



# Renovation of THE Borden Hotel: THE MODEL-T INN, BAR & GRILLE

**BORDEN** – Saddle up to the bar at the Model-T Bar and Grille and experience the 1920s. Tony and Helen Beaudry bought the Borden hotel in 2007, and have been working steadily to renovate this heritage building ever since.

“We have people who come in regularly,” Helen said. “They get to listen to my player piano and sit on the saddle at the bar.”

Built in 1905, the hotel was called the Pioneer Hotel until 1952. Many changes were made to the building by successive owners.

The original 16 guest rooms were reduced to 15 to accommodate the bathroom when the hotel was equipped with running water. Interior plaster walls and transom windows were covered with wallboard.

Part of the upstairs was closed off and not opened again until 50 years later, when the Beaudrys started peeling back the layers, revealing the building's heritage features.

For example, when they removed the wallboard in one of the second-storey guest rooms, they found the en-



**Top: The original Borden hotel, c. 1910.**  
CREDIT: Courtesy of the Borden Museum.

**Helen and Tony Beaudry have spent \$200,000 to renovate the Borden hotel.** CREDIT: Courtesy of Helen and Tony Beaudry.

**Below: Sam and Ada Wright (with unidentified man on left) owned the Borden hotel in the 1950s.**  
CREDIT: Courtesy of the Borden Museum.



trance to the balcony once located above the front door of the original hotel.

“When I walked in, I felt like I was home,” Helen said of her first look at the hotel in 2008. “I thought, ‘Wow! This has a lot of potential!’”

The Beaudrys put in a successful bid of \$25,000 with the Borden village council, which had taken over the property from the former owner.

“We were bidding against four other people, but they gave it to us because we weren't going to tear it down,” said Helen.

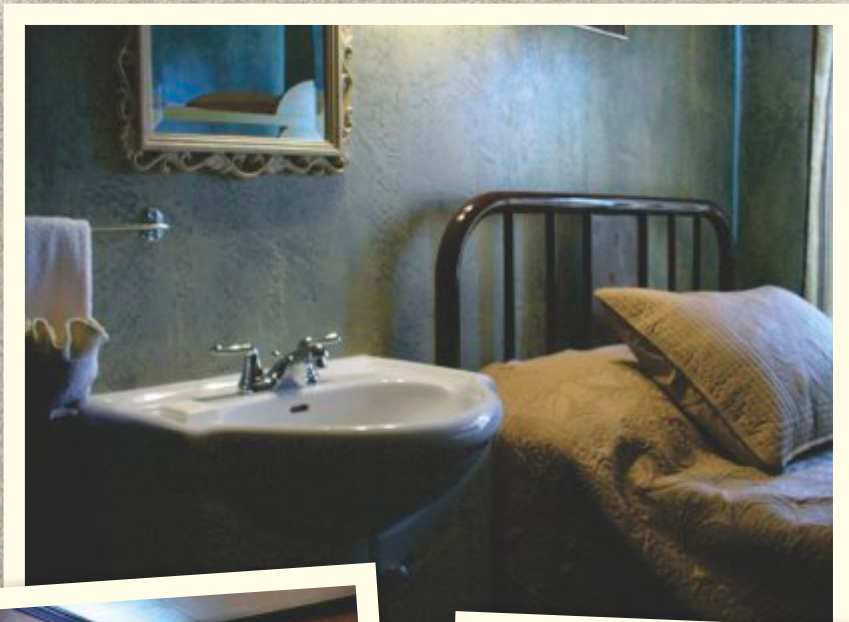
The Beaudrys financed and did all the restoration work themselves.

The first thing the couple did was gut the lobby, bar and kitchen.

It was a dirty job as can be seen in the “before and after” photos on the hotel's web site, [www.model-t.ca/](http://www.model-t.ca/).

The current restaurant space once served as the original hotel's rotunda, an ice cream parlour, the owners' residence, and finally a games room – complete with VLTs and pool table.

The Beaudrys removed these gaming items and opened both sides of the hotel's main floor as fam-



**Clockwise from top:**

**Old-fashioned comforts in a hotel guest room.**

Credit: Joan Champ photo

**Upstairs hallway of the hotel.**

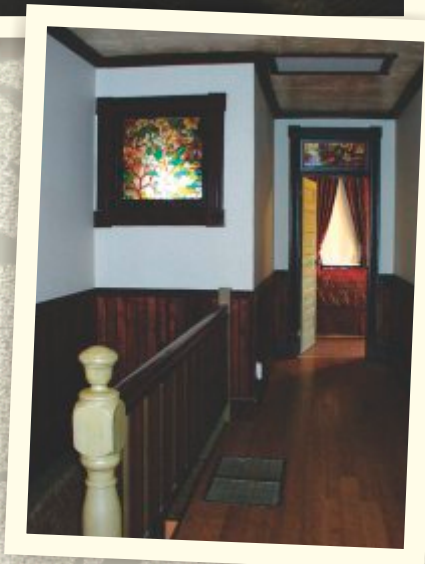
Credit: Joan Champ photo

**Tony Beaudry looks over the Model-T Grille.**

Credit: Joan Champ photo

**Hotel suite with a claw-foot bathtub.**

Credit: Joan Champ photo



ily dining areas. A five-foot lobby separates the two areas, and stairs lead up to the second floor.

The second-floor guest rooms are laid out like an old boarding house. At the top of the stairs, there is a seating area where hotel guests can relax.

Three regular rooms, each with a sink, share two bathrooms and a shower down the hall – just like in the old days. Two larger suites feature a double bed, fireplace, toilet, sink and claw-foot tub with a shower attachment.

The rooms are named after Borden-area school districts: Concordia, Thistledale, Saginaw, Diefenbaker, and Baltimore.

“We opened up the side that had been closed since the 40's,” Tony explained.

This section will soon be the Halcyonia Suite, which will sleep six guests. Helen and Tony have carefully chosen authentic period furniture and fabrics for each room.

The Model-T Inn, Bar and Grille received provincial heritage designation in 2009.

“If I had the money, I'd buy up all the small town hotels in Saskatchewan and renovate them to their original splendor,” said Helen.

The Beaudry's commitment to this big restoration project has turned the old hotel into something the town of Borden can once again be proud of.

The couple's passion will continue to carry them through as they renovate the hotel's exterior this coming summer. **W**

• *By Joan Champ and Merrill Edlund*

