

# Haunted Aspen: Ghosts at the Hotel Jerome?

Have you ever stayed at a haunted hotel before? After a night at the Hotel Jerome in Aspen, I can consider myself in that number.

I moved into the Hotel Jerome – Aspen’s most historic hotel, dating back more than 120 years – after two nights at the Aspen St. Regis where I stayed courtesy of PRSA Travel & Tourism conference.

Immediately I fell in love with the hotel’s western charm, antique furniture, spacious rooms and the infamous J. Bar restaurant, where Hunter S. Thompson used to drink.

But then I went on the Aspen Dark Side tour, a night walk led by [Aspen Walking Tours](http://AspenWalkingTours.com). The tour, which runs Friday nights June through September and also Wednesday nights in July and August, leads you through Aspen’s small downtown, as well as the courthouse where serial killer Ted Bundy escaped in 1977.

As one of Aspen’s oldest buildings, I figured Hotel Jerome would be on the tour. But I didn’t know that the hotel is allegedly one of the most haunted buildings in Aspen!

Our guide Dean Weiler had numerous stories to tell about ghostly going ons at the hotel. One guest saw a little boy shivering in the hallway with a towel. After she spoke to him, he disappeared, leaving only a wet stain on the floor. When she asked the front desk about him, they told her that no kids were currently at the hotel – and that the boy she saw matched the description of a child who drowned in the pool years before!

When I heard this, I shuddered: our room, 117, was located right above the pool. But at least we weren’t on the third floor: staff members have apparently had so many incidents with ghosts playing tricks on them that they don’t like to work up there!

After hearing all these stories, I saw the hotel in a new light when I came back. The long gabled hallways, so picturesque, now seemed creepy And the charming 19th century piano bar, where we had taken photos earlier in the day, appeared dark and malevolent

I walked quickly through the building, trying not to catch a reflection in the mirrors. Turns out I should have been more worried about the room. When I entered, my friend Kathryn – who had skipped most of the ghost tour – had some questions for me.

“Why did you put the heat back on?” she asked. “When I came back into the room, it was on. And I know I turned it off before I left.”

I didn’t touch the heat, I told her.

“Hmm, that’s weird,” she answered. We had both been in the room during turndown service, and specifically told the maid not to touch the heat. But that wasn’t the end of the weirdness:

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“And why did you leave the left sink full of water? Did you wash your face before you left?” Kathryn said. “Because it was filled with soapy water when I came in.”

Let the record show that I had not used that sink all day. We examined the soaps in the dish. They were unused.

We looked at each other in horror, then Kathryn dove into my bed with a shriek. “Creepy!” she shouted.

“Omigod, I am not going out in that hallway by myself again,” I told her.

Eventually we did fall asleep in our own beds. But we kept the TV on all night, as well as a light on in the bathroom.

I would stay at the Hotel Jerome again in a heartbeat, as it's one of the most atmospheric places I've been in the West. But next time, I'm avoiding any tours or books that could possibly remind me of paranormal activity. Because no matter how many times I tell myself that there's no such thing as ghosts, a little part of me still believes.