

# The historic Algonquin Times Square in New York City

by Mike Cohen



Located in the heart of Midtown Manhattan, the historic Algonquin Hotel commands the center of 44th Street, just a block and a half away from Times Square. The Algonquin first opened its doors in 1902. Today it is part of the Marriott chain's Autograph Collection.

For 100 years, the Algonquin has been greeting and lodging the country's most prominent writers and literary personalities, as well as the leading figures of the American stage. The hotel is best known, perhaps, for the members of the Round Table, a group of luminaries who had in common both the ability to fire blazing witticisms and to withstand being on the receiving end of them. The tone they set during their daily meetings set the literary style of the 1920s. After World War I, Vanity Fair writers and Algonquin regulars Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley and Robert E. Sherwood began lunching at the Algonquin. Though society columns referred to them as the Algonquin Round Table, they called themselves the Vicious Circle. "By force of character," observed drama critic Brooks Atkinson, "they changed the nature of American comedy and established the tastes of a new period in the arts and theatre."

Each of the 181 rooms and 25 suites features a comfortable well-lit work desk, as well as complimentary Wi-Fi. Always one step ahead of everyone else, the hotel was the first to offer accommodations to actors and single women travellers. We stayed in a very comfortable one bedroom Noel Coward Suite, named for the legendary playwright, composer, actor, singer and director. There are framed Playbill covers from Coward's productions in the room.

The layout was ideally suited for us. There is a nice sized entrance, with the master bedroom to the right, a large bathroom straight ahead and the living room with a pull out couch to the left. But that is not all. The latter is also somewhat of library, with shelves of books to choose from. You can also download the special Folio app, which will provide access to a wide variety of ebooks you can read as long as you remain on the premises.

The Algonquin was recently the site of a large pre-Tony Award party for the creative team and cast of *Waitress*.

Delighting thirsty revelers when it opened at the demise of the Prohibition in 1933, The Blue Bar has moved – both physically and eruditely – through decades of Times Square hotel bar trends. There is also The Round Table Restaurant and the casual Lobby Lounge.

As a cat lover we are always excited to see Matilda, the house cat. She is a real beauty and can be found sleeping in atop her cat house at the front desk or making her way through the different cat doors on the main floor. Matilda is a large ragdoll cat, soft as velvet.

It should come as no surprise that with the return of the musical *Cats* on Broadway, a special partnership has been developed with the Algonquin. A variety of promotional activities have been lined up, including the wrapping of elevators and the introduction of a "Cats" suite.

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