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## Renovations Restore Grandeur of The King Edward Hotel

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Two years and \$40 million worth of renovations later, the grand interiors of The Omni King Edward Hotel have been tastefully restored. The intricate lobby, restaurant and bar, alongside all of the guest rooms, meeting spaces and dining rooms, were painstakingly modernized by [Moncur Design Associates](#) while maintaining the old-world charm that attracted the wealthy and the powerful to what was billed as Toronto's first luxury hotel.

The Omni King Edward Hotel is located just east of Yonge and King, image by Marcus Mitanis

Opened in 1903, the 8-storey hotel was designed by Chicago architect Henry Ives Cobb and Toronto's own E.J. Lennox, who also designed several landmarks around the city, including Casa

Loma and Old City Hall. In 1921, an 18-storey addition brought 530 more rooms to the hotel, which originally contained 400. The King Edward quickly became a hotspot for celebrities, hosting the likes of Ernest Hemingway, Liz Taylor, Elvis Presley and Mark Twain.



The entrance to the 8-storey original structure, image by Marcus Mitanis

As of 2013, Omni Hotels and Resorts now manages the *grand dame*. They immediately started renovations of the 301 guest rooms, 22,000 square feet of meeting spaces and other common areas, completing the project this past June.



The hotel's lobby atrium, image by Marcus Mitanis

These efforts were unveiled Wednesday night in an event attended by the dozens of stakeholders involved in the iconic hotel's resurgence. The event featured foods by Executive Chef Daniel Schick, whose culinary skills were put to use during the modernization process when updating the menus of the King Eddy's two eateries, Victoria's Restaurant and Consort Bar. Held in the Vanity Fair Ballroom, which also underwent renovations, the event included a ribbon cutting ceremony officially marking the rebuild.



The Vanity Fair Ballroom, image by Marcus Mitanis

"For more than a century, this beloved property has held the position as one of the most famous hotels in Toronto. There is a delicate balance between maintaining history, and keeping the beauty and elegance that makes a place like this so very special, while also becoming modern and delivering what discerning guests want and need today," said Christophe Le Chatton, General Manager of The Omni King Edward. "I believe we have struck this balance with stunning results, and I am proud to reintroduce the Omni King Edward in all her splendour."





Officials on hand to cut the ribbon, image by Marcus Mitanis

The ribbon was cut by several stakeholders involved in the project, including Senior Vice President of Operations at Omni Hotels Peter Strel, King Edward General Manager Christophe Le Chatton, President and Chairman of Skyline International Gil Blutrach, Jason Lester, Senior Vice President of Urban Development at Dream, and the President and CEO of the Greater Toronto Hotel Association, Terry Mundell.

The 11th floor Royal Club contains 29 guest rooms and comes with a package of amenities which includes access to the VIP Royal Club Lounge, light meals throughout the day, and use of the business centre, boardrooms and car service.



The Beatles stayed in this guest room, image by Marcus Mitanis

The King Eddy's Royal Suite is known for attracting the biggest pop culture icons. John Lennon and Yoko Ono stayed there in 1969, The Beatles together in another suite on the 8th floor five years earlier. Crown mouldings, high ceilings, fine furnishings, marble bathrooms and red accents complete the regal theme throughout the hotel.



The Royal Suite, image by Marcus Mitanis

The hotel coexists with [private residences](#) located on the third, fourth and fifth floors, which [Skyline International](#) brought to market in 2012. Residents have access to the hotel's amenities, making for a seamless connection between guests and residents.



The Royal Suite's dining room, image by Marcus Mitanis

Three grand ballrooms were retrofitted during the process, including the ground floor Sovereign Ballroom pictured below. New chandeliers hang from the stunningly Edwardian-style ceiling as traditional afternoon tea is held below.



The Sovereign Ballroom, image by Marcus Mitanis

A notable exclusion from the renovations is the Crystal Ballroom located on the 17th floor. Encompassing the top two storeys of the hotel, with floor-to-ceiling windows offering panoramic



views of the city, the ballroom was shuttered in the 1950s following the implementation of new fire codes. The space has seldom been seen since then, but a glimpse during Doors Open in recent years revealed its rich potential.



The Crystal Ballroom could regain its former glory, image by Marcus Mitanis

Omni and Skyline have indicated their desire to refurbish and reopen the space as a party hall. If that happens, one of Toronto's best kept secrets will once again, over half a century later, join the majesty the rest of the hotel enjoys again.

For more information about the hotel, visit the dataBase file linked below. Want to get involved in the discussion? Check out the associated Forum thread or leave a comment in the field provided at the bottom of the page.