



The lobby at Trump International Hotel & Tower Toronto has a Champagne and caviar décor theme. TRUMP INTERNATIONAL HOTEL & TOWER TORONTO

TRUMP TORONTO HAS STYLE

Upscale five-star hotel has a hipper, younger vibe than you might expect



ROCHELLE LASH
Checking In

A new year inspires thrilling new experiences, so I played my Trump card for a first visit to this blue-chip brand. I had a modest agenda: to research why Trump International Hotel & Tower Toronto is one of only two hotels in the city on the exclusive Forbes Five-Star list (the other is the Four Seasons) and the No. 1 luxury hotel on Trip Advisor. This super-chic establishment carries The Donald's name, so I knew Trump Toronto would radiate power, beauty, glamour and success. His three children also are his celebrity apprentices. Donald Jr., Eric and Ivanka (she's a fashion and jewelry designer) co-own the Trump Hotel Collection, so it radiates a stylish, young vibe in addition to

being a top Bay St. business hotel. It's tech-connected, too. I googled Trump Toronto for a preview and up popped my reservation, accessible only to my computer's IP address, with an offer to customize my visit online. This service is called Trump Attaché, and I clicked my way to a few indulgences: downy pillows infused with rosemary; a deep-tissue massage at Purebeauty Spa; and reservations at the stunning new America, a cool celebrity hub of social dining. If you are in a spending mode, you also can peruse Trump products ranging from body lotion (\$30) to condominiums (\$3 million). Trump Toronto's décor theme is Champagne and caviar, and I can't think of a better way to express luxury. The opulent lobby is built in granite in shades of black and grey (the caviar), brightened by a stunning mural of 10,000 sparkling Swarovski crystals (the bubbly). "The five-star clientèle has changed," says general manager Mickael C. Damelincourt. "We regularly host our established

elite travellers, but our guest register now also includes their 20-something children and a new generation of dynamic business-people in their 30s and 40s. "Today's CEO might be sporting jeans and a hoodie." Trump's chef concierge, Rhonda Chan-Maloney, is feeling the new-age revolution. Her most frequent requests used to be about procuring theatre tickets and posh lunch tables, but one of her recent challenges was to hire a tattoo artist to ink an A-list actor and his entire entourage. Trump's boldest move to youth culture is the recent opening of America, the hotel's spectacular hybrid supper club-nightclub on the 31st floor. I bumped into Helen Betito, a former Montrealer who is one of the managers, and we dished about some of the celebs who already have made the scene at America's parties: Richard Gere, Meg Ryan, Ethan Hawke, Salma Hayek, Robert Pattinson and Channing Tatum. To achieve this popularity, America has banished stodgy hotel dining and has become a fashionable destination with sexy LED lighting, swanky décor, contemporary cuisine and a late-night DJ. America is the creation of two hot companies: Toronto's

No. 1 restaurateurs Oliver & Bonacini (Canoe, Jump, Auberge du Pommier) and Ink Entertainment, a leading nightclub and lifestyle impresario. If Trump represents white-glove hotel service and facilities, America is all red-hot social dining. It's more about cool, comfort and creativity than haute gastronomy, but it does have standout dishes. For breakfast: banana pancakes and juices of acai, kale and berries. For lunch: Ahi tuna spicy salad, Wagyu burger or lemon-chicken paillard. For dinner: foie gras flapjacks and rack of lamb. And for late night, fried chicken and steak sticks. Still hungry? The hotel-themed Champagne and Canadian sturgeon black caviar always is on the menu. The lobby-level bar, The Calvin, also has been overhauled. The new look is intimate and clubby with mahogany walls and leather sofas in oxblood and charcoal. I was awed by the connoisseurs' list of spirits, from the entry-level Bowmore 12-year-old Scotch (\$12) to the 40-year version (an astounding \$1,800 per ounce), but I settled for a perky tequila cocktail with jalapeno and ginger. The 65-storey Trump tower encompasses private condominiums and 261 hotel rooms and

suites with stunning views of Toronto's skyline. Sure, they're luxurious, with magazine-worthy décor and plush carpeting. But what puts these accommodations over the top are such details as fine cotton Italian bedding and the user-friendly bedside controls for lighting and drapes (on both sides of the bed). The white-porcelain bathrooms sport large baths, glass showers, heated floors and in-mirror HDTVs so you don't miss a minute of the financial report or Celebrity Apprentice. The suites feature electric fireplaces, powder rooms and sofa-beds. Purebeauty Salon & Spa is remodelling and adding men's services to its mani-pedi and hair salons. The spa is surrounded by windows overlooking the skyline and Lake Ontario — and it's licensed, so you can kick back during your treatment with a Scotch — or yes, more Champagne and caviar. Rochelle@rochellelash.com twitter.com/rochellelash

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