

HOTEL INTEL

NEW ST. REGIS TORONTO A PLACE TO BE PAMPERED



ROCHELLE LASH

Talk about a grand and glamorous entrance.

The ravishing new St. Regis Toronto marks the brand's debut at a coveted Bay St. address with extravagant hallmark features, such as signature butler service, a nightly champagne sabreing event, fabulous new dining and drinking and some of the most spacious accommodations in town. Officially opened with a gala soirée a few weeks ago, this lap of luxury operates in a glassine tower, formerly a Trump hotel, which has undergone major remodelling.

The news: The St. Regis's public spaces are airier, lighter and more inviting.

The lobby opens into the Astor Lounge, a chic, comfortable living room with a fireplace and sofas in soft, natural linen, leather and suede. The Astor Lounge has many moods: morning cappuccino and croissants, afternoon tea on weekends and a flamboyant champagne "sabreing" by a sommelier at cocktail hour daily. The champagne ritual is a dramatic and delightful mini-show and each patron (paying guests, thank you!) is treated to a ceremonial sip of French bubbly.

Louix Louis, the exceptional 31st-floor restaurant and grand bar, is poised to be the hot spot for Bay St. bankers, brokers and new-generation Mad Men. It has artful cuisine, a sparkling wall of 500 kinds of whiskies and handsome leather decor in amber tones of scotch, rum and bourbon, with the shimmer of crystal and bronze.

Gilded age, 2018: John Jacob Astor IV, arguably the richest man in the United States around 1900, built the first St. Regis Hotel in New York City during the Gilded Age (and tragically went down with the Titanic a few years later).

IF YOU GO

St. Regis Toronto
Contact: 866-912-1123, 416-306-5800, stregis.com
Where: 325 Bay St., Toronto.
Marriott rewards apply; best rate is at marriott.com.
Prices are approximate: rooms from \$650, suites from \$950, including pool/hot tub/sauna, butler service, champagne ritual, Clefs d'Or Concierge, evening turndown, in-room Nespresso, Wi-Fi, e-car charging. Pet-friendly.
Extra: valet parking, 24-hour in-room dining.

Louix Louis: 416-637-5550, louixlouis.com; breakfast, lunch, dinner, bar menu.

Toronto info: 800-499-2514, 416-203-2500, seetorontonow.com.

So the brand St. Regis has historic, aristocratic roots, but the new incarnation adds today's possibilities to classic luxury.

"We are introducing a new era of glamour and we aim to set the standard for luxury service in Canada," said general manager Tim Terceira, who brings savoir faire from Ritz-Carltons in Boston and Toronto. "Our guests expect the best and we strive to top that with our signature offerings."

It's too early to know about ratings, but St. Regis establishments in New York and Bal Harbour/Miami Beach are Forbes five-star hotels, so it looks promising for Toronto, too.

Personal attention: The St. Regis's customer care is virtually nonpareil and includes the solicitous attention of doormen, receptionists, concierges, valets, bellman, servers and particularly



St. Regis Toronto's remodelling includes opening up the Astor Lounge next to the lobby. PHOTOS: ST. REGIS TORONTO



The spectacular Caroline Astor Suite is one of the new penthouses at the luxury St. Regis Toronto.

the men and women of St. Regis's Signature Butler Service.

Dressed in trim grey and white, the butlers provide such personal services as unpacking, ironing and complementary morning coffee and tea. Recent shopping requests for gifts have included a Gucci handbag (easy) and a gold-fur retriever (more difficult).

Here's a tech twist that updates the concept of summoning Mr. Bates in Downton Abbey. At St. Regis, you can call someone 24/7, using eButler chat on the Marriott Mobile App.

Guest rooms: The St. Regis has 258 rooms, among the largest in Toronto, including 124 suites, more than any other hotel in Canada. Suites, elegant in ivory, ebony and heather, are equipped with fireplaces and wet bars. All rooms have touch pads to control lighting and drapes, which open to floor-to-ceiling windows and

great views. The bathrooms are wow factors — double vanities, rain showers and soaking tubs, plus TVs embedded in the mirrors. Some have heated marble floors. Two new penthouse enclaves, the Caroline Astor Suite and the John Jacob Astor Suite, keep the legend of luxury alive with accoutrements befitting a corporate titan — and his mother, the powerful queen of New York society in the late 1800s. Caroline Astor created St. Regis's grandest customs — the butlers, the champagne and midnight suppers for the elite (Toronto A-listers, start primping — the latter is still to come.).

Louix, Louis: Executive chef Guillaume Robin is from France and has worked with Michel Roux, a three-Michelin-starred chef. He describes Louix Louis as "contemporary American with French influence."

For dinner, you can go gastronomic with caviar, duck magret (the chef's favourite), Dover sole and prime beef — filet mignon, N.Y. strip or a tomahawk for two. Heartier fare — still gourmet — might be tortellini with truffle cream, pastrami short rib or the Louis Burger, with brie and foie gras.

Lunch features oysters, a lobster roll, veal schnitzel or a salad of super foods. And power breakfasts include croque madame, an açai berry bowl or brioche French toast with whipped mascarpone and blueberries.

Spa life: The indoor infinity-edge saltwater pool is a big beauty, with impressive 32nd-floor views. The Spa at The St. Regis offers beauty and body treatments, done with restorative products by Valmont of Switzerland and Image Skincare from Florida.

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