

HOTEL INTEL

TEL AVIV FILLED WITH RESORTS, BOUTIQUE HOTELS

Toronto power couple co-developing boutique beauty R48 Hotel and Garden



ROCHELLE LASH

Israel has reopened to foreign travellers just in time for spring celebrations, and the hospitality industry is heralding several new establishments in Tel Aviv.

The range includes superior seaside resorts and fashionable boutique hotels, such as R48 Hotel and Garden, a heritage treasure being developed by Toronto power couple Heather Reisman, CEO of Indigo Books & Music, and Gerald Schwartz, CEO of the private equity firm Onex Corporation.

Tel Aviv is known for sizzling nightlife, beach bliss and fabulous food, all stoked by more than 300 days a year of sunshine. The culinary scene is a paragon of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern gastronomy, with home-grown wine and a profusion of vegetarian options.

“Many tourists come just for the cuisine, both casual and elevated,” said Gal Hana, Israel’s director of tourism for Canada. “The flavours of Israel blend so many faiths and so many cultures. This diverse melting pot is unique.”

Also a pacesetter in technology and medical advances, Israel was a pioneer in COVID research, and recently opened the border to foreigners with PCR testing.

Many landmarks have been upgraded, including the Charles Bronfman Auditorium (a.k.a. the Tel Aviv Culture Center). Opened in 1957, it’s the home of the Israel Philharmonic Orches-

tra and has presented legends including Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand and Michael Jackson.

Here’s a peek at new hotels in Tel Aviv.

Canadian content: The R48 Hotel and Garden, a boutique beauty in a Bauhaus architectural masterpiece, will open in late summer or fall with 11 exclusive suites, a luxuriant garden, and extraordinary dining, in collaboration with hospitality virtuoso Rutie Broudo.

“The restoration of this jewel is a labour of love,” said Reisman. “R48 has an iconic location on Rothschild Boulevard, a stone’s throw from Independence Hall where David Ben-Gurion signed and announced the Declaration of the State of Israel in May 1948.” R48 also refers to Rothschild, the aristocratic family fundamental to Israel’s early development.

In addition, Reisman and Schwartz are discussing a project with Meir Teper, the Israeli partner of the Nobu Hospitality triumvirate, which also includes Robert De Niro and super-chef Nobu Matsuhisa.

Around town: The sensational David Kempinski Tel Aviv opens this month on the city’s lively promenade along the coveted shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The 32-storey hotel features 250 rooms and suites (plus an adjacent condo tower) and five-star life with fine kosher cuisine, a cigar and whisky bar, a gym, a spa and two outdoor swimming pools (one reserved for signature suites).

There will be tantalizing food aplenty. The Joël Robuchon group, with a record 32 Michelin stars throughout its global empire, will operate L’Epoque at the new Accor hotel MGallery



David Kempinski Tel Aviv opens this month on the city’s promenade along the coveted shore of the Mediterranean Sea. DAVID KEMPINSKI TEL AVIV



MGallery Elkonin Tel Aviv will include a restaurant by the Joël Robuchon group. MGALLERY ELKONIN TEL AVIV

Elkonin Tel Aviv. MGallery will open mid-year in the posh Neve Tzedek district, in an ornate, vintage building that was Tel Aviv’s first hotel in the early 1900s. With 44 luxe rooms in soft colours of ocean aqua, seashell pink and pale sand, it feels boutique, but it will be full service, with an outdoor swimming pool and a Clarins spa.

Hôtel BoBo, a Brown Hotel, is a “bohemian bourgeois” mix with a golden sheen of classic glamour and contemporary touches such as concrete columns. A 200-room design standout near Rothschild Boulevard, BoBo features a rooftop playground with a cocktail bar, a tanning deck, a hot tub and plunge pool. Méli-Mélo is BoBo’s “kitchen

IF YOU GO

Tel Aviv tourism: visit.tel-aviv.gov.il.
Israel tourism: info.goisrael.com. For COVID-19 testing and border requirements, see israelSAFE.com or corona.health.gov.il.

bar,” where renowned chef Meir Adoni combines Israeli-Mediterranean cuisine with Japanese and French flavours.

A sister property, the Debrah Brown, also has rooftop sunning and dipping, as well as Dvora, a kosher restaurant by celebrity chef Eyal Shani. This culinary maestro has more than 20 highly successful locales worldwide, including North Abraxas and HaSalon in Tel Aviv and HaSalon in New York City.

Ink Hotel is a smashing boutique newbie near Carmel Market and the shopping and culture of Sheinkin Street. It’s a new build with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Tel Aviv’s White City of Bauhaus buildings. Ink has deluxe urban-chic decor, balconies, rooftop gardens around a pool, plus a gym, massage room and conference space. Perks include pillow menus, Nespresso and late checkout (on availability). Ink’s buzzy bar-restaurant Sun Young is a hot spot for a world of wine, cocktails, sushi and a modern fusion of Asian cuisine with Mediterranean accents.

Swissôtel South Beach Tel Aviv, another classy Accor brand, will be a wellness resort in Bat Yam with 236 rooms in two glass towers, plus wellness and water galore: spa treatments, a Dead Sea pool, an Olympic-size indoor pool and an outdoor infinity pool. Bat Yam, south of Jaffa, is blessed with some of Israel’s finest oceanfront stretches, drawing both surfers and sun worshippers.



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