

HOTEL BUSINESS[®]

ICD
PUBLICATIONS

MARKETING CHALLENGES

Chicago's Newly Opened Amalfi Hotel Looks To Hit Marketing Home Run

BY SHANNON McMULLEN

CHICAGO— The 215-room Amalfi Hotel, which opened here recently, devised a slick way of gaining attention, by tying into one of the most emotional events of the city—a public execution of the foul ball from Game 6 of the 2003 National League Championship Series.

The hotel's food and beverage partner, Harry Caray's restaurant, purchased the foul ball that Chicago Cubs fan Steve Bartman deflected in the infamous game between the Cubs and Florida Marlins for more than \$113,000.

After they had possession of the ball, they issued a statement that they were seeking fans to come up with a way to destroy it to keep it out of the hands of any Marlins fans and hopefully end the "curse" which has allegedly kept the Cubs from winning the World Series since 1945.

Enter the Amalfi Hotel, owned by Hostmark Hospitality, an independent management company based in Schaumburg, IL. Hotel management approached Harry Caray's with the idea to host the ball in the hotel on its final night in a sort of "Dead Ball Walking" theme, extending the relationship between the partners, and adding layers to the destruction process

that would turn into some serious headlines for the new lodging property.

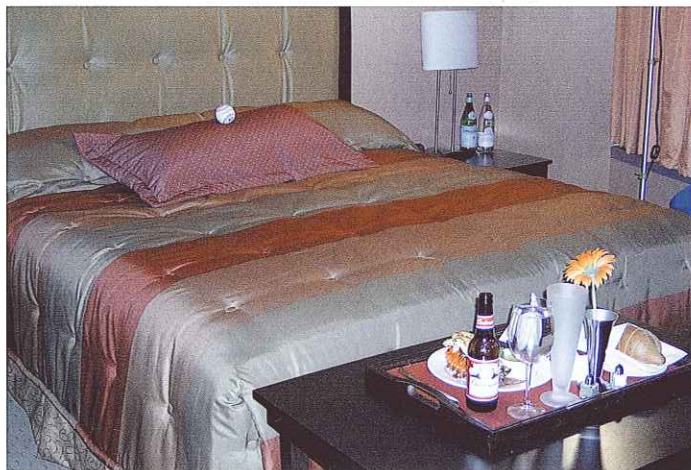
Since the planned February 26, 2004 destruction was brought about to help raise funds for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the hotel made a \$10,000 donation to the fund, and the ball was ushered to the hotel.

The ball was given its own suite overlooking Harry Caray's and had room service deliver it's last meal, which consisted of filet and lobster.

The next morning the infamous ball was brought to the local NBC studio where Katie Couric announced how the ball was to be destroyed. Harry Caray's got a special effects tech from Los Angeles, who worked on Jurassic Park and other major motion pictures, to come out and destroy the ball.

Fans were also encouraged to pay their final respects to the ball when brought back to the Amalfi that afternoon. It was destroyed in front of the hotel and restaurant that evening at 7:31 CST, which was carried live on MSNBC.

Given all aspects of the event were highly anticipated, it was widely covered on television, radio and in the newspapers. The ball was filmed arriving at the hotel, checking in, going up to its



The public execution of the famous foul ball was preceded by a last meal at the Amalfi Hotel in Chicago.

suite, having dinner, a massage and fans coming in to see it, said Amalfi Hotel General Manager Paul Drummond.

The media on property filming included CNN, ESPN, Good Morning America, Major League Baseball, Local Fox, ABC, CBS and NBC, both Major Chicago Newspapers— *Tribune and Sun Times*— and many radio stations, according to Drummond. In addition, all three local TV affiliates did live cut-ins and teasers from in the room during the 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. news hours, as well as on-the-street comments and edited stories on the 10:00 p.m. news and the morning shows, he said. *USA Today* also picked up the

story as well as numerous newspapers and radio stations across the U.S.

All told the media exposure measured in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. "Well worth the \$13,000 we spent—\$3,000 on security and hand outs for the fans that stopped by, plus the original \$10,000 donation," said Drummond. HB

A M A L F I
C O N D O H O T E L

CHICAGO

Amalfi Hotel
20 W. Kinzie, Suite #429
Chicago, IL 60610
www.amalficondohotel.com
312-395-9080