

Home away from home

N.Y. hotels welcome the top pop groups

NEW YORK — There are hotels in Atlanta, Detroit, and London which refuse to accept rock groups as guests. But New York welcomes them with open arms—and palms. Rock bands make money and lavish hotels are happy to help them part with it.

Where the groups once confined themselves to such hotels as the Warwick and the Gramercy Park, they are now staying in Gotham's most elegant digs.

The Pierre and the Plaza, once the favorites of the socially elite 400, now reveal with pride that the Rolling Stones stay there. They even vie over the distinction. The Pierre disclosed that Mick Jagger stays there when he's in town, while the Plaza takes credit for all of the Stones.

Elton John, Credence Clearwater, and Little Richard have been regular Plaza guests as is George Harrison. Most of them use their own names to make reservations, although in the past Harrison has found it necessary to use a variety of pseudonyms.

David Cassidy who finds it impossible to rent a hotel room in London, has his pick of places in New York. Fans in England overran several hotels and now the management tells the Partridge Family idol he would be welcome, but not his fans.

Consequently, David charters a yacht on the Thames, an idea which the Osmonds may have to copy since they, too, have found that their overexuberant British fans have made them unwelcome at the Churchill and the Dorchester.

In New York, the Warwick is still a favorite among rock groups because it is located near the major networks and record companies.

The Allman Brothers and Neil Diamond prefer the Navarro on Central Park South. Led Zeppelin was the first group to stay at the Drake, one of Loew's Corporation's elegant Park Avenue establishments.

"It seemed slightly odd to see these long-haired youngsters walking through the lobby," said a spokesman for the hotel who preferred not to be named "lest we offend them. They're good customers and we'd like them to come back."

The Pierre, whose French antique white satin decor has been the backdrop for ladies with lorgnettes and gentlemen in spats, has taken the new look in stride.

A public relations type whose elegant vocabulary reflects her elegant surroundings said, "We have no policy against having guests from the rock world."

When it was suggested that perhaps the Mick Jagers and the Rod Stewarts looked different from their other guests, she said, "Oh dear, no. A lot of our guests are sons and daughters of monied people and some of them are even princes and barons and the like who themselves dress very 'au tres chic or outré' or, you know what I mean, 'way-out.'"

Many of the more popular rock stars book reservations in two or more hotels, according to the innkeepers, and then secretly choose which one they will stay in at the last minute to avoid a crush from their fans.

In case word leaks out, however, hotels are geared through extra security details to handle any mob scene that could ensue.

The Plaza, apparently, has gotten over the crush of the 1964 Beatle invasion when police barricades were thrown up all around the hotel. There are still memories of "the Beatle experience," as it is called there, when the hotel's crystal chandeliers were shaken and the rafters vibrated with giggling girls trying to get to the British idols.

One story the management recalled, and there were many, was of the three girls who walked in the delivery entrance with an enormous box which they said was a gift for the Beatles, which they would like to deliver personally.

The staff took a dim view of the idea and escorted the girls and their gift-wrapped box out to the street — at which time the ribbons burst open and three more girls jumped out of the wrapping.