



The Hotel Grande-Bretagne



The Hotel Grande-Bretagne in 1896.

Designed and built in the 1840s by Danish architect Theophile Hansen, this French renaissance-style mansion which now houses the Hotel Grande-Bretagne was originally commissioned as the Athenian residence of a wealthy Greek citizen. By the time it was converted into a hotel by new owners Savvas Kentros and Stathis Lampsas in the 1870s, its original patron had never moved in. Lampsas had a particular affinity for the orphaned hotel, His years of culinary studies in Paris and his French wife had planted the seed of his ambition to create a

luxury accommodation in Greece to equal the grand hotels of Western Europe.

By 1894, the year in which the International Olympic Committee was founded, the Grande-Bretagne was the toast of Athens, as well as the first building in Greece to be fully equipped with electricity.

When Athens was selected as host city to the Games of the I Olympiad, local authorities scurried to refurbish, beautify and

1896. Αποδοχές		1896.	
100	50	4,519	
100	100		
100	217		
150	150	808	
100	100		
100	100		
100	100	1702	
100	100		
100	100	7158	
100	100		
100	100	858	
100	100		
100	100	1506	
100	100		
100	100	1054	
100	100	59405	

a book which describes the organization of the Games of the I Olympiad in Athens and the important role of the city's leading hotel. Set against a historical backdrop, Athens 1896 contains colour and black-and-white illustrations depicting the people and events of the Games, and also the bill presented to Baron de Coubertin.

As the first hundred years of modern Olympic history come full circle, members of the Olympic Movement will once again stay in the Grande-Bretagne in April as guests of the Hellenic Olympic Committee. They will be attending the commemorative events in Athens to celebrate the Centennial of the modern Olympic Games and hail a new century of peace and friendship through sport and the Olympic ideal.

Amanda Pingree

The Hotel's accounts ledger, showing the bill for the IOC members and Coubertin.

modernize, replacing kerosene street lamps with less polluting gaslights, sprucing up public spaces and buildings, and laying a rail link between the port of Piraeus and downtown Athens. The Grande-Bretagne would accommodate the second IOC Session, convened prior to the Games, and continue to entertain dignitaries, sports officials, athletes and journalists throughout the month of March and into April 1896.

The flock of guests who registered at the Grande-Bretagne to see the Games were drawn not only by its stately halls and fine amenities, but also by its location. Set on Constitution (Syntagma) Square opposite the Royal Palace, the hotel was at the centre of Athens' social, political and economic activities. It was also close to the Olympic Stadium.

To salute the Centennial year of the modern Olympic Games, the Hotel Grande-Bretagne has published *Athens 1896 - A Remembrance*,

