlike its other historically designated innkeepers — The Breakers, The Brazilian Court, Palm Beach Historic Inn, Bradley Park and The Chesterfield. 'Although The Colony has lost its original aubergine color, it will always be classic Palm Beach,' said James Ponce, a designated Palm Beach living landmark and a manager at the hotel during the 1950s and '60s. Originally planned to be built before the war on a larger property to the east of its current location, the six-story 90-room hotel with a distinctive four-story portico and porte-cochère did not open until 1947, designed by architect Byron Simonson in an elaborate resort colonial-revival style with traces of Deco Moderne elements. Simonson was a registered architect in New York and Florida, associated first with the York and Sawyer firm in New York before moving to Palm Beach where he was Addison Mizner's chief draftsman and office manager from 1930-33. Following Mizner's death, he worked for Treanor and Fatio, Florida Associates and Simonson and Holley, before establishing his own name firm. According to The Colony's Web site, the hotel's British West Indies-style rooms, suites and penthouses have been the Palm Beach address for presidents, royalty and other distinguished visitors, and soon they will be joined by the state's leading historic preservationists.

— **AUGUSTUS MAYHEW**

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