

A REGAL UPDATE ELEVATES FAIRMONT HOTEL VANCOUVER

Four-year, \$75M renovation modernizes city landmark while preserving its charm



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Pandemic protocol: Certain events and establishments in British Columbia, such as restaurants, require proof of vaccination (gov.bc.ca). Fairmont hotels follow Accor All Safe hygiene standards.

What’s old at the majestic Fairmont Hotel Vancouver is new again, but thankfully not *too* new. A four-year, \$75-million renovation has rocked this landmark with a sweeping update, but has also preserved the hotel’s stateliness and heritage. The establishment known as the “castle in the city” has refurbished its lobby, the restaurant Notch8 and the more than 500 guest rooms. The Fairmont Gold section was remodelled splendidly in the spirit and style of the 1939 royal visit by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. The hotel buzzes 365 days a year with an epic food and beverage scene, including a social whirl of weddings and banquets and the Fairmont’s crowning glory, Notch8 Restaurant and Bar, all under the direction of executive chef David Baarschers. He is an alum of several Four Seasons, including those in Whistler, B.C., and London, as well as the illustrious Restaurant Gordon Ramsay, which has three Michelin stars.

IF YOU GO

Fairmont Hotel Vancouver: 604-684-3131, 866-540-4452, fairmont.com; 900 W. Georgia St., Vancouver. Forbes Travel Guide four-star hotel. Accor loyalty plan applies. Pets stay for free. Fully accessible.
Price: Including indoor pool, sauna, 24-hour fitness. Rooms start at \$349, suites at \$549; Fairmont Gold is higher. A Family Affair package offers 40 per cent off a second room. Pet-Friendly package offers a 10 per cent discount, parking, late checkout, room upgrade and doggie perks.
Notch8 Restaurant and Bar: 604-662-1900, notch8-dining.com.
Vancouver tourism: 604-683-2000, destinationvancouver.com. British Columbia tourism: hellobc.com.

“We represent classic, timeless hospitality,” said general manager Adam Laker. “We have added modern features, but we still have our regal bearing.” Noble principles, those, and the hotel is also valued for the glories of a full-service establishment: an impressive indoor pool surrounded by a summer sundeck, a double-staffed concierge desk, a business centre, an Absolute Spa (independently operated) and two adorable canine ambassadors, Elly and Ella, who are available for hugs, but probably only if you dish out doggie treats. Located downtown, the hotel is at the core of shopping heaven.



The “castle in the city,” the luxurious Fairmont Hotel Vancouver is located amid downtown shopping heaven. PHOTOS: FAIRMONT HOTEL VANCOUVER



A hotel-with-a-hotel, the Fairmont Gold section pampers guests.

Dior and Louis Vuitton have boutiques on the ground floor, Tiffany and Hermès are across the street, and Nordstrom is two blocks away in CF Pacific Centre. Next to the hotel, the Vancouver Art Gallery is presenting Yoko Ono: Growing Freedom until May 1 (vanartgallery.bc.ca). **Fairmont Gold:** You know the

expression it’s just like home? Fairmont Gold isn’t. If you want to feel like a VIP, away from the fray and cosseted to the max, Fairmont Gold is a regal sanctuary. It’s a hotel-within-a-hotel with thoughtful niceties like a dedicated concierge, a choice of pillows and free ironing. But the ultimate pamper-

ing and privacy is found at the Fairmont Gold lounge. It’s a rare privilege to simply hang out in this formal salon, where you can help yourself to a full breakfast, afternoon tea, evening hors d’oeuvres, soft drinks and barista coffee. There is an honour bar for beer, wine and spirits. Adèle Rankin of CHIL Interior Design was inspired by history and grandeur when she refitted the Fairmont Gold section. She highlighted precious architectural details of bronze, marble and carved plaster, and dressed the rooms richly in royal blue velvet with flashes of gold. **Food and drink:** Notch8 Restaurant and Bar is decked out with bold, train-inspired decor by EDG Interior Architecture + Design. (Hotel Vancouver once was a Canadian Pacific Railway property.) There are vintage photographs of train travel and impressive bronze “gates” as room separators. The term Notch8 refers to a locomotive’s full-power gear. Notch8 is lively all the time — for breakfast, lunch, dinner, weekend brunch, happy hour and the refined ritual of afternoon tea, a celebrated occasion at the hotel. The culinary team focuses on ingredients from throughout British Columbia. Special dishes include (for lunch) garlic prawns, roast cod or bison carpaccio; (for weekend brunch) braised beef short ribs and eggs, a soba noodle power bowl or Crab Louis; (for dinner) prime rib, squash and wild mushroom risotto, or a delicate kampachi crudo flavoured with lime, cilantro and serrano chili. **Fairmont nation:** The “castle in the city” is one of four Fairmonts in Metro Vancouver, the highest concentration of the brand. National and international travellers also frequent the hip, contemporary Fairmont Pacific Rim; the eco-centric Fairmont Waterfront; and the Fairmont Vancouver Airport, a deluxe, convenient connection in Richmond, directly at YVR. This Fairmont has been named by aviation bible Skytrax as the No. 1 airport hotel in North America for seven years. *Rochelle Lash’s Hotel Intel column will return on Jan. 8.*

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