

CHÂTEAU CHAMPLAIN MAKES DRAMATIC SECOND DEBUT

Hotel known for its captivating curved bay windows is strikingly more modern



ROCHELLE LASH

The Montreal Marriott Château Champlain is making hospitality history for the second time. It was one of the important hotels to open for Expo 67 and it became a downtown landmark primarily for its distinctive architecture by Montrealer Roger D'Astous, who also built the controversial Olympic Village. The Château Champlain is known for its iconic curved bay windows, but that's not all. With 614 rooms and suites, it is the third-largest hotel in town (after Fairmont Hotel Queen Elizabeth and Le Centre Sheraton). The views are captivating. You can visit Montreal in a dizzying 360-degree panorama of landmarks: the CIBC tower, Mount Royal, the Bell Centre (almost next door), Place Ville Marie, Central Station, 1000 de la Gauchetière (with an indoor skating rink, also adjacent), and the St. Lawrence River, spanned by the Victoria and Jacques-Cartier bridges. This season, the Château Champlain's owner, Tidan Inc. (which also owns the five-star Mount Stephen Hôtel and the four-star Hotel & Spa Mont Gabriel), is gradually unveiling the Château Champlain's first total overhaul. The influential firm Sid Lee Architecture has

crafted a new look to everything. Everything inside, that is. What has not changed are the amazing curved windows and the pivotal location. And the service. Marriott Château Champlain is a full-service hotel, and its team of front deskers, bellmen and servers know their business. "Our location is ideal for visitors who want to explore Montreal's culture," said Jennifer Labrosse, director of sales and marketing. "And, as one of the largest hotels in Montreal with spectacular banquet spaces, we are ready for the return of our meeting and event clients." Dramatically new: After its makeover, the hotel is lighter, brighter, more open and strikingly more modern. The lobby is a vision in white marble, which has turned the original Neoclassical arches into contemporary showpieces. Lloyd, the new restaurant and bar, flows through different moods — the lounge for socializing around a fireplace; dining tables for between two and eight; a low-rise bar; and discreet booths for private rendezvous. Lloyd is named for Frank Lloyd Wright, the mentor of the hotel's architect, D'Astous. The Château Champlain also has one of the largest hotel fitness centres in Montreal, decked out with top equipment, a mixed sauna, massage rooms, and for Marriott Bonvoy members, digital workout programs. Scheduled to open soon, the famous Caf' Conc' supper club, where sexy cancan dancers entertained in the 1970s, will be



Lloyd, the restaurant-bar at the reimagined Montréal Marriott Château Champlain, has tables and sofas for socializing, discreet alcoves for privacy and a happy hour. PHOTOS: MONTRÉAL MARRIOTT CHÂTEAU CHAMPLAIN



The Montréal Marriott Château Champlain's famous curved alcove windows have panoramic views of downtown, the St. Lawrence River or Mount Royal. Some rooms have touchpads for lighting and space-age toilets and bidets.

a party room with a Gatsby-esque feel. And the swish M Club lounge, an executive retreat for Marriott Bonvoy members, will offer business services, complimentary breakfast, all-day refreshments and evening hors d'oeuvres with an honour bar for alcohol. **Guest rooms:** The highlight of the guest rooms still is the view from those iconic windows, now framed by sheer white curtains. The new decor is a serene, uncomplicated backdrop of wall panels in linen and marble desks in white and grey. Some room categories have electronic touchpads for lighting and space-age toilets and bidets with a dozen remarkable con-

trols, including heated seats and oscillating jets. **Food and drink:** The bar at Château Champlain, pre-COVID, always was packed with businesspeople from the neighbouring office towers. The hotel bar has a generous reopening happy hour, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., with signature cocktails, mocktails, beer and wines-by-the-glass. The hotel also has partnered with Birra Fanelli of Sorel to produce a signature Italian-style brew. Lloyd's executive chef Kevin Mougin was born in France and spent the last five years at several prestigious hotels in the tropical paradise of French Polynesia. Dinner is relaxed, with an inter-

IF YOU GO
Montreal Marriott Château Champlain: 514-878-9000, marriott.com; 1050 rue de La Gauchetière W. Marriott Bonvoy loyalty program applies (marriottbonvoy.com). Marriott app provides Mobile Guest Services, including contactless check-in. Fully accessible features. **Prices fluctuate:** rooms, \$249-\$600; concierge rooms cost \$100 more (higher floor, amenities such as bathrobes, "smart" toilets, heated bathroom floors and future access to MClub); suites from \$800-\$10,000; including in-room Nespresso, Wi-Fi, fitness centre, mixed sauna (operating according to COVID-19 rules). Seniors ages 62 and over get a discount; best-rate guarantee. **Lloyd Restaurant-Bar:** Mon.-Sun.; breakfast, lunch, dinner.

TRAVEL BRIEFS

Curators digitize Sutton Hoo photos

Thousands of previously unseen photos of the Sutton Hoo archeological site in Britain, an important Anglo-Saxon burial ground, have been digitized and are now available to view online for the first time. The "ghost ship" site in eastern England was the subject of recent Netflix film *The Dig*, starring Ralph Fiennes. It traced the story of the excavation, which revolutionized the world's understanding of seventh-century history. The conservation body National Trust, which is behind the project, said the collection of more than 4,000 photos were taken by schoolteacher pals Mercie Lack and Barbara Wagstaff in 1939, and were bequeathed to the trust by Lack's great-nephew, Andrew Lack. It has taken three years of painstaking work to conserve and annotate all of the images, which capture every



A woman views the Sutton Hoo Helmet at The British Museum. Photos from the site are now available in digital form. OLI SCARFF/GETTY IMAGES

detail of the excavation. In all, 11 photo albums were donated to the trust, most in black and white, but one in colour. Quoted by The East Anglian Daily Times, senior conservator Anita Bools said: "I feel that these two brilliant women would be pleased to know that through this conservation and digitization project, people today can explore scenes recorded over 80 years ago, and sense something of the thrill Mercie Lack and

Barbara Wagstaff experienced as the ship burial was revealed." For details, visit nationaltrust.org.uk/sutton-hoo. **'Garden of gods' unveiled in Rome** A "garden of the gods" that once entertained Roman emperors has been unearthed beneath an office building in the centre of the Italian capital. Archeologists in Rome say the remains of the

imperial pleasure palace include brass pendants from a cavalry officer's harness, bronze ink wells and pieces of an ivory doll. The palace, which once entertained the likes of Claudius and Caligula, also contained a private zoo and researchers say the bones of African lions and ostriches, and the tooth of a brown bear, were discovered during construction work at the site. In all, 100,000 fragments and objects from the Roman world were uncovered, the Daily Telegraph of London reported. "It would have been extraordinary," said Daniela Porro, of Rome's archeological office. "The gardens would have been full of statues, mosaics, frescoes and marble from all over the empire." The items have now been turned into Italy's newest museum and will be opened to the public on Nov. 6.

Warner Bros. hotel 'truly magnificent' Can't get enough of Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck and the sitcom Friends? A new hotel in Abu

Dhabi has just the ticket for you. Hollywood entertainment giant Warner Bros. said it will open its first branded hotel in November in the United Arab Emirates capital, featuring room service by the "wascally wabbit" himself, among other cartoon quirks. The National says the 257-room hotel — operated by Hilton under the Curio Collection brand — will be directly opposite the Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi theme park on Yas Island, described as the world's largest indoor theme park. At the hotel, guests will pass a Friends fountain inspired by the hit show as they enter the lobby, which will be filled with props, costumes and art from TV shows and films linked to the studios. Digital screens spanning the full height of the eight-storey hotel will play original content as customers arrive. The Gulf-based newspaper said each of the hotel's rooms has been decorated with three themes exploring the world of Hollywood — Script to Screen, Artist Confidential and The Vault.

Andre Ramshaw, Postmedia News

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