

NOVEMBER 2023

HERITAGE is the newsletter for Pabst Mansion, Inc., a historic house museum dedicated to the restoration of the Pabst Mansion and the preservation of the Pabst family legacy.

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## PABST TAKES A BITE OF THE BIG APPLE



BY DAVID ZEH

The 1890s are frequently referred to as the Pabst Decade in Milwaukee, and this description is entirely fitting. Under Captain Pabst’s leadership, the Pabst Brewing Company experienced remarkable growth, expanding its annual production from 100,000 barrels in 1873 to over 1,000,000 by 1893. This success established Pabst as a prominent figure in the brewing industry and allowed him to further solidify his legacy by reinvesting in the city’s future.

Pabst’s contributions to Milwaukee’s cultural landscape were significant. In 1893, the Pabst Building became Milwaukee’s first skyscraper, while the Pabst Theater hosted prominent German performances. Among Pabst’s other ventures were the Pabst Whitefish Bay Resort, the Blue Ribbon Buffet, Empire Café, and the Pabst Hotel (formerly the St. Charles Hotel). Beyond Milwaukee, Captain Pabst was eager to expand the Pabst brand on a national scale, aiming to make the name Pabst synonymous with quality and distinction. New York City seemed the perfect location for Pabst to achieve his goal. However, entering the market proved challenging. Established brewers in New York already had a stronghold in the city and newcomers were generally discouraged. Yet this did not deter Captain Pabst as he began searching for real estate opportunities in the very heart of the city.

In 1898, Pabst successfully secured a lease for a triangular lot facing Broadway and 42nd Street in Longacre Square. His ambitious plan involved the construction of a lavish nine-story hotel, designed by Henry F. Kilburn. To add to its grandeur, Milwaukee’s esteemed architect, Otto Strack, was enlisted to create an elaborate two-story portico that housed the hotel’s dining room.



*Rathskeller’s German restaurant, c. January 1900. Image courtesy of Museum of the City of New York*



*Exterior of the Pabst Hotel at Broadway and 42nd St., c. 1900*

The Pabst Hotel, specifically tailored for bachelors, officially opened on November 11, 1899. Sparing no expense for his first property in Manhattan, an enormous lower-level beer hall, the Rathskeller, occupied the basement and could seat 350 people. The Rathskeller was complete with a bar made entirely of marble, a mosaic tiled floor, and handcrafted mahogany furniture. After a cool glass of beer, guests could order dinner from the Rathskeller’s German kitchen while enjoying classical music from a Viennese band.

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## PABST TAKES A BITE OF THE BIG APPLE *continued from page 1*

On the second floor, the hotel boasted a glass-enclosed ladies' dining room, offering a picturesque view of New York's bustling streets. Chef Louis Mercier of Delmonico's, renowned for his culinary expertise, presided over the kitchen and prepared some of the finest French cuisine the city had to offer.

Meanwhile, the suites on the upper floors epitomized Gilded Age luxury, providing guests with ample space and elegant accommodations. Following the hotel's triumphant grand opening, Captain Pabst was poised to undertake an even more ambitious project.

Located at 125th Street, Pabst Harlem opened its doors on September 22, 1900, and quickly gained fame as the largest restaurant in America. Also designed by Otto Strack, the establishment was hailed as the finest restaurant of its kind, offering a plethora of amenities for its guests. The dining hall, spanning 100,000 square feet, accommodated 1,400 people and was graced by a large arching dome adorned with exquisite glass skylights. The walls were decorated with lush palms and opulent works of art, including a painting then valued at \$20,000 by Ernst Berger, titled "Dedication of the Fountain."

Pabst Harlem was part of the "Lobster Palace" trend, a restaurant craze that captivated affluent New Yorkers from approximately 1890 to 1910. Notably, it stood out as one of the first restaurants to introduce cabaret entertainment to Harlem,



*Picture of a guestroom in the bachelor hotel. Image courtesy of Museum of the City of New York*

featuring performances every afternoon and evening. Captain Pabst's marketing acumen was further demonstrated by another clever strategy. He supposedly hired Broadway actors to visit bars, purchase a round of beer for everyone present, and toast to the health of Captain Pabst, thereby enhancing the brand's visibility and appeal among the public.

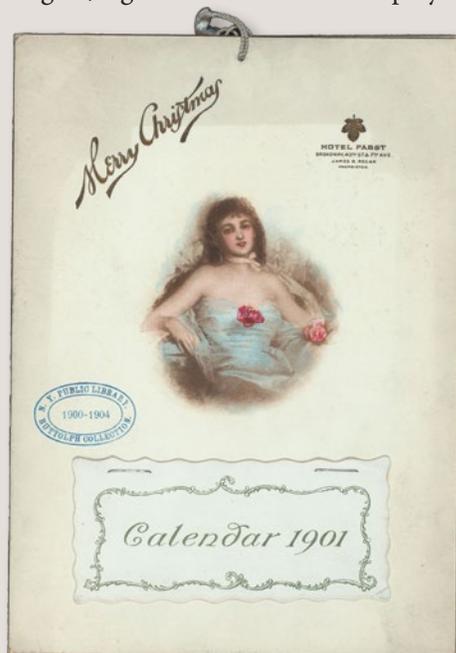
Against all odds, Pabst demonstrated his ability to compete in a market that was previously considered off-limits. Both the Pabst Hotel and Pabst Harlem spared no expense in creating extravagant

holiday celebrations. On Christmas Day in 1900, the Pabst Hotel hosted a lavish dinner with nearly a dozen courses. The menu was comprised of over twenty desserts, including the classic Wisconsin cream puff, and even featured a unique appetizer named Baked Oysters a la Pabst.

Similarly, Pabst Harlem also organized annual Christmas dinners, but what truly captured attention was their remarkable holiday decorations. On December 24, 1901, a reporter from *The New York Times* marveled at the restaurant's Christmas tree, describing it as "one of the largest ever seen indoors," standing at over fifty-feet high and placed prominently in the center of the hall. This height was apparently comparable to the trees delivered to Rockefeller Center decades later. The tree was embellished with more than 1,500 ornaments, and to ensure a stunning display of lights, eight electricians were employed



*Interior photograph of Pabst Harlem's immense dining room. Berger's 'Dedication of the Fountain' can be seen hanging prominently on the upper level.*



*Pabst Hotel's Christmas menu, featuring a festively dressed woman with a small calendar for 1901 on the cover. Image courtesy of The New York Public Library*

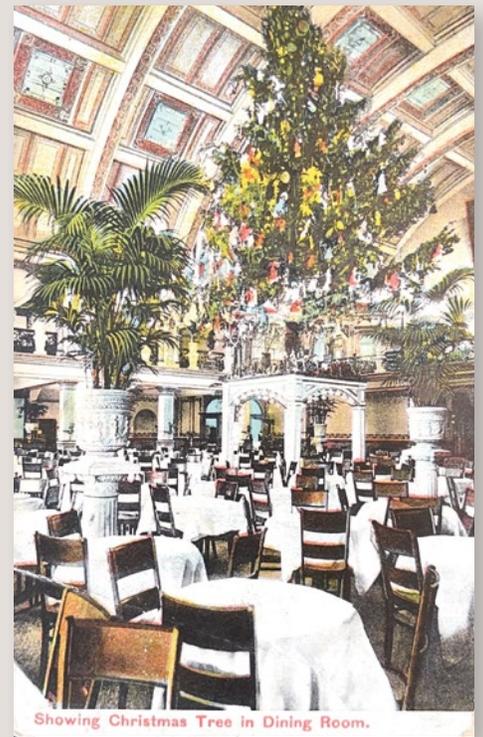
to create striking light effects. The reporter also noted that presents would be distributed from the tree's branches to every child during their Christmas Eve celebration, adding to the festive atmosphere.

During this period of expansion for the Pabst Brewing Company, significant changes were also underway in New York City's landscape. Between 1900 and 1902, *The New York Times* criticized city officials in numerous articles for permitting the construction of the hotel's portico. One article declared, "The four pillars which support the portico constitute a violation of the law and ordinances of the city." The hotel faced further challenges when its renowned Rathskeller had to be removed due to the installation of a new subway line beneath the property. In 1902, an article in *The New York Tribune* marked the end of the Pabst Hotel, stating, "New York is Growing Like a Boom Town and This New Quarter-Million Dollar Building is in the Way."

Later that year, the hotel was demolished, earning the distinction of being the first steel skyscraper in Manhattan to be razed. *The New York Times* acquired the site of the former Pabst Hotel and the surrounding Longacre Square to construct their new headquarters. On April 8, 1904, this area was officially renamed Times Square, becoming the iconic location we know today.

In spite of the loss of their hotel, the Pabst Brewing Company decided to forge ahead with new ventures. The company constructed Pabst Grand Circle at the Columbus Circle entrance to Central Park. Once again, Otto Strack was commissioned to design this new establishment, which included a hotel, restaurant, and theater. Additionally, the company introduced another hotel, restaurant, and a large pavilion called the Pabst Loop where travelers visiting or leaving Coney Island could satisfy their thirst by purchasing an ice-cold Pabst beer at this convenient location.

By the early 1900s, the brewery had established properties in every major American city. Captain Pabst's innovative leadership ushered in a new standard of advertising that continues to influence the industry today. While the Schlitz Brewing Company may have been "The beer that made Milwaukee famous," it was Pabst that truly solidified Milwaukee's reputation as "The Beer Capitol of the World."



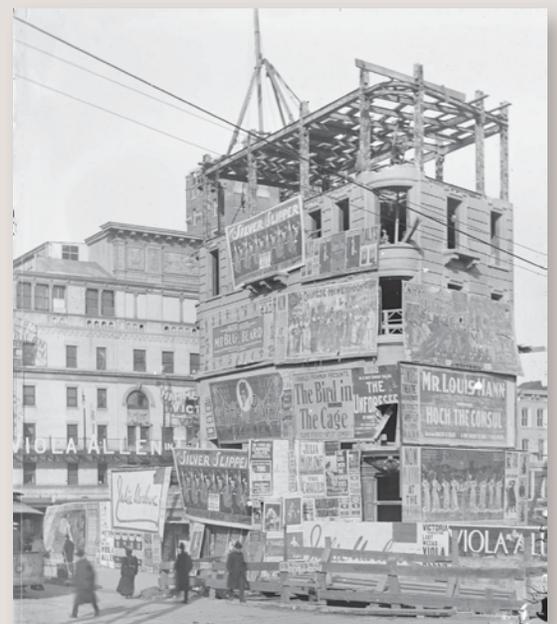
Postcard of Pabst Harlem's Christmas tree, c. 1900



Postcard of the Pabst Loop at Coney Island, c. 1900



Pabst Grand Circle, c. 1903



Picture of the demolition of the Pabst Hotel, 1902.  
Image courtesy of Museum of the City of New York

# The Halls are Decked for Christmas at the Pabst Mansion!

## OPENING RECEPTION

**November 15, 5:30 – 7:30pm**

**Tickets:** \$50 member/\$60 non-member

*Beer Baron level membership & above receive two complimentary tickets (must RSVP).*

You are invited to an exclusive preview of *Christmas at the Pabst Mansion* during the official opening reception! Join us in celebrating the season during an evening of holiday drinks, hors d'oeuvres, desserts and live music where the champagne's sparkle matches that of the trees!

## DAILY SELF-GUIDED TOURS

**November 16, 2023 – January 7, 2024, Monday-Saturday, 10am – 4pm;**

**Sunday, 11am – 2:30pm (Closed on holidays)**

**Tickets:** Adult: \$20, Senior/Student/Military: \$18, Child (6 & over): \$13,

Child (5 & under): Free, Member: Free

Experience the magic of the holiday season! With new decorations each year, *Christmas at the Pabst Mansion* is a holiday tradition not to be missed! From sparkling winter wonderlands to decorations bursting with color, everyone in the family is sure to find their favorite tree.

## TWILIGHT TOURS

**Thursdays – Saturdays, 4:30 – 7:30pm**

**November 24 – December 30, 2023 & January 6, 2024**

**Tickets:** Adult: \$26, Senior/Student/Military: \$24, Members: \$11

A self-guided evening tour with twinkling lights, live holiday music, and drinks for purchase like glühwein and pecan whiskey cider to give you that warm Christmas glow!

## FATHER CHRISTMAS VISITS THE MANSION!

**Sundays, 2:30 – 5:30pm**

**November 26 – December 17, Special Christmas Eve hours 11am – 1pm**

**Tickets:** Adult: \$20, Senior/Student/Military: \$18, Child (6 & over): \$13, Child (3-5): \$8,

Infant (0-2): Free, Member: Free

With his lantern, walking stick and trimmed red cloak, a whimsical Father Christmas travels south to visit the Pabst Mansion each Sunday during the holiday season. Create magical memories with holiday treats, letters to Santa, and room after room of enchanting Christmas displays.

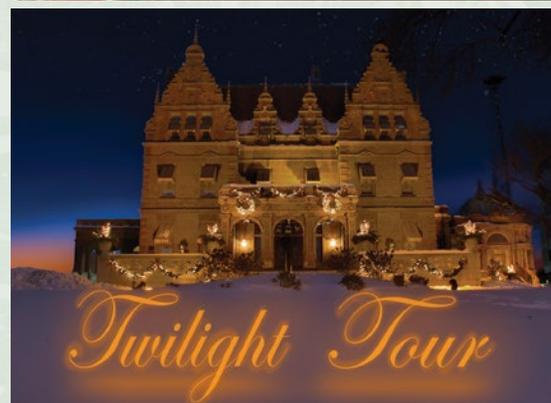
## HOLIDAY MIMOSA TOURS

**Thursdays - Saturdays, 9:30am; Sundays, 9:30am & 10am**

**November 19, 2023 – January 7, 2024**

**Tickets:** Adult: \$26, Senior/Student/Military: \$24, Member: \$11

The only guided tour during Christmas at the Pabst Mansion... with a mimosa! This tour is for those wanting a guided experience during the holiday season with a little something extra. Cheers to making special holiday memories!



**Special Thanks to  
Our Sponsors:**



# Give the Gift OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Pabst Mansion includes:

- ❁ Free year-round admission to the Pabst Mansion
- ❁ 10% discount in the Pabst Mansion gift shop
- ❁ Subscription to our *Heritage* newsletter
- ❁ Discounts on special tours and events
- ❁ Join or renew at the Brewmaster level [\$175] or above and you will automatically be enrolled in NARM [North American Reciprocal Museum Association]. This enrollment provides you access to free admission and discounts to over 1,000 arts, cultural and historical institutions across the United States, Canada and Mexico through the North American Reciprocal Membership (NARM) Association.

For more information on membership levels or to purchase a membership online, visit [pabstmansion.com/memberships](http://pabstmansion.com/memberships)

**Give the gift that keeps on giving!**



**MEMBERSHIP**

***Yes, I want to be a member of the Pabst Mansion!***

- |                                       |         |                                      |       |
|---------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comet        | \$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Brewmaster  | \$175 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grand Circle | \$500   | <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Ribbon | \$95  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beer Baron   | \$250   | <input type="checkbox"/> First Mate  | \$50  |

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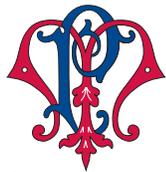
Please make checks payable to Pabst Mansion. To pay securely by credit card, visit [www.pabstmansion.com](http://www.pabstmansion.com)

- I am interested in volunteer opportunities, please contact me.

*I would like to make a contribution to the Mansion.*

*Enclosed is my contribution for \$ \_\_\_\_\_.*

Detach and mail to: Pabst Mansion  
2000 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53233



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## Holiday Gifts

INSPIRED BY  
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Make this holiday season historic with the Pabst Mansion Gift Shop! From stationery to clothing and accessories, the collection of items inspired by the Pabst Mansion has something for every stocking.

Available onsite or at [pabstmansion.com](http://pabstmansion.com)



AT THE PABST MANSION

### Hours / Admission

November 16, 2023 – January 7, 2024

### Daily Self-Guided Tours

Monday-Saturday 10am-4pm • Sunday 11am-5:30pm

Last Entry 45 min. to close

Open Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve 10am-1pm

Closed: Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day

Adult: \$20 • Senior/Student/Military: \$18

Child (6-17): \$13 • Child (5 and under): Free

Member: Free

Prices and hours subject to change.

### Twilight Tours

Thursdays – Saturdays 4:30-7:30pm

November 25 – January 6

Adult: \$26

Senior/Student/Military: \$24

Member: \$11

Located on 20th and Wisconsin Avenue.

Limited parking is available. Wheelchair accessible.