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TRAVEL TALES

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By MIKE COHEN

THE RITZ-CARLTON MONTREAL: Last summer, in order to get a feel for Montreal's most iconic hotel, I accepted an invitation to spend a weekend at the Ritz-Carlton Montreal (<http://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/Montreal/Default.htm>).

Let's just say that for anyone in Montreal considering a "Staycation," or if you are travelling to Montreal on business or vacation the Ritz should be at the top of your list. The Ritz was recently named the "number one city hotel in Canada" by *Travel + Leisure*, as part of the magazine's 2015 World's Best Awards Readers' Survey. "We at Ritz-Carlton Montreal are delighted to be selected the 'No. 1 city hotel in Canada,'" said CEO and General Manager Andrew Torriani. "It is an honour to

be recognized by such a well-regarded travel publication. We take great pride in maintaining high standards of quality in all areas from design, to service and amenities, and are grateful for the recognition by all the readers who took the time to vote."

KOSHER CATERING: Legendary Jewish author Mordecai Richler adored the Ritz so when filming took place in 2010 for the motion picture based on his book *Barney's Version* there could be no other place to shoot the Jewish wedding scene than the Ritz Gardens. In fact they were totally rebuilt for the filming, then immediately bulldozed once the cameras stopped rolling. The Ritz has a partnership with La Marguerite Kosher Catering and a full kosher

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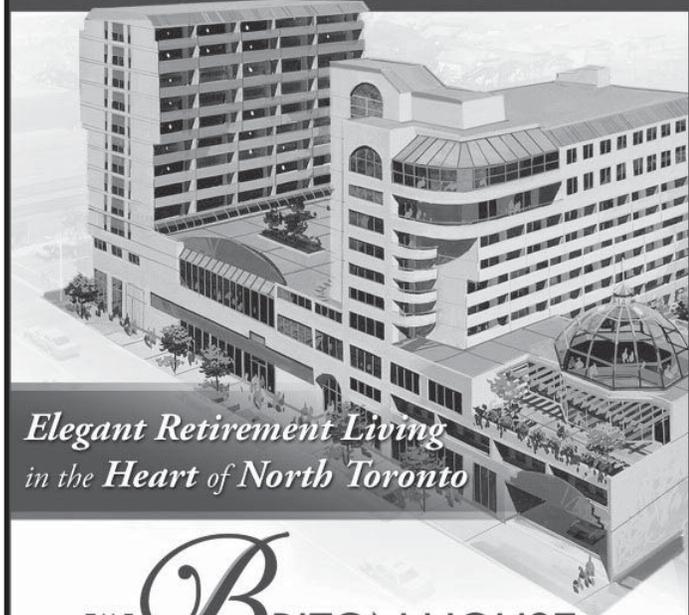
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TRAVEL TALES

(Continued from page 9)

kitchen. Noted Jewish community leader Charles Bronfman and his family were spotted in the restaurant. Among their party was retired Senator Leo Kolber. The Ritz has a long history of attracting Jewish weddings, sweet sixteens, bar/bat mitzvahs and special events. Sales manager Magda Sabella notes this is still very much the case. Shabbat dinners, catered by La Marguerite, are now being arranged upon request as well.

RESTORATION: It has now been just over three years since The Ritz reopened amid much hoopla following an extensive four year, \$200 million restoration of what is known as the Grand Dame of Sherbrooke Street West.

The Ritz-Carlton Montreal opened its doors on December 31, 1912 – the very first hotel of this glamorous chain in the world. Since then, it has been the address of choice for discerning travelers and public figures, hosting everyone from Elizabeth Taylor and Queen Elizabeth II to Winston Churchill and the Rolling Stones. The recent restoration brought cutting-edge technology to the facility, yet guests can still find historic charm throughout the five-star hotel, from

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the luxurious accommodations to the lobby, where the curved front desk has stood since the opening.

In its rich past, this Montreal luxury hotel offered more than simply a luxurious bed; it was a gathering place for the famous Club 55, a group of gourmets who planned epic feasts. Today, well-versed palates come to this AAA Five Diamond hotel, the only spot in Quebec for Maison Boulud, an upscale restaurant offering a twist on traditional French cuisine. Meanwhile, the indoor heated saltwater pool overlooks the city from the rooftop, where visitors can get acquainted with the surrounding neighborhood and all its spectacular sites.

C H A M P A G N E BAR: Last year the Ritz opened the new Dom Pérignon Champagne Bar. Exclusive to the Ritz-Carlton Montreal - and the first of its kind in all of Canada - it is located in the

historic Montreal hotel's famed Palm Court.

AFTERNOON TEA: When the Ritz-Carlton Montreal opened in 1912 it became known for its legendary style and impeccable service. The hotel also became known as a comfortable spot for Montrealers to enjoy "Afternoon Tea" and socialize. A century later, the Ritz has revived the tradition of 'Afternoon Tea,' a flashback to the Edwardian era when Tea Time was a social ritual. Set amidst the comfort and elegance of the famous Palm Court, a selection of fine teas, homemade canapés, scones and pastries are on offer. Breakfast Tea is served daily from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and afternoon Tea at 1 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Mike Cohen's email address is info@mikecohen.ca. Follow his travels at www.sandboxworld.com/travel and on Twitter @mikecohencl.

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