

Event Spotlight



Returning to Somewhere in Time Cherie Oliver

An annual event at a historic hotel gives costumers a chance to experience romance and the ghosts of a bygone era.

Somewhere In Time is one of the most touching and romantic movies ever made.

The theme is everlasting love – love so strong that nothing can keep the lovers apart, not even Time itself. A young man (“Richard,” played by Christopher Reeve at his winningest) is haunted by a photo of an actress popular in 1912 (“Elise,” played by Jane Seymour at her loveliest). To find his love, he learns to travel back in time.

Released in 1980, the film was panned by the cynical critics as corny and sentimental. But its unabashed romanticism appealed to many, actually building



The costumes in this movie are far from perfect. Richard’s one suit, although nicely tailored, does not look 1900-1915. As is often the case, the extras’ costumes are better than the stars’. But the movie still makes quite an impression visually.

its audience over the years, and it is now a cult classic.

The movie was filmed at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, a 19th-century resort off the northern tip of the Michigan mitten. A beautiful and stately setting, the Grand is also like a character in the movie; it is by immersing himself in its ambience, and changing his clothes and everything else around him, that the young man succeeds in going back to 1912.

If these elements were indeed the key to time-travel, the folks who go to the annual Somewhere in Time Weekend at the Grand Hotel would have moved to the past long ago. As it is, the event gives them the chance for a long visit there.

Set for the Grand’s last weekend of the season, Somewhere in Time Weekend draws people from all over the world to come, dress up in 1912 style, watch the movie together, and participate in other events that highlight the romantic world of the movie. The old hotel seems to preen proudly, filled as she is again with ladies in long gowns and hats, and gentlemen in suits and walking sticks. The clothing



The historic Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, Michigan where the movie was made plays host to the annual *Somewhere In Time* weekend.

ranges from period-perfect vintage, to pretty good costumes, to off-the-rack ‘period’ repros. Everyone who attends is motivated by its very nature to at least try to dress the part. And, the event guests are numerous enough to outnumber the usual shorts-and-tee-shirt crowd. The overall effect is charming.

Many of the people who come have a story to tell about the role of the movie in their lives. One couple we met had just started dating when they saw *Somewhere In Time* together. The experience made them realize that they really wanted to be together forever, determine to overcome the doubts and obstacles, and decide to get married. They were so thrilled to have found this event, it was like a second honeymoon for them. Another couple named their daughter Elise; she has been coming every year since she was born, and is now a beautiful young woman ready to find her own true love.

The event is sponsored by INSITE, the International Network of *Somewhere In Time* Enthusiasts, and has been going for over 20 years. It is a good value, with many events and two excellent meals a day included. Getting there is not easy, but once you are there, the hotel and the island itself is idyllic. It is easy to imagine yourself in the past when you are surrounded by the sight and sound of horse-drawn carriages everywhere – no cars are allowed on the island! There is dancing – the Grand has retained its original ballroom and there’s an orchestra every night – but when we were there the music was not of 1912 vintage.

In the movie, Richard is tragically returned to the present by a 1979 penny in his pocket. If they would only learn some Ragtime, this event would be the perfect time-traveler’s holiday.

I saw the movie in 1982 (on TV, as many did), and it changed my life. I decided I wanted to look like that, to live in the past.



Reproduction of Elise's walking suit - made for event

I started creating my own vintage events, and always remembered: avoid the penny in the pocket! I would recommend this event to almost everyone – except cynics.

The next *Somewhere in Time* weekend is from Friday Oct 26 to Sunday October 28, 2012. The cost is \$985/couple and includes:

- Accommodations (package room only)
- Full breakfast and five-course dinner daily
- Thursday evening Welcome Reception
- Friday evening reception
- Saturday Grand Luncheon Buffet
- Saturday evening reception
- Special showing of *Somewhere in Time* Thursday and Friday evenings
- Free golf green fees on The Jewel (cart fee required, subject to course availability)
- Special discount on ferry boat tickets
- No tipping within Grand Hotel

Additional nights (Wed/Thu) available at \$159/per. This is the Grand Hotel’s 125th anniversary – and the 100th anniversary of Richard and Elise’s meeting. Visit the Grand Hotel [website](#) for details and reservations.

Cherie Oliver has been collecting vintage clothing and participating in vintage costume events since 1984. A former president of the Art Deco Society of California and producer of the Heritage Holiday event series at the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite, she continues to mount vintage fashion shows and other events from her new home in Grass Valley, CA.



Couples are drawn to pose by the "Is It You?" Rock Marker. Plaque shows the first meeting place of Richard and Elise in the movie.

