



The Presidio's new boutique hotel has modern American style and a firepit with GGB views

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By Jen Woo



After nearly three years of construction and anticipation, the Lodge at the Presidio opens its doors Thursday.

Once part of the Montgomery Street Barracks, which were built at the end of the 1800s to house infantry, artillery, and calvary companies, the new boutique stay is an opportunity to shack up in one of the Presidio's 470 structures listed in the National Registry of Historic Places, which incidentally also has panoramic views of the lush 300-acre forest, the San Francisco Bay, skyline and, of course, that big red bridge, which can be seen from most of the 42 guest rooms.

Sister to the [Inn at the Presidio](#), the new three-story Lodge is a contemporary stay with all the modern creature comforts you'd want—where else will you find both free breakfast and a firepit with views of the Golden Gate?—but its patriotic history can still be felt in its halls, where the new design, by SF's Laura Cook (who also designed the inn and Traci Des Jardins' Arguello restaurant, as well as Sausalito's Cavallo Point) still pays its respects to the heritage of the place.



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Two grand staircases (one of which was discovered behind enclosed walls) were restored to their original state, and guest rooms now take the place of the old mess hall, barracks, and residential quarters for the tailor, barber, and cooks. The sprawling lobby is divided into four seating areas for working or hanging out. The color palette throughout (blue, grey, black, white, and pops of red) hints at American tradition, as do the materials chosen (leather, wood, antique brass, and iron), while decorative elements suggest the past in tent-inspired canvas headboards above custom-made pillow top mattresses; woven leather bedroom benches reminiscent of military cots; and ottomans swathed in canvas and denim evoke old army duffel bags. On the third floor's exposed brick wall, you'll find an original stenciled sign: "Maximum Occupancy Five Men."

If you're interested in a further glimpse into the past, you could take a walk through the hotel where a collection of original art, historic photographs, and found objects curated by [Julia Coyle Art Associates](#) pays homage to both the historical background and the natural surrounds of the place. Above the dining room fireplace, a circular piece of chert and serpentine stone that was found during excavation of the building gets pride of place (these stones were once used by the Ohlone native to create tools and weapons). In the lobby, *A Soldier's Story* is a collage of items a military person may have collected—matchbooks, postcards, and a torn playing card that references an old tradition of tearing the last hand of cards before shipping out for service in the hope of returning home. Watercolors of hiking trails by local artist [Lynn Sondag](#) meander through the space, as do sweeping photographs of the Presidio landscape, the Marin Headlands, and regional beaches.

The [Lodge at the Presidio](#) also honors its locale with an eco-friendly build. While transforming the barracks into a hotel, the [Presidio Trust](#) and the Architectural Resources Group focused on the concept of adaptive reuse. Original windows were restored with the addition of weather stripping and sound-reducing glass, and recycled jean scraps were used for insulation in the walls and roof. While reinforcing the brick building, a strengthening process using carbon and glass fibers was utilized to conserve energy and waste; construction was done in compliance with the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) standards; and water-efficient plumbing and landscaping was implemented to decrease average water usage by 20 percent. The rooms also have energy-efficient on-demand power that is key-card-activated to conserve energy when the room is empty.

Of course, the eco-friendly hotel also offers numerous feel-good ways to enjoy the lush nature that envelops it, whether it's borrowing a bike to explore the many trails or relaxing in a rocking chair on the front porch to take in the majestic views.

// Lodge at the Presidio, 105 Montgomery St. (Presidio); reservations (starting at \$275/night) are available at presidiolodging.com.