

The Barbizon: The Hotel That Set Women Free

In the heart of Manhattan, at the corner of Lexington Avenue and 63rd Street, stands a historic landmark that has played a pivotal role in the lives of countless women: The Barbizon. Built in 1927 as a residential hotel for women, the Barbizon quickly became a haven for ambitious young women seeking independence and a place to pursue their dreams in the bustling metropolis of New York City.



The Barbizon: The Hotel That Set Women Free

by Paulina Bren

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

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In the early 20th century, societal norms and expectations for women were rigid and confining. They were expected to prioritize domestic duties and marriage over their own aspirations. The Barbizon challenged these conventions by providing a safe and supportive space for women to live and work without the constraints imposed by society.



At the Barbizon, women from all walks of life found a community of like-minded individuals who encouraged them to pursue their passions. The hotel's residents included aspiring actresses, writers, artists, musicians, and dancers. The Barbizon became a breeding ground for talent and a launchpad for countless careers.

Notable Residents of the Barbizon

Over the decades, the Barbizon has been home to a remarkable roster of notable women, including:

- Grace Kelly, the iconic Hollywood actress who lived at the Barbizon while pursuing her acting career.
- Sylvia Plath, the renowned poet who resided at the hotel during her early writing years.
- Joan Crawford, the legendary film star who called the Barbizon her home while working in New York.
- Maya Angelou, the acclaimed author and poet who found solace and inspiration within the hotel's walls.
- Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, the former First Lady who spent her early years living at the Barbizon.

These women, along with countless others, found at the Barbizon a supportive environment where they could develop their talents, navigate the challenges of life in a male-dominated world, and break free from societal constraints.

A Symbol of Empowerment and Liberation

The Barbizon became more than just a residential hotel; it evolved into a symbol of empowerment and liberation for women. It represented the changing social landscape of the 20th century, where women were increasingly seeking independence and equality.



Women found a sense of community and support at the Barbizon Hotel.

The Barbizon's philosophy of empowering women extended beyond its walls. The hotel's management actively supported women's suffrage, equal rights, and access to education and employment. The Barbizon became a hub for women's organizations and a platform for advocating for gender equality.

The Barbizon Today

Today, the Barbizon Hotel is still a vibrant and iconic landmark on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. While it is no longer exclusively a women's hotel, it continues to honor its legacy of female empowerment. The Barbizon is a reminder of the transformative impact that a single institution can have on the lives of countless individuals.

For anyone interested in women's history, cultural history, or the history of New York City, "The Barbizon: The Hotel That Set Women Free" is an indispensable read. This meticulously researched and engaging book offers a fascinating and inspiring account of a remarkable institution that played a pivotal role in shaping the lives of women in the 20th century.



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