



Le Germain Hotel Toronto is a fashionable getaway in the heart of the city's vibrant entertainment district. PHOTOS: LE GERMAIN HOTELS

LE GERMAIN TORONTO IS REDONE À LA QUEBEC



ROCHELLE LASH
Checking In

It's Canada's 150th birthday and Le Germain Hotel Toronto is dressed to the nines for the party.

The hotel recently wrapped up a renovation of its guest rooms by the modernist masters, Quebec-based Lemay Michaud Architecture Design, who created the original streamlined, relaxed look.

The interiors throughout are lightly luxe, and both warm and cool at the same time. It's warm because of the soft, earthy colours and natural textures — nubby carpeting, linen sofas, and dark wood are a contrast to the concrete urban setting.

And Le Germain is cool, well, simply because it is a Le Germain, plus the clean lines and modular design are pure, fresh and youthful.

I sank into a cushy sofa in the stunning lobby lounge, and I instantly fit in with all the other guests, typing and texting, meeting and chatting. Make yourself at home. There is a fireplace, a guest computer and a coffee machine for espresso or lattes.

Le Germain is stylish throughout, with that special touch à la Quebec. My visit started with a



The guest rooms were renovated by Lemay Michaud Architecture Design.

cheerful greeting by the dashing young valets wearing leather jackets by m0851, the Montreal-based fashion house. Then I was in the hands of front desk staffers who all were sporting dark, fitted suits by Marie Saint-Pierre.

The hotel executes Le Germain brand's signature offerings beautifully: deeply comfortable beds, and friendly and effective service. The delectable, generous continental breakfast included in the price adds great value, with fresh fruits and juices, cheeses, homemade jams and baked goods, a choice of such gourmet granolas as honey-pecan, charcuterie, boiled eggs, extras like cranberries, cashews and berry compote, plus cappuccino à volonté.

Le Germain Hotel Toronto has its own distinctive features, notably the Nama-Stay yoga program. Guests can borrow one of four yoga videos and a mat by Lululemon to practise in the privacy of their rooms.

The Sleep In Every Day is a perk at all Le Germain and affiliated Alt hotels across Canada. If you request a late checkout when you make your reservation (must be directly with the hotel, either online or by telephone), you can stay almost as long as you like — even 1 p.m., 4 p.m., 7 p.m. — you name it, based on availability.

NEW ROOMS

Le Germain Hotel Toronto has 123 rooms and suites in several

categories. The look throughout is lean and understated, with modular closets in wood, 55-inch flat screens and a long work desk.

The accommodations are new, so they are tech-tech. There are charging outlets for mobile devices, recessed lighting for a subdued effect, BOSE sound systems and HDMI terminals on the TVs for computer links. Every room has a walk-in glass rain shower and some have soaking tubs. Some suites have powder rooms and living-dining rooms.

A signature feature of Le Germain hotels is the bed — a custom-made mattress draped in dreamy soft sheets, and covered by a frothy duvet and pillows of goose down. If you like the beautiful linens, you can buy almost everything, except the mattresses, at eight Simons stores across Canada.

FOOD & DRINK

Victor, the chic bistro off Le Germain's lobby, is reopening in spring after a total makeover of menus and decor.

Chef Lanny McLeod will continue to run the kitchen and feature American tavern classics like steaks and chops, as well as seafood towers, and whole chicken or fish carved tableside.

ENTERTAINING NEIGHBOURHOOD

The hotel is across the street from the Second City comedy club, which was the launch pad for stars including Dan Aykroyd, Eugene Levy, Martin Short and Mike Myers.

The Princess of Wales Theatre will present Saturday Night Fever and Cabaret in February and The Book of Mormon, Feb. 28-April 16. The Audience, a play about Queen Elizabeth, runs at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in

IF YOU GO

Le Germain Hotel Toronto is two kilometres from Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport and about one kilometre from Union Station.

Le Germain Hotel Toronto: 866-345-9501, 416-345-9500; legermainhotels.com; 30 Mercer St., Toronto, Ont. Pet-friendly, \$30 per day. In Toronto, affiliates are Le Germain Hotel Maple Leaf Square and Alt Hotel Toronto Airport.

Price: Rates fluctuate and include deluxe continental breakfast, in-room Nespresso coffee and David's Tea, daily newspaper, DVD library, yoga mat/video, baby gear, Wi-Fi, fitness room 24/7, rooftop golf putting green (seasonal), car charging stations. Three levels of rooms and suites start at \$245. Extra: cooked-to-order or in-room breakfast, mini-bar, indoor valet parking, 24-hour in-room dining.

Packages: Romantic Getaway: starts at \$359 with a bottle of wine, bonbons, parking; Park 'n' Stay from \$245, Fri.-Sun., with continental breakfast, late checkout. Business package, from \$329, includes meeting space, lunch, break-time refreshment, welcome gift. Weekend Special (Fri., Sat., or Sun.) starts at \$245, prepaid and non-refundable. Ripley's Aquarium: starts at \$387 for two adults and two children (two double beds), aquarium tickets for four, parking, 2 p.m. checkout.

Victor Restaurant & Bar: victorrestaurant.com, 416-883-3431 (reopening in spring). **Toronto information:** 416-987-1739, seetorontonow.com; Ontario Tourism live chats at ontariotravel.net.

February; and The Bodyguard (based on the 1992 film with Whitney Houston) runs at the Ed Mirvish Theatre from February to May.

Roy Thomson Hall, home of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, goes pop in February and March with Disney-Pixar Ratatouille in Concert, Linda Ronstadt, and the thrilling film Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark set to music by a live orchestra.

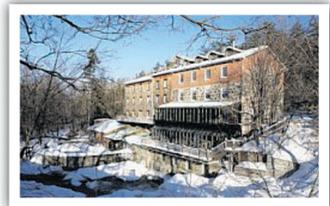
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