

HOTEL INTEL

# TORONTO HOTEL REIMAGINED FOR MILLENNIUM

*Crystalline-towered next-generation Marriott at core of Markham's biz boom*



ROCHELLE LASH

MARKHAM, ONT. The Toronto Marriott Markham Hotel is a radiant new example of a familiar brand that has been reimagined for the millennium.

Remember the staid, big-box Marriott? Forget about it.

The Marriott Markham is a crystalline tower that sparkles with a trendy vibe, plus serious food and drink and flashy interiors with vapour fireplaces, modern artworks and floor-to-ceiling windows. And the service? Impressive, well-informed and responsive.

In less than a year, this pacesetter has become a go-to for business travel, conferences, weddings and upscale bistro cuisine at Draco.

"Our Markham hotel is the first of the next-generation Marriott paradigm and we're making a statement, especially about the relevance of full-service hotels," said Hireen Prabhakar, the general manager who brings global experience from Moscow, Saudi Arabia and Zambia.

"We're equipped for the tech-savvy traveller, and our architects have created stimulating public spaces where post-millennium businesspeople can mingle and brainstorm," Prabhakar said.

The hotel is a testing ground for several new Marriott features, including expanded work desks and more efficient meeting rooms. As well, you can bypass the front desk by checking in via a Marriott app and using your smartphone as a room key.

Another new concept is the in-room dining feature, Fresh Bites, which does away with the intrusive deliveries of big food trolleys. Your meal is delivered in recyclable paper packaging and left at your door with a gentle knock.

The gorgeous indoor infinity-edge pool is a restorative break from life on the road. And the new decor is a handsome blend of earth tones, so effective that the hotel's suites have won awards for their supersized bathrooms and modern style.

IF YOU GO

**TORONTO MARRIOTT MARKHAM HOTEL**  
**Contacts:** 888-236-2427, 905-489-1400, marriott.com/yyzmr; 170 Enterprise Blvd., Markham, Ont. Marriott Bonvoy rewards apply.  
**Rates:** Fluctuate. Best available rate is at Marriott.com; rooms approximately \$222 to \$375 (suites and M Club cost more), including self-parking (\$20 overnight), Wi-Fi, coffee machine, bottled water, indoor pool/whirlpool, fitness centre, business services. M Club Lounge, for certain Marriott Bonvoy members, open 24 hours.  
**Draco:** 437-777-3496; breakfast, lunch, dinner, cocktails. Available: 24-hour room service, convenience corner.  
**Area info:** markham.ca; mainstreetmarkham.com; downtownmarkham.ca.

**Food/drink:** Draco is a stunning open-design restaurant-lounge with seating areas for every mood. The decor mixes natural leather, wood and linen with the industrial shine of metal, mirrors and lacquer.

Canadian culinary ingredients play a starring role.

The bar serves Draco private-label wine from Reif Estate Winery in Niagara-on-the-Lake; Draco Marriott Elite Pilsener, brewed in Toronto; and Draco vodka, distilled locally.

Cocktails pair well with sharing plates of charcuterie and maple-bourbon wings. For lunch or dinner, Draco presents salmon tartare, crab cakes, a brisket burger, duck confit, rib-eye with cilantro chimichurri or an Asian-inspired vermicelli bowl with shrimp or salmon. The lobster grilled cheese on challah is "the perfect sandwich," executive chef Bill Jewer says.



Draco at the new Toronto Marriott Markham Hotel serves gourmet Canadian food and private-label drinks.

PHOTOS: TORONTO MARRIOTT MARKHAM HOTEL

For breakfast, I went light with a yogurt-berry parfait and decaf cappuccino, but you can feast on a crab omelette with Brie, French toast with strawberries or steak and eggs. The breakfast buffet Monday to Friday is a deal at \$22.

At the M Club Lounge, guests can relax with newspapers, work on computers, eat or drink. Here you'll have complimentary soft drinks and coffee, a breakfast buffet, and on Sundays to Thursdays, 5 p.m. hors d'oeuvres and 8 p.m. dessert. For a fee, there are privately imported wines and signature beer.

**The neighbourhood:** Part of Greater Toronto, Markham is a lifestyle boom town loaded with shopping, dining and important venues such as the Pan-Am Centre and the Fla-

to Markham Theatre. It's also an intense business hub — home to more than 1,000 tech companies including IBM, Motorola, Toshiba and Honeywell.

Condo prices are rapidly approaching those of Toronto's famously affluent Yorkville and Harbourfront. Luxury-car dealers like Mercedes, BMW and Lexus report among the highest sales in Canada, and galleries are selling pricey artworks like hotcakes.

That is the dynamic backdrop for the development by the Remington Group called Downtown Markham, a sprawling multibillion-dollar commercial, office and condo complex, now in its 13th year of a 25-year plan. And Marriott Markham is the hospitality heart of it all.



The new Toronto Marriott Markham Hotel sets a gold standard for the brand.

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