



JENNY KIMBALL

CHAIR OF THE BOARD, LA FONDA ON THE PLAZA, SANTA FE

When Jenny Kimball, board chair of Santa Fe's La Fonda on the Plaza, and architect Barbara Felix took over renovation of the historic hotel in 2008, they did so in the spirit of a place whose history is full of brave, visionary women. From schoolteacher turned architect Mary Colter to the Harvey Girls who left their homes behind to bring hospitality to the Wild West, La Fonda is the hearth of the Plaza because of women like Kimball, who took a leap of faith.

CHANGING LANES: Kimball's optimism has given her the courage to move from a legal career to running an educational nonprofit to being recognized last year as Sustainability Champion and Historic Hotelier of the Year by Historic Hotels of America. "I went to law school so I would have the education

and training to do whatever I wanted," she says. "That's ended up serving me well."

LEAP FORWARD: An avid outdoorswoman who loves to ski, fly-fish, and mountain-bike, the Dallas native is equally driven by a desire to avoid a boring life. "I don't look before I leap. I leap and I don't look back."

TEAM EQUALITY: Kimball attributes the hotel's recent awards and success to La Fonda's team effort. When she and a group of investors purchased the former Harvey House hotel from the Ballen family in 2014, Kimball learned the important relationship between the front and back of the house. One

of her first changes was to ensure not only equal pay for women, but the ability for female employees to be heard. When La Fonda's longtime restaurant manager got a raise, she pulled Kimball aside to thank her. "She told me how she'd learned to use the men under her to go to the man above her for things she needed for the restaurant."

HEART OF SANTA FE: In renovating the hotel's 180 guest rooms, Kimball and Felix dusted off the past and pumped it full of new life with a collection of contemporary Native American art. "Barbara and I stripped away the tchotchkes and focused on highlighting the deep, rich history, architecture, and craftsmanship that was in the building since the twenties but had gotten lost over the decades," she recalls. "Why would you go abroad for art and craftsmanship when Santa Fe is full of such amazing Native artists?"

CULTURAL CONTINUUM: The unique landscape, history, and multiculturalism of New Mexico is the love spell that binds Kimball to Santa Fe and gives La Fonda a special energy that, like the state itself, is lodged somewhere between then and now. "La Fonda is going to be 100 years old in 2022," she says. "There aren't many buildings that evoke this kind of spirit." —*Ungelbah Dávila-Shivers*