NFB22 Navigating the Hotels

## New Orleans Marriot

New Orleans is a city rich with traditions and celebrations. Honoring that tradition, let's approach the layout of the New Orleans Marriott by imagining a birthday celebration for a two-year-old. We're going to present this young birthday celebrant with a square four-layer cake with two candles. Since this cake is imaginary, you can make it any flavor and choose your favorite frosting. Rather than placing the candles in the middle of the cake, we'll place them near the two front corners of our cake. And don't sneak a taste of the frosting! You can celebrate when we're done with our tour of the hotel.

Now let's put our analogy to work. The Marriott takes up an entire square city block on the edge of the French Quarter, New Orleans' oldest neighborhood. Picture the hotel as our layer cake, with each square layer placed directly on top of those below it. There are two towers of sleeping rooms. The birthday candle on the left rises twenty-one floors and is called the Quarter Tower, named for the French Quarter. The birthday candle on the right is known as the River Tower, given the hotel's proximity to the mighty Mississippi River. It contains forty-one floors. The lobby takes up much of the first layer of the cake. The second, third, and fourth layers are filled with meeting space. The roof of the fourth floor is, figuratively speaking, the icing on the cake in more ways than one—on the fifth floor between the two birthday candles are the hotel's two rooftop swimming pools.

The Marriott's main entrance is on Canal Street, roughly in the center of the hotel. Stepping through the two sets of doors, you will walk up several steps to find yourself in the hotel's bustling lobby. Turn to the right and you will immediately find the line for the front desk on your right, running along the Canal Street wall. Unless you arrive late at night, you can expect this to be a busy and crowded area. Working your way through the crowd, as you approach the end of the reservation desk, you will find the River Tower escalators to your left positioned perpendicularly to the registration desk. These escalators run to the second and third floors of the meeting space. Also on your left, just beyond the escalators is the FedEx business office, a helpful place to go if your chapter or affiliate has shipped something to the hotel. Past the registration desk and the business office, you will enter the River Tower elevator lobby. In this elevator lobby, you will find seven elevators labeled A through G in a clockwise pattern. Elevators A, B, and C are on your left, elevator D is on the wall in front of you, and elevators E, F, and G are on the right. These elevators stop at all meeting room levels, the fifth floor for the pool and the fitness center, and the River Tower sleeping rooms. There is more to say about the elevators at the hotel, but we will save that for the end of the tour.

Let’s return to the top of the front door steps where we began. If we continue walking straight, heading across the lobby, we pass on our left the bellstand and the concierge counter. On the right is a large lobby bar called 55 Fahrenheit. The bar itself is far to the right, backed up against the River Tower escalators. The majority of the space between you and the bar is filled with a variety of tables and comfortable seating clusters. Continuing our walk across the lobby brings you to the entrance of 5Fifty5, the hotel's main restaurant. Just to the right is the entrance to the M Club for qualified Marriott Bonvoy members. To your left is a large revolving door that exits to the porte-cochère and parking garage. Wheelchair users will want to use this entrance and exit as there are also ADA paddle-operated doors at this location. Some of you arriving via airport transportation may enter the hotel through these doors. If instead we turn to the right at the 5Fifty5 entrance, walking with the side of 55 Fahrenheit on our right, we will reach the Canal Street Pantry. The Pantry, in the far right corner of our first layer, offers prepackaged foods, fresh fruit, salads, made-to-order pizzas and sandwiches as well as a selection of beer, wine, and liquor.

Now let’s return once more to the top of the stairs where we first entered the lobby. If we were instead to turn left, we would find ourselves headed towards the Quarter Tower escalators that run parallel to Canal Street. These serve the second and third floors of the meeting space. To the right of the escalators is the Quarter Tower elevator lobby. All passenger elevators—H, I, J, and K—are on the right side of the lobby. On the left are two service elevators. These elevators stop at all floors except the fourth floor. On the wall in between the Quarter Tower escalators and elevators is an ATM.

Let’s take the Quarter Tower escalators to the second floor. There are two meeting room clusters on the second floor: the Preservation Hall Studio breakouts are on the Quarter Tower side while the Galerie meeting rooms are closer to the River Tower side.

As we step off the escalators on the second floor and turn to our right, with Canal Street now at our backs, we are facing Preservation Hall with its collection of breakout meeting rooms. As we approach the Preservation Hall entrance, the Quarter Tower elevators are on our right. There are also restrooms, men’s to the left and women’s to the right, just before we enter the Studios foyer. The meeting rooms vary in size and are arranged in a horseshoe. Down the left side are Studios 1 through 5, Studio 6 is at the very back, and Studios 7 through 10 work their way back to the foyer entrance on the right side.

The other second floor meeting room cluster hosts Galerie 1 through Galerie 6. If we were to have made a U-turn at the top of the escalator, we would be heading back towards the River Tower elevators with Canal Street on our right. On the left is Galerie 1. Further down the corridor is Galerie 4. Galerie 2 and 3 are stacked behind Galerie 1 while Galerie 5 and 6 are stacked behind Galerie 4. Turning left around the corner of Galerie 4 will take us down a hallway with entrances to Galeries 4, 5, and 6 on our left. On the right we will pass the River Tower elevators and the River Tower escalators. Further down this corridor on the right is another set of restrooms and the Galerie registration desk.

You may have noticed that I did not talk about the entrances to Galeries 2 and 3. This is a bit tricky. You will remember when we first arrived on the second floor, we passed the Quarter Tower elevators. Stepping through the elevator lobby you will find a narrow hallway extending to the left away from Canal Street. Down this hallway on the right are entrances to Galeries 1, 2, and 3.

Let’s go back to the Quarter Tower escalators and take them up one more level to the third layer of our birthday cake. As with the second floor level, the third floor has two meeting clusters. The large ballrooms that will house our largest sessions, collectively called the Grand Ballroom—Acadia, Bissonet, and Carondelet—are on the Quarter Tower side while Salons A through H are on the River Tower side.

And as with the second floor, turning to our right off the escalators, with Canal Street at our back, we stand in the Grand Ballroom foyer facing the doors to the Acadia ballroom. Beyond Acadia is Bissonnet and further yet is Carondelet.

Again, as with the second floor, if we were to have made a U-turn at the top of the Quarter Tower escalators, we would be heading back towards the River Tower elevators. With Canal Street on our right, we will pass the entrance to a hallway that runs perpendicular to Canal Street and between the ballrooms and the salons. Down this hallway are entrances to the ballrooms on the left and entrances to Salons D, E, and H on the right. Continuing along the Canal Street wall, we pass entrances to Salons A, B, and C. Turning left at the end of the corridor and heading towards the back side of our layer cake, the River Tower elevators and escalators are on the right while entrances to salons D, E, and F are on the left. The third floor restrooms are just past the escalators.

There is still one more layer to our cake. There are only a small number of meeting rooms on the fourth floor, and many of you will not have need to visit them. The primary means of access to the meeting rooms is the River Tower elevators. As you step out of the River Tower elevator lobby on the fourth floor, the Canal Street hallway serving Balcony rooms I, J, and K is just off to the left. Turning right out of the elevator lobby, we pass four meeting rooms on the right: Bonaparte, Regent, Bacchus, and Iberville. At the end of the corridor on the left is a hallway parallel to Canal Street, containing entrances to Balcony L, M, and N. Pro tip: there are two small set of stairs across from Bonaparte and Iberville that run between the third and fourth floors.

As you now know, the fifth floor is our frosting. The elevator lobbies in either tower provide direct access to the pool deck, which sits between our two birthday candles. There are four meeting rooms on the fifth floor accessible from the River Tower elevators. Turn right when exiting the elevator lobby and walk down the hallway. On the right are four small meeting rooms: Audubon, Beauregard, Galvez, and Jackson. On the left are sleeping rooms, and at the far end of the hallway is the health club.

There is one more small meeting cluster on the 41st floor of the River Tower. Here you will find Napoleon, Lafayette, Saint Charles, Riverview 1, and Riverview 2.

### Operating the Elevators

You now have the layout of the New Orleans Marriott birthday cake. I did promise more information about the elevators. Both the Marriott and the Sheraton have installed smart elevators. This means that you will find no floor buttons on the inside of the elevator cabs. In the elevator lobby, hotel guests punch their desired floor number into a keypad, and the software running the elevator system determines the most efficient elevator to take. Here’s how it works. On each side of the elevator lobbies is a keypad much like that of a touchtone phone--the traditional three by four keypad with 123 across the top followed by 456, 789, and the fourth row with a zero in the middle. There is a fifth row containing one wide button for accessibility mode. Pressing the accessibility button before keying in your destination floor number will cause the keypad to speak your floor and the elevator letter you should take. When your elevator arrives, the elevator will announce its arrival by letter. When your elevator arrives at your destination floor, the elevator will also announce the floor.

If all goes smoothly, this process should be accessible to our attendees. However, matters will be further complicated when there are several dozen Federationists in an elevator lobby chatting about what they have been doing for the last three years. When possible, Ambassador Committee members and/or volunteers will be stationed in the lower elevator lobbies. Bear in mind that this process will require practice and, more importantly, patience.

You may now enjoy a slice of imaginary cake. Mine is yellow cake with chocolate frosting.

### New Orleans Marriott Meeting Room Locations

* Balcony I-N, Bonaparte, Regent, Bacchus, and Iberville meeting rooms – 4th floor (access only from River Tower elevators or double set of stairs on River Tower side of 3rd and 4th floors).
* Galerie meeting rooms (Galerie 1-6) – 2nd floor River Tower side
* Grand Ballroom (Acadia, Bissonet, and Carondelet) – 3rd floor Quarter Tower side
* Preservation Hall breakout rooms (Studios 1-10) – 2nd floor Quarter Tower side
* Salon meeting rooms (A-H) – 3rd floor River Tower side

## The Sheraton New Orleans

Walking through the front doors of the Sheraton New Orleans from Canal Street, you find yourself in a large, bright two-story atrium. Almost immediately to your right is the main attraction for many, a Starbucks coffee shop. To your left, a few steps below the lobby level, is the expansive Pelican Bar. As you continue further forward into the hotel, you will pass on your right a set of escalators connecting the second floor. Beyond the Pelican Bar and the escalators, you arrive at an intersection of sorts. If you were to turn right, you would find the FedEx business center on the right. If you were to continue straight ahead, the Sheraton’s two elevator lobbies are on the right. And finally, turning left leads you into a wide registration area with a long registration desk on your right, running parallel to Canal Street. Beyond the registration desk are the doors to the Sheraton’s motor lobby. Those of you arriving to the hotel from the airport may be dropped off at this entrance, making the registration desk readily accessible. The bellstand is also conveniently located between the registration desk and the doors to the motor lobby.

In the Sheraton, the meeting space is primarily on floors two through five. Floors six and seven contain only administrative offices for the hotel. The eighth floor contains a modest number of meeting rooms but, more importantly, is also home to the fitness center and the swimming pool.

Let’s return to the lobby escalators and take them up to the second floor. Stepping off the escalators, you arrive at an intersection similar to the downstairs lobby. Turn to the right and head towards the escalators that serve meeting rooms on floors two through five. If you were to continue straight ahead, the Sheraton's two elevator lobbies are again on the right. Immediately to the left is the entrance to Roux Bistro, the Sheraton's Creole restaurant with tables along two sides of the hotel, overlooking the lobby below.

I mentioned that there are two elevator lobbies. One set of elevators serves the low sleeping room floors and the other serves the higher floors. All elevators stop at the lobby and all meeting levels. The first elevator lobby, the one closest to the Canal Street entrance, contains the elevators that take guests to floors one through twenty-nine. The second set of elevators serves floors one through eight and twenty-nine through forty-nine. You'll note that the twenty-ninth floor is a common floor where guests can switch between lower and higher floors without traveling all the way down to the lobby. The Sheraton uses the same smart elevator system as described in the above section.

The NFB’s exhibit hall and Independence Market are in the Napoleon Ballroom throughout the week. The Napoleon Ballroom is on the third floor. Its entrance is just a few short steps from both elevator lobbies and only a few steps further from the meeting room escalators.