

Word on the Street: DoubleTree is the latest name for downtown Fresno hotel

By Tim Sheehan

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DoubleTree by Hilton Fresno Convention Center is the new name for the hotel at Ventura and M streets. The new brand was announced Wednesday following the completion of a \$7 million renovation of the 321-room property. The eight-story hotel, built in 1983, was originally the Centre Plaza Holiday Inn and later the Radisson Hotel & Conference Center.

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The eight-story hotel that has stood at Ventura and M streets across from the Fresno Convention Center since the early 1980s is a prime example of the game of “musical brands” in the hospitality business.

The hotel started its life in 1983 as the Centre Plaza Holiday Inn and operated under that name until early 1999, when the property was sold to Uniwell Corporation LLC. Uniwell lined up with the Radisson brand, and the hotel was known as the Radisson Hotel & Conference Center until last spring.

After a thorough \$7 million renovation and modernization, the 321-room hotel now bears the name [DoubleTree by Hilton Fresno Convention Center](#). While the full name doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, it's a major brand with considerably more cachet than the rather generic Fresno Hotel & Conference Center (not to be confused with the

rundown, 103-year-old Hotel Fresno a few blocks to the northwest) under which the hotel operated independently as an interim bridge between the Radisson and DoubleTree brands.

The new [DoubleTree by Hilton](#) affiliation was announced Wednesday. The renovation included a new design for the hotel's expansive atrium lobby as well as sprucing up the furnishing and remodeling bathrooms in the guest rooms. The pool and hot-tub areas and 24-hour fitness center were also included in the renovation.

The DoubleTree brand is known for greeting guests with warm chocolate chip cookies, but DoubleTree by Hilton promises more amenities, including in-room gourmet coffees and teas and a specialty line of soaps and lotions in the guest bathrooms. For members of [Hilton's HHonors](#) guest loyalty program, the hotel is running a grand-opening promotion in which members can earn 1,000 bonus points for stays Sundays through Thursdays.

If all those name changes for the Ventura Street hotel weren't enough to get your head spinning, consider the other big hotel in downtown Fresno, on Van Ness Avenue across from the Fresno County Courthouse. That nine-story, 197-room property opened in 1972 as the Fresno Hilton, and over the years it's had more than its share of name changes, too — DoubleTree, Fresno Plaza and Howard Johnson Plaza before it was shuttered in 2002. It reopened as a Holiday Inn in 2008, and for part of last year it operated independently as the Fresno Inn Downtown Convention Center before becoming a member of the Radisson family last year as the [Radisson Hotel Fresno Conference Center](#).

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