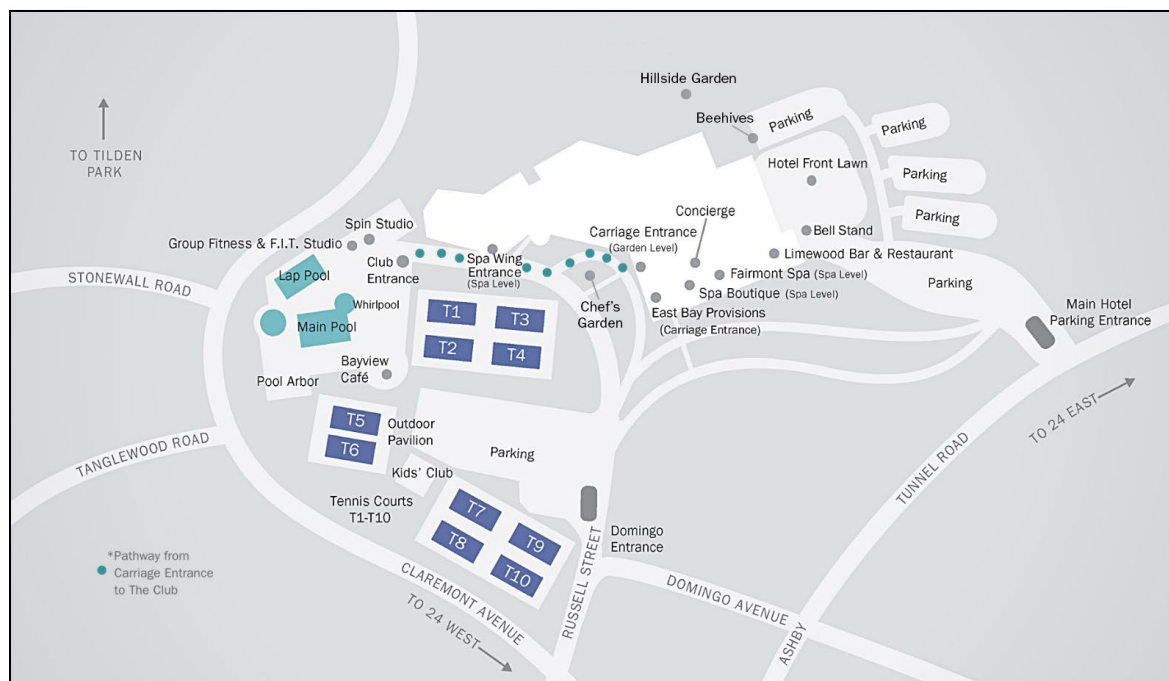




The Club

The Club at the Claremont first opened its doors in 1989 and now nearly 35 years later, it is still regarded as one of the best hotel gyms in North America. Hotel Guests enjoy full access to everything the Club has to offer, including it's 10 Tennis & Pickle Ball Courts, 3 Saline Pools, a Wellness Studio, Kids' Club, fully-equipped Fitness Center and over 70 Wellness Classes each week. The Club also offers locals a Membership program: a shared community pursuing an active lifestyle, overall wellness and recreational fun.

Sustainability—At Claremont Resort & Club, we pledge to continue to limit our impact on the planet by reducing food waste, eliminating single-use plastics and planting native flora throughout our 22-acre resort. This includes a recently planted garden that naturally receives reclaimed water as it makes its way down the hillside. We also source some of our ingredients for Limewood from our Chef's Garden located just outside the Carriage Entrance. This has everything from mint, thyme, rosemary as well as edible flowers for garnishes. Even more exciting are our beehives, found just outside our front doors overlooking Five Palms. The honey produced by these busy bees will be used in various dishes and spa treatments. The bees are also crucial in pollinating our gardens for guests to enjoy for years to come.



41 Tunnel Road Berkeley, CA 94705 (510) 843-3000 www.claremontresortandclub.com

Follow us on Social Media! @claremonthotel



The history of the Claremont Club & Spa dates back to the late 1800's, when a man from the mid-west named Bill Thornburg came into riches through his association with George Hearst. He promised his wife and daughter he would build a home that looked like an English castle, so he purchased 13,000 acres from the Peralta Land Grant and built a Tudor-style turreted home with stables that housed pedigreed horses. Their fascination with English society eventually resulted in the marriage of their daughter to an English lord and her move to England. They sold the property to a new family - the Ballards. Unfortunately tragedy struck in July of 1901 when the house burned to the ground one especially dry windy day.

A Brief History of The Castle on The Hill



Won in a Game of Checkers

When local investors Francis "Borax" Smith and Frank Havens purchased the property from the Ballards they had plans to build a grand hotel. Legend has it that one night the team sat down for a game of checkers at the old Athenian Club in Oakland. To make the game really interesting they bet the new property, with the winner retaining full rights. According to the story Mr. Havens won, though more likely, their partnership had already dissolved and Havens had been in charge of land holdings. He proceeded with plans for the hotel and held a competition for the design - the winner was Charles Dickey and his partner Walter Reed. Their half-timbered Elizabethan chateau was similar to another Havens-owned hotel in downtown Oakland, the Key Route Inn. Havens began building in 1905, but the infamous San Francisco earthquake forced the new partners, including Klondike millionaire Erick Lindbloom to delay the completion for years. The new Claremont Hotel finally opened for business in 1915 just in time for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition being held in the Bay Area.



From the charming rural setting and expansive veranda with views of the Bay, to the on-site radio station, The Claremont was one of the nation’s grand new hotels. The Lobby has seen many changes over the years, but the most exciting was during the 2015 renovations, they re-opened the wall that had closed it off from our panoramic San Francisco Bay views. The rock columns from the original veranda can still be seen between the windows on the west wall of the Hillary Tenzing Room as seen below.



Trains in the Lobby

In 1904 the property was bought by local investors: San Francisco lawyer Frank Havens, Francis “Borax” Smith of “The Twenty Mule Team” cleanser fame and a developer named John H. Spring. They wanted to build a resort up in the hills for city folks from San Francisco to come enjoy, with trains running directly into the lobby. The “E” line never actually made it into the Lobby, but trains stopped between the tennis courts below our grounds, transporting guests from the ferries at the Oakland waterfront. The tracks were removed in 1958 when the Key Rail System ended, but the tennis courts remain with a path between them where the old rail tracks used to be.

Free Drinks for Life

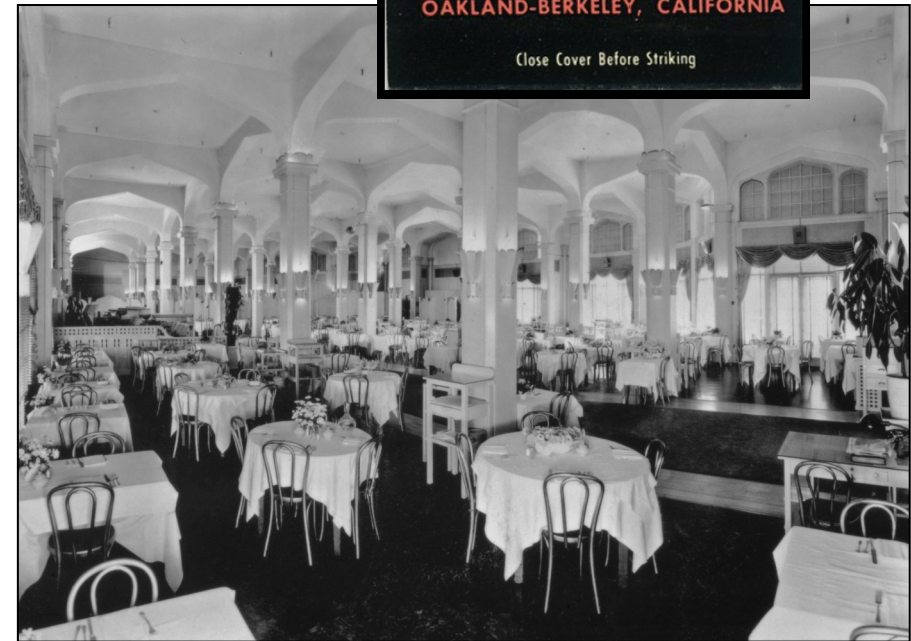
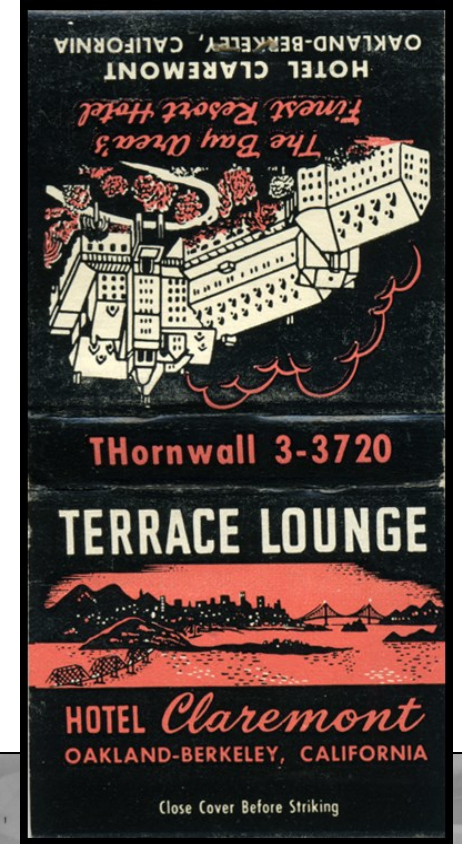
After the repeal of prohibition, the Hotel Claremont still suffered from a state law that banned the sale of alcohol within 1 mile of the UC Berkeley campus. Officials didn’t want the college students to be distracted from their studies. In 1936 an enterprising student and her friends measured several of the possible routes, finding that the shortest distance from the edge of campus to the hotel’s front steps (which was the Carriage Entrance at the time) was just a few feet over a mile. The Claremont immediately opened the Terrace Lounge (now the Lobby Lounge) and awarded the clever student free drinks for life.

Above Left: The original space off the Lobby where the Terrace Bar opened. Left: The Hillary Tenzing Room is filled with antiques & artifacts celebrating Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay’s ascent of Mt. Everest.



The Big Band Era

In 1937 Claude Gillum who had worked at the Hotel Claremont as a night clerk since 1926, purchased the property for \$250,000 and just in time. Big Bands were coming into vogue and the Claremont became *the* place for dancing, dining and imbibing. For a time, a radio station even broadcast live from the hotel. Some will remember The Claremont’s Garden Room “high atop the hill” where such famous bands as Count Basie, Louis Armstrong and Tommy Dorsey all had performed. During this period lawn sports were gaining popularity and the resort’s tennis courts and swimming pools were built. Around 1940 the veranda was enclosed and the Claremont was painted all white. The Gillums’ eventually sold their interest in the hotel in the 1950s. In 1954 Mr. Harold Schnitzer, a member of the family who owns Schnitzer Steel bought The Hotel Claremont and owned it until 1998.



Above Left: The Key Route Trains came right up between the tennis courts; Above Right: A Historic Matchbook cover Above: The original Garden Room