

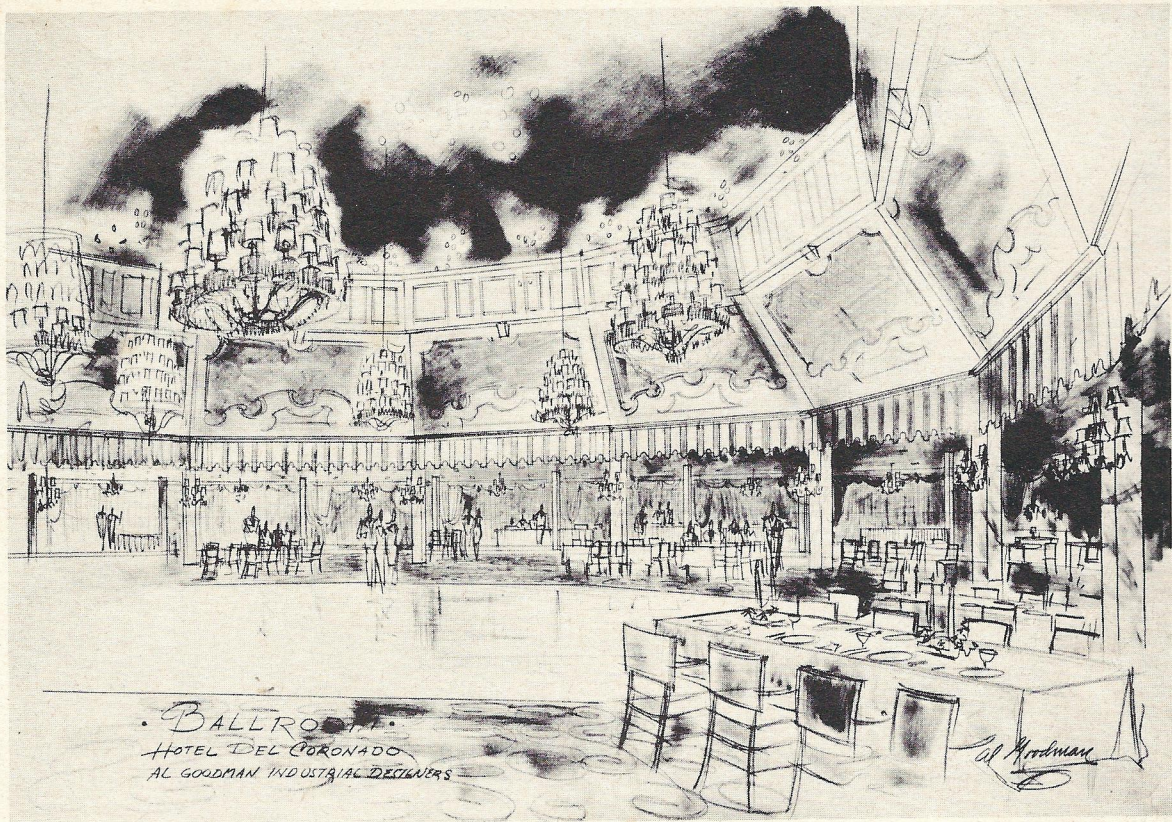


CHARLES SCHNEIDER



Columns and a bay window in an overlooked corner of the hotel's main floor (above) suggested to designer Al Goodman the velvety, decorous and utterly charming Victorian Room lounge (top of page). The mullioned glass on the lounge door and the inimitable stained glass window above the bar are genuine pieces from the hotel's storied past. The window with full figure once was imbedded in the second floor section of a giant fireplace (see page 68) that ran the full height of the hotel's façade.

DESIGNER AL GOODMAN: HOW TO GET AHEAD BY LIVING IN THE PAST



The attitude of Coronado toward its Hotel del is roughly comparable to that feeling with which Frenchmen enshrine the city of Paris, that the mediaeval Florentines felt for their lions and that the fictional village of Adano expressed for its bell. Hotel del Coronado spawned the town about it and not yet vanished are all the many generations whose lives pivoted about the historic old hostelry. So when the hotel was bought a year ago by a corporation formed by the brothers Alessio, whose first step was to announce an earth-shattering program of renovation, Coronado residents were understandably fearful that they were about to witness Operation Desecration. Their misgivings to a certain extent were shared by some longtime hotel employees, who had come to regard as tools of the devil anything beyond a bucket of clear varnish or the contents of a hardware catalogue.

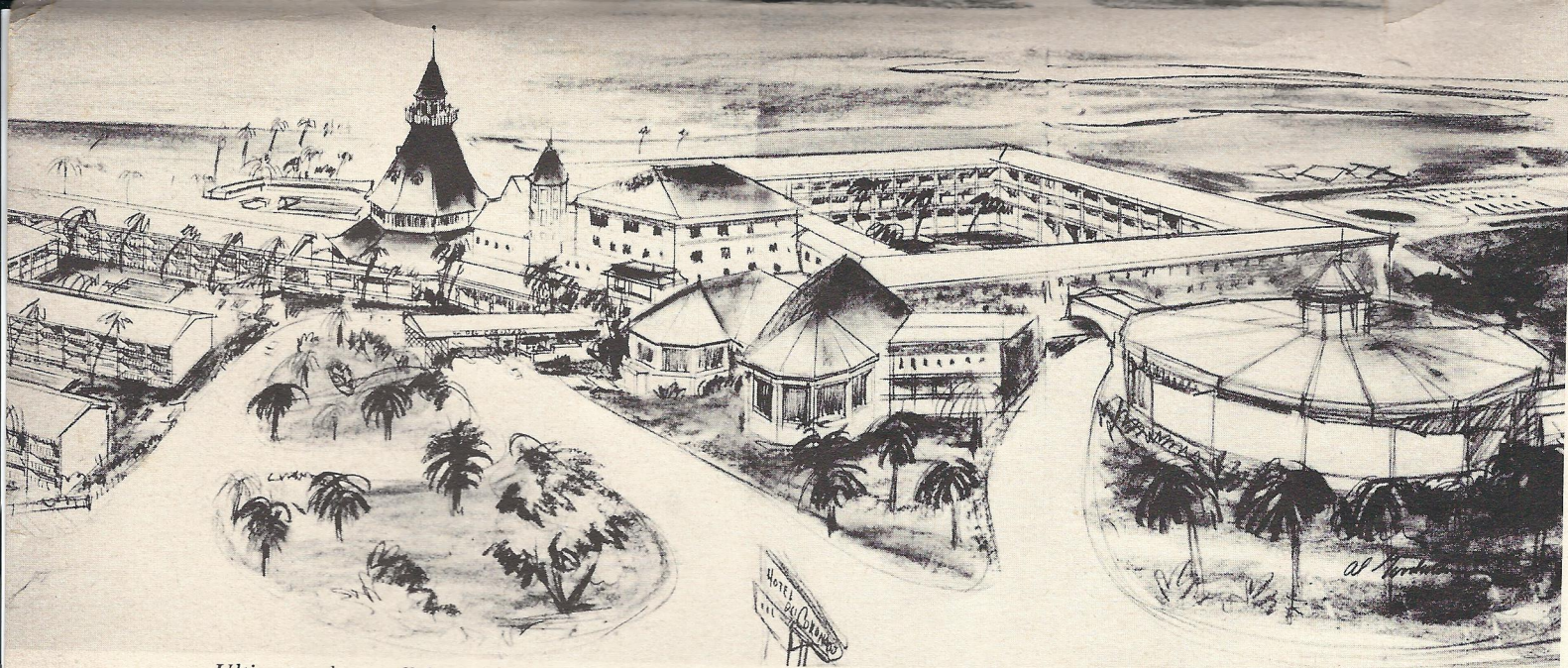
Al Goodman was offered the commission to convert the graceful but sadly rundown pleasure palace into a topflight twentieth century resort mecca. Uneasy would lie any head proffered such a crown and from the townspeople's point of view Goodman was an interloper and a particularly unwelcome one. He was not a Coronadoan. Indeed, he was barely a San Diegan. And — ultimate horror — he had served some twenty years in the film capital.

Quietly unperturbed, Goodman purchased two tennis racquets which he never has found time to use, and

Set designer turned industrial designer, Al Goodman (below) has amazed draftsmen, journeymen and suppliers with the accuracy of his full scale drawings, detailed plans and order lists. Renderings usually are accorded some artistic license but this delightful sketch of the hotel's grand ballroom, an artist's conception dashed off far in advance of alterations, is drawn to exact scale and indistinguishable from photographs made upon completion.

CHARLES SCHNEIDER





Ultimate plans call for construction of several hundred additional guest units, left, and a convention center, right.

accepted the job. "Nobody in Coronado," he recalls, "talked to me for the first four months I was here."

When he turned an expert's relentless gaze upon Coronado's beloved old hotel, he saw, stripped of sentiment, a giant, well-constructed, still comfortable caravansary nearly three-quarters of a century old, that was not putting its best foot forward anywhere near the stairway accesses of the main lobby. Here were cracking wainscoting and sorry furnishings from a jumble of periods. Moreover, the logistics of the establishment troubled Al Goodman, who was accustomed to thinking not merely in terms of room design, but of the people who would move through the story that a scenario had to tell. On the hotel's credit side,

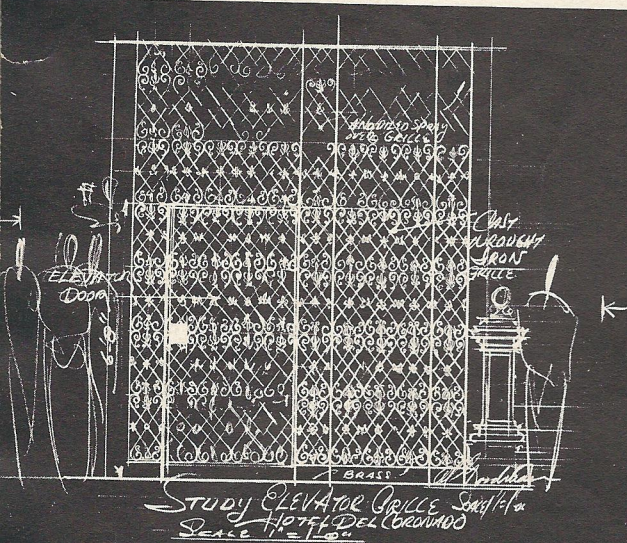
there was the sumptuous Crown Room, incredibly fine parquetry ceilings throughout most of the main floor and practically unlimited space in which to apply his talents, although the enormity of the building's dimensions at first disconcerted Goodman. "I had been fighting all my life to create the effect of space and now here was too much of it."

Sixty thousand square feet of it ultimately required his attention and he set upon them in a businesslike fashion, sometimes with as many as fourteen areas under alteration at one time. Little by little, as work proceeded and certain projects were completed, it became apparent to about 18,000 critics* that the man to whom the Alessios had entrusted their beloved Coronado hotel had

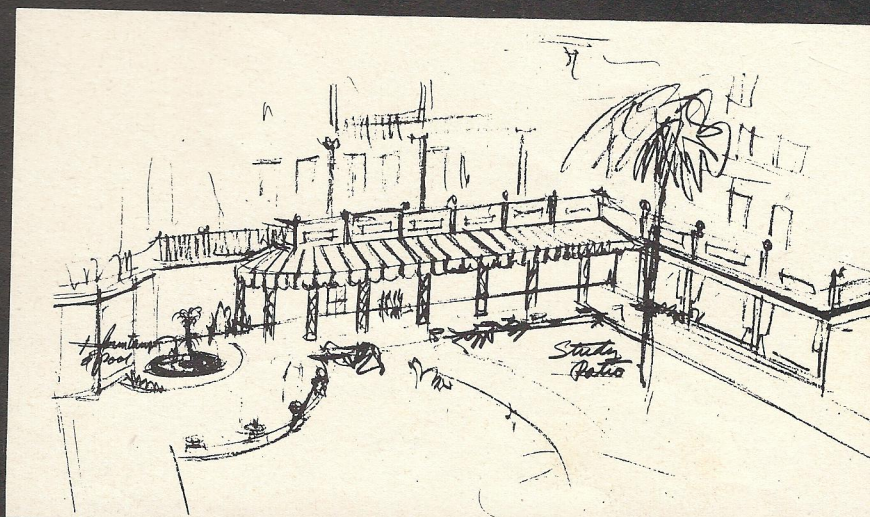
* Coronado population 18,018

a genuine, unerring feeling for period. ("After a whole year with Queen Victoria, sometimes I feel out of place in this century.") They saw that he had not changed the hotel so much as enhanced it, creating more lavish embellishments than ever it had known in its palmiest days. ("You have to be a nut or a moron to be a designer because you have to completely disregard money."—A. Goodman.) And perhaps some now realize that all along this usurper has had sensitivity and regard for their anxiety over a familiar landmark that to them was as precious as Adano's bell. Of course he did—who do you suppose created the set, an entire Italian fishing village, for the film version of *A Bell for Adano*?

Continued on page 62



Goodman designed this wonderfully ornate, purely Victorian grille for hotel's picturesque elevator.



Patio will gain an awning and a fountain. Fountain (left) can be seen from Crown Room.



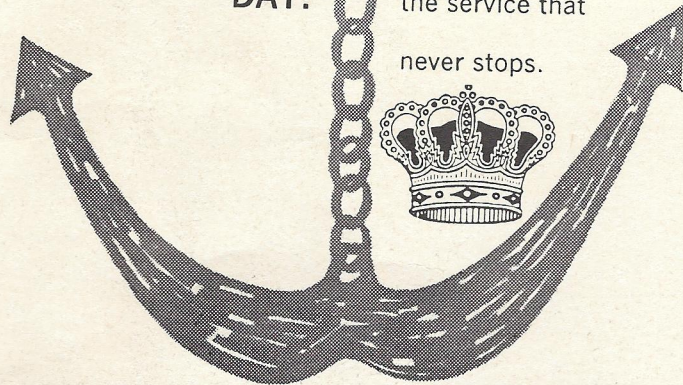
All agree that the magnificent Crown Room, whose beauty has weathered 73 years, should remain inviolate.

—Photograph by Tommy Lark.

75 YEARS AGO *the Coronado Ferry was inaugurated to haul men, materials and supplies for the building of the famed Hotel Del Coronado. As we celebrate our 75th Anniversary this year, we are proud of our part in helping to serve continuously the people and the communities of Coronado and San Diego.*

TO
SERVE
YOU ...
WE
"WEIGH
ANCHOR"
338
TIMES
A
DAY!

In a day and night,
the Coronado Ferry
makes 169 round
trips. Quick, reliable,
it's the ten-minute
link between San Diego
and Coronado . . .
the service that
never stops.



SAN DIEGO & CORONADO FERRY COMPANY

TO THE CROWN



HOTEL DEL

CORONADO

**PURVEYORS OF FINE
FRESH FROZEN FOODS
SINCE 1926**

**WILLARD SNYDER
PRODUCE CO.**

**CATERING TO THE FINER
HOTELS, RESTAURANTS AND
INSTITUTIONS**

101 WEST ISLAND AVE., SAN DIEGO 1 BE 9-5157

Continued from page 60

Al Goodman's evolution from Chicagoan to Hollywood scenic wizard to industrial designer began in the doldrums of the depression. Fresh from the old Armour Institute, Goodman arrived in Hollywood promptly went to his drawing board for two days, completed two sketches and was given six months' work at Paramount. For some years he shifted from studio to studio, laying the foundation for his eventual promotions from sketch artist to illustrator to the top post of art director. Throughout this period he had access to those overwhelming and recondite art libraries which each major studio then assembled to tutor its artist-technicians in the simulation of every land and every era in history. Goodman assimilated their material so thoroughly that he not merely identifies all furnishings by periods, but can sketch such details as the development of every ornamental molding since pre-Christian times.

In the golden years of movie-making, Goodman won his share of choice screen credits: *Dragonwyck*, *Quo Vadis?*, *Show Boat*, *Up in Central Park*, *Keys to the Kingdom*, *Anna and the King of Siam*. When the bag of theatre popcorn was supplanted by the TV dinner, Goodman quickly moved into the new medium. Television settings, however, are inhibited by certain restrictions of their medium, and lack the scope of the old super-colossal, multi-million dollar Hollywood epic. Al Goodman found that designing for weekly series left him with much free time. While *Show Boat* still was current, his wife prompted him to try his luck (artistic) in Las Vegas. After he was two weeks in Vegas, backers sought him out in regard to a *Show Boat* theatre restaurant they planned to build. It was a million dollar assignment and he somewhat dazedly took it.

With appetite whetted for creating scenic illusions outside a sound stage, Goodman decided to chuck the world of show business. He chose San Diego as a base for his new operations. San Diego was less than ready for him.

Those who are alert to planted publicity stories may question the rags-to-riches flavor of Goodman's recital of his last three years. This writer actually met Al Goodman at the start of his San Diego career and can attest to the validity of what he recounts. His first job was Hamburger Heaven, a hole in the wall at 6th and E, 52 feet long by six feet eleven inches wide. Next came the Apache, very nearly as narrow, situated on the east side of the Plaza. Third was the lobby of the St. James Hotel. Despite his protestations that an artist should have disregard for money, like any good scenic designer Goodman is capable of working within a careful budget. Since the St. James Hotel was losing money and had little to spare, he cut down second-hand furniture and reupholstered it as part of the lobby re-

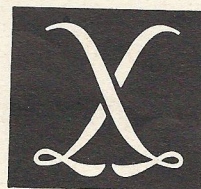


The gala elegance of these chandeliers keynotes the atmosphere of the new Hotel del Coronado ballroom. The outstanding design concept of Al Goodman and the fine craftsmanship of manufacturer Sid Dorner have combined to create an atmosphere that makes any great occasion a memorable one.

DORNER CUSTOM DIVISION
OF LIGHTOLIER

2515 S. BROADWAY

LOS ANGELES 7, CALIF.



furbishing. This sprucing-up put the S. James into the black and the hotel soon afterward was sold for a profit.

Most San Diegans are familiar with Al Goodman's chuck wagon successes for the Kahns. First came the Campus Chucky Wagon, and then the Midway, whose Gaslight Room decor and flocked wallpaper almost immediately touched off a chain of imitations. Not so well known is his designing of the Shelter Island Inn. Next came work re-doing the main floor of the U. S. Grant Hotel, followed by the Parkway Lanes in El Cajon, whose Roaring Twenties Room has become the night life smash of the San Diego area.

Having just re-done the outer foyer at the Grant, Goodman was called by John Alessio to study the Hotel del Coronado and its down-at-the-heels facilities. Here is how he saw the historic old empress of Glorietta Bay, together with some random comments on his approach to her problems. "You know, if the Hotel del Coronado had been built in the East in 1888, it would have been Renaissance style instead of Victorian. But because the owners and architect were from the Midwest and because the West always is 15 years behind the East, the style is Midwestern Victorian. Have you seen the diagram showing the original layout of the rooms, the billiard parlors and all? In the early years a resort's activities were similar to what they do today on a steamship.

"I think originally the color was green and gold but now the new decor is red and green. It took me a three-month search to find an authentic carpeting pattern. Afterward I went through major San Francisco hotels to be sure of avoiding repetition. The carpets then were custom-dyed to match the color scheme.

"I have a theory about Victorian patterns. I think that their fussiness resulted from sex-repression and sensuous curves and motifs cropped out in the decor. These days we don't feel the need of such elaborate design but modern people, on the other hand, never really finish a room.

"My idea in the ballroom was to bring it down to human scale so people won't feel lost. The Promenade Room is intended to lift up the spirits. If I don't feel a room, it never turns out. The simplest design can impart a feeling; design is just elimination — the more you know, the more you eliminate. Even the one-room of Colonial times, with its stone fireplace and few chairs, could give a feeling of great security.

"Next to the Grand Ballroom, the Crystal Room is deliberately understated. Having a bizarre type of ballroom next to it makes it look very quiet and attractive.

"The Crown Room is magnificent and I am leaving it just as it is. However, to make up for having cut off a little of the diners' view, I am putting a patio fountain outside the Crown Room window.

Continued on page 74