

# THE GLOBE AND MAIL

CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1844 • WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2000

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

TRAVEL

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2000 • R11

## At this Vancouver hotel, the art gallery comes to you

JUDI LEES  
Special to *The Globe and Mail*  
Vancouver

A bronze and bluestone sculpture, just inside the entrance of the Listel Vancouver Hotel, gives the first hint of the eye candy to come. Titled *Ginnetoy*, it is the work of American artist Boaz Vaadia. Vancouver painter Carmelo Sortino's dramatic oil on canvas, *Pomegranates III*, greets you on the way to the elevator. Exiting on the fourth floor, a glassed-in exhibit called *Cornucopia* gives reason for another pause. It's a lively and colourful rendition of a grocery store — and it's valued at \$20,400.

Entering your guest room, you take in décor befitting a very gracious home. A cozy chaise longue beckons from a bay window, and a soothing original watercolour creates an inviting ambience.

Listel Vancouver, near the city's West End, displays original and limited-edition artwork gallery-style in some public areas and in 54 guest rooms (four of them suites) on two "gallery" floors. Room 506 is home to *Bouquet d'Iris Bleu* by French modernist Bernard Cathelin; Room 516 has *Dark Canyon*, an interpretation of an east-coast seascape by Anne Merideth Barry of Newfoundland. A glossy art book graces the coffee table in each of the gallery rooms.

This high-art concept evolved when the hotel was being redesigned and refurbished in 1997. Originally opened in 1986, it was formerly O'Doul's Hotel. Today the popular bar and restaurant still use the O'Doul name. In 1992, the 130-room hotel was purchased by the Listel Corporation of Japan.

Listel's management team knew the hotel was reliable and well located, and came with a strong business following. But they decided to build on those strengths by creating



The Listel, near the city's West End, displays original and limited-edition artwork in public areas, and even in 54 guest rooms.



HOTELS

LISTEL VANCOUVER

two premium-quality floors.

To help set their new rooms apart, they looked for help only a few blocks away — to the Buschlen Mowatt Gallery, which represents Canadian works as well as modern and contemporary masters from around the world. The partnership that developed was code-named "art and elegance."

"We were thrilled to discover a new and unusual way to introduce our collection of artists to the Lis-

tel's international guest list," recalls Sherri Kajiwara, director of the gallery.

Not only are the works exquisite; in some cases, their sheer volume impresses. Room 511, for example, is home to five paintings by European master Bernard Gantner that are valued at a total of more than \$50,000.

It is immediately evident that the Listel provides a stay with a difference. It isn't just the impressive art; it is the bigger picture, too. The lobby is luxurious in an understated way, with marble flooring, rich mahogany panelling and a cozy fireplace corner. Guest-room décor is varied: traditional in one, contemporary or Italian modern in another. Frequent business guests enjoy this aspect: They can stay many times and always have a change of scenery.

And the furnishings aren't standard issue for a hotel. Explains Judi Henderson of Henderson Ritter Design: "We custom-designed the furniture using local talent and added a mix of antiques. And the art wasn't chosen to 'match' a room, it was chosen to be interesting. You can stay in a traditionally furnished room and enjoy contemporary art."

Room amenities include goose-down duvets, voice mail, dataport capabilities and twice-a-day maid service. Security features like key-activated elevators and parking make the Listel a favourite with women travellers.

O'Doul's Restaurant is known for its Pacific-coast cuisine — and its succulent lamb has been noted as among the city's best — and the bar features live jazz on the weekends.

The six-storey Listel is located on trendy Robson Street, a couple of

blocks west of the heaviest Vancouver sidewalk traffic and chic boutiques. A walk farther west leads to the West End, one of the city's oldest apartment neighbourhoods. You can stop on Denman Street for a java or sushi before continuing to English Bay, one of Vancouver's many picture-postcard stops, and beyond to Stanley Park.

More changes are on the way at the Listel. This spring, 22 redesigned rooms will open on the top floor, each featuring B.C. products and the work of local artisans. Cedar and hemlock cabinets and headboards, innovative tactile fabrics, and creative touches such as the colourful and whimsically designed plates of Lindsie Nicholson (which also adorn the restaurant) will aim to create rooms that designer Henderson describes as "a meditative environment."

The gallery floors will remain as they are, except for the occasional change of art. Why tamper with a big draw?

♦ ♦ ♦

Listel Vancouver, a member of Sterling Hotels & Resorts, is located at 1300 Robson St. A double room costs

\$170; a double room on the gallery floors is \$190; a one-bedroom gallery suite is \$300. Gallery-floor guests receive complimentary French-pressed coffee delivered each morning. A popular spring package called Art, Elegance & Aveda is priced at \$170, based on double occupancy. It includes a full breakfast. O'Doul's Restaurant & Bar was honoured by Northwest Palate Magazine for "Best British Columbia Café/Bistro," "Best Décor" and "Best Live Music." It has twice won a Wine Spectator magazine Award of Excellence. The grainy Dijon-crust rack of lamb with candied shallots and red wine jus is the most expensive entrée at \$27. Weekend brunch is especially popular with eggs Benedict devotees. Priced from \$9-\$12, there are many specials — eggs Haida has smoked B.C. wild salmon as part of its taste sensation. Phone (604) 684-8461 or (800) 663-5491. Internet site: [www.listel-vancouver.com](http://www.listel-vancouver.com).

♦ ♦ ♦

Judi Lees is based in Vancouver.