

# BANKING ON KINGSTON'S RICH HISTORY

Frontenac Club Inn features unique architectural fusion



ROCHELLE LASH  
Checking In

The intriguing Frontenac Club Inn in Kingston, Ont., is living history. It is an architectural fusion of a bank dating from the 1800s, a grand private house and a bowling alley.

Eventually, the property became a private gentlemen's club and now it's one of the most popular inns in the area.

That is a story I couldn't refuse, so I set off for Kingston, the oldest city in Ontario, founded as Fort Frontenac in 1673 and Canada's capital during the 1840s. (Ottawa didn't get the nod until the 1850s.) Today Kingston is hopping with bistros, culture and a picturesque waterfront where cruises depart for the Thousand Islands.

The Frontenac Club Inn is two blocks from Kingston's central Market Square and Lake Ontario and a few blocks from Queen's University and the Rogers K-Rock Centre, a concert and hockey venue.

Winner of a design award for historic preservation, the Frontenac is one of the limestone landmarks in a district of fine architecture. Equally stately neighbours along King St. include city hall, the Customs House, the Empire Insurance Company and St. George's Cathedral.

**THE ACCOMMODATIONS:** The property once was owned by a major antique dealer, so the inn is decorated with lots of armoires, vintage photos and country collectibles. Today the innkeepers are Beare Weatherup, a jovial host who cooks and serves breakfast, and his wife, Susan Shaw, who takes care of administration.

The inn's bank wing is particularly distinguished. The entrance has a striking black and white marble floor, and one salon was the manager's imposing office, with heavy oak doors and an elaborately carved wood-panelled wall.

One of the Frontenac's meeting rooms is called The Lanes because it was part of the bowling

**IF YOU GO**

Kingston is off Highway 401, halfway between Montreal and Toronto (approximately three hours each way). Frontenac Club Inn: 613-547-6167, frontenacclub.com; 225 King St. E., entrance at 30 William St., Kingston. Price: Until Oct. 31, \$169-\$259 for two, including breakfast, Wi-Fi, parking. Certain suites can accommodate a third guest at \$30. Two-night minimum on some weekends. Frontenac welcomes children 13 and over. Prices are lower Nov. 1-April 30. Kingston information: 888-855-4555, kingstoncanada.com, or 613-531-5290, visitkingston.ca. Tourism Ontario: information and live chats at ontariotravel.net. Chez Piggy Restaurant and Bar: 613-549-7673, chezpiggy.com; 68 Princess St., Kingston. Lunch and dinner daily; Sunday brunch. Evening table d'hôte costs \$38-\$45.

alley. The fine hardwood floors are still intact.

The Chapman Room is genteel and clubby, a combination lounge and library, rich with leather sofas, fine tables, books and board games. Nat King Cole and Nina Simone are on the jazzy playlist, and talented guests are invited to play the piano. Coffee and tea are available in a butler's pantry that used to be a bank vault, and you can bring your own wine.

Comfortable, handsome and well equipped, all of the rooms have TVs, hair dryers, air conditioning and fine Aveda bath products, and some have gas fireplaces.

The property attracted many prominent guests when it was a private club, and some of the 16 rooms are named after notables including Alexander Graham Bell, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, Gen. Sir Arthur Currie and Titanic survivor Lady Duff-Gordon.

The Peterson Room, honouring Canadian singer Colleen Peterson, has a claw-foot tub and an office space. The grand Sandburg Suite, named for Pulitzer Prize-winning author Carl Sandburg, has 13-foot ceilings, a fancy sitting room, a king-sized bed, a double whirlpool bath and a



The ivy-covered stone façade of the Frontenac Club Inn in Kingston, Ont., speaks of history and prestige.  
PHOTOS: FRONTENAC CLUB INN



One of 16 handsome guest rooms at the stately Frontenac Club Inn.

deeply rooted in Kingston and features products from local purveyors, including Cooke's Fine Foods and Coffee, which opened in 1865 and is arguably North America's oldest grocery; Kingston Olive Oil Company, which is a terrific place to visit for tastings; and Pan Chanco Bakery, run by Chez Piggy, Kingston's best-known restaurant.

Chez Piggy was created more than 30 years ago by Zal Yanovsky of the 1960s pop group the Lovin' Spoonful and his partner Rose Richardson, and now is operated by his daughter Zoe Yanovsky. Located in a former horse stable built in 1806, Chez Piggy has stone and wood decor and a menu of eclectic fine dining.

Some of the signature dishes include Muscovy duck confit, Vietnamese spring rolls, bone marrow with truffles and scallops with a coconut-lemon grass sauce.

The beef, chicken, vegetables and other produce are sourced locally, local microbrews are on tap and some of the wine is from Ontario's respected vineyards.

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