

Del Camino In El Paso Is Unique Museum

Aficionado Collects Objects Of Latin Sport

By FRED WILLIAMS

The modern "corrida de toros" has all the pageantry, excitement and thrills anyone could ask for, and until recently a closeup look at what goes into the making of the Sunday afternoon combat between man and bull has been reserved to a small group of insiders.

El Paso is fortunate to now have a place where aficionados of the sport of bullfighting, or those just curious about the spectacle, can see firsthand the history, background and equipment used in the ring by the participants in the "fiesta brava."

Thousands of books and articles have been written about bullfighting and people throughout the world know something about it. Now there is a place for everyone to step inside the legendary world of the bullfight.

El Paso became the site of the first bullfight museum in the United States on Sept. 23. The museum is located in the Del Camino Motor Hotel, 5001 Alameda, or it might be more correct to say the Del Camino is the bullfight museum.

The smiling matador has been the symbol of the Del Camino for years but in the last few months the motel has been turned into a memorial to the bullfighter and his sport.

W. P. "Bill" Adams, managing partner of the Del Camino, has seen a dream come true.

Adams became interested in bullfighting through his brother, Calvin C. Adams, the other partner in the Del Camino and owner of the Pyrenees Restaurant in Skokie, Ill.

Adams said his brother acquired a few pieces of art centered around bullfighting and brought other objects back from a trip to Spain before he moved to Illinois. "Then I became enthusiastic myself and started collecting things," Adams said.

From there it seemed to snowball. Adams said a friend, Mike Padilla of Chihuahua City, inherited many objects connected with bullfighting which he didn't want and gave them to him.

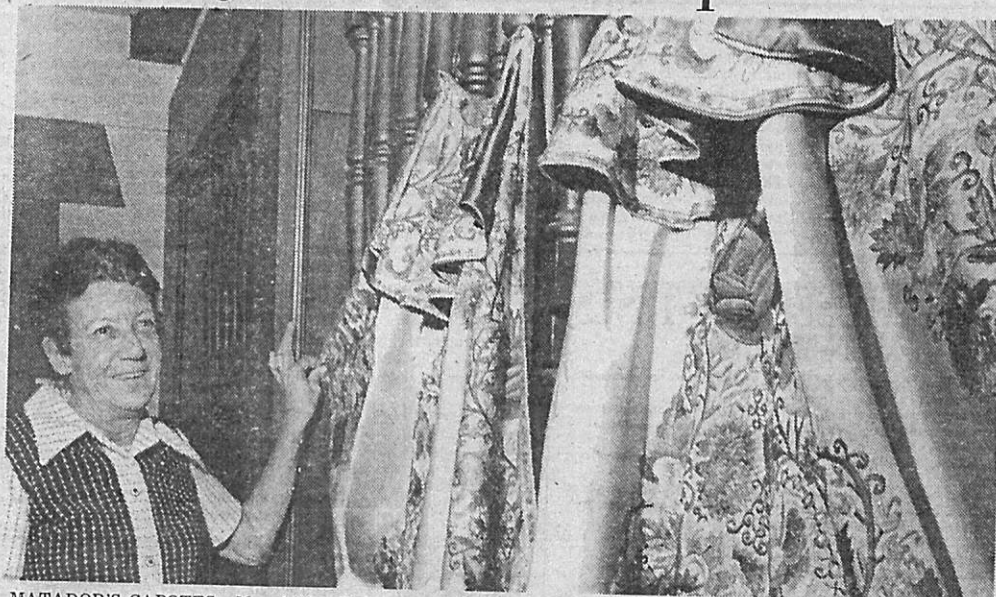
Adams said the motel offices began to fill with pictures, bull heads, books, scarfs, capes, posters and other paraphernalia "until we ran out of space." Padilla kept bringing in things until Adams came up with the idea of starting the museum.

"I contacted Raul Gonzalez, president of the Barrera Taurina Club of El Paso and we all caught the fever and went crazy about the idea of a bullfight museum in El Paso," Adams said.

The Barrera Taurina Club is a local bullfight enthusiasts' club. Spelling of the titles varies.

The closest bullfight museum outside of El Paso is in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, Adams said.

Young Mexican matador Curro Rivera partici-



MATADOR'S CAPOTES—Mrs. Lilian Sulz, motel manager at the Del Camino Motor Hotel, examines several ornate capes from Spain worn into the bull ring by the

matador. The capes are about 100 years old and are part of the new bullfight museum at the Del Camino.

pated in the dedication ceremonies of the new museum and fought the next day in Plaza Monumental. Following the fight he donated his cape, clothing and other items used to kill his two bulls to the museum.

The motel offices, lounge and dining areas contain part of Adams' bullfight collection.

Upon entering the coffee shop the Barrera Taurino Room is dedicated exclusively to the exhibition of posters, banners, photographs, matador's clothing and equipment and paintings by El Paso artist Manuel Acosta of famous bullfighters.

Throughout the La Corrida, Patio, Torero and Guadalajara Rooms are still more bullfight paraphernalia including a glass enclosed case on the wall of the La Corrida dining room with everything a matador uses in the ring. The cape, more than 100 years old and made in Spain, is valued at more than \$2,000.

Bullfight art dating from the 17th century is on display at the museum.

More than 50 lithographs from a bullfight tabloid, "La Lidia," published in the 1880s depicting the history of the sport, are on display throughout the halls of the Del Camino.

The head of "El Firmador," the only bull ever pardoned in the history of bullfighting in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, is on display. "El Firmador" was fought by Joselito Huerta, widely known matador among border aficionados, in 1968. The banderillas used by Huerta on the day of his encounter with "El Firmador" are also on display.

Swords and muletas, with traces of blood still remaining, can be seen in the museum.

One of the most interesting displays in the museum is a collection donated by former female bullfighter Patricia Franklin, who resides in El Paso with her husband, Richard.

Mrs. Franklin, known in her fighting days as Pat Hayes, faced bulls in major rings in Mexico, Portugal and Ecuador before retiring in 1963.

She became interested in bullfighting while a student at North Texas State College where she was a music student. She saw her first fight in Villahermosa, Mexico, and she knew she wanted to be a bullfighter, she said.

Mrs. Franklin participated in the museum dedication along with Rivera. She donated her collection of photographs, news and magazine

stories a muleta and a sword.

Adams said Mrs. Franklin's donation is the most notable exhibit in the museum because she was the "greatest of the women bullfighters."

Adams said the museum plans to honor famous matadors who come to the El Paso-Juarez area. He said the motel will name suites after matadors who stay in the motel. Curro Rivera was the first to be so honored after he dressed in the Del Camino for his Sept. 24 fight and crossed into Mexico to kill his two bulls. He was the first matador to ever dress in the United States for a fight in Mexico.

A gallery of matadors who fight in Juarez will also be established at the Del Camino, Adams said.

The museum, although already dedicated, will be completed and officially opened preceeding the opening of the 1974 bullfight season, Adams said.

"This place is dear to my heart," Adams said, "I feel like this is a perfect setting for a bullfight museum since the matador is our emblem. It is a great tourist attraction and will help the City as well as us."



BIT OF LIGHTS—A print of the painting entitled "The Dead Matador" by French artist Monet is behind "Traje de Luz," the matador's costume, and a pair of shoes worn by matador Alfredo Leal on display in the Barrera Taurino Room at the Del Camino Motor Hotel.

COVER PHOTO: W. A. "Bill" Adams, managing partner of the Del Camino Motor Hotel bullfight museum, holds a silk tapestry from Spain promoting a bullfight. The tapestry and many other old and colorful bullfighting objects collected by Adams are on display in the new bullfight museum in the motel. It is the first such museum in the United States.



CERAMIC BULLFIGHT SCENE—Mrs. Eula McGranahan, Del Camino restaurant manager, examines the full size ceramic tile depiction of a pass called the "natural" on the wall outside the Del Camino Motor Hotel. The mural was made by a California firm especially for the Del Camino.