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Commemorating Canadian Icons

As the nation celebrates its 150th anniversary, it's an excellent opportunity to commemorate some of Canada's most iconic hotels.

By Sandra MacGregor



#FAIRMONT CHATEAU LAKE LOUISE

Canada's iconic hotels are special, not only for their inimitable appearance, but also for the role they played in shaping Canada's history, whether by making it easier to travel across the country, taming previously inaccessible regions, or simply giving a worn traveller a place to call home for a night.



CORNER SUITE
#FAIRMONT CHATEAU LAKE LOUISE

**FAIRMONT LE CHATEAU FRONTENAC,
QUEBEC CITY, QUEBEC**

Recorded by the Guinness Book of World Records as the most photographed hotel in the world, Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac is certainly Canada's most iconic. Opened in 1893, the imposing edifice was one of several castle-like hotels commissioned by the Canadian Pacific Railway to encourage luxury travel across our vast country.

Standing sentinel atop a cliff over Old Quebec and the St. Lawrence River, Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac commands the skyline and blends seamlessly with the historic heart of the city. Its eye-catching copper roof, turrets and intricate gables, and opulent interior (which is peppered with historic artifacts from archeological digs around the city) add to its allure. The fact that a structure so central to our national history has also been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site is testament to the magnitude of its majesty.

A fascinating mix of political leaders, celebrities and even royalty have graced the halls of the Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac. Perhaps one of the hotel's most significant moments was in 1943 when it hosted the Quebec Conference and world leaders Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt and William Lyon Mackenzie King gathered to discuss strategies for World War II.

FAIRMONT BANFF SPRINGS, BANFF ALBERTA

Coming upon the striking, castle-like Fairmont Banff Springs, nestled in Banff National Park, you'd be forgiven for thinking you'd just stumbled into a fairy tale. All that's missing is the knight battling a dragon (although who knows what the dense forests of Banff hold?)

Another example of Canada's heritage chateausque railway hotels, William Cornelius Van Horne (the general manager of the Canadian Pacific Railway) commissioned the hotel in 1887 in an effort to expand train travel and open up the west to tourism. He's reported to have said "since we can't export the scenery, we'll have to import the tourists." Today the hotel, like Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac, has the honour of being a UNESCO World Heritage site.

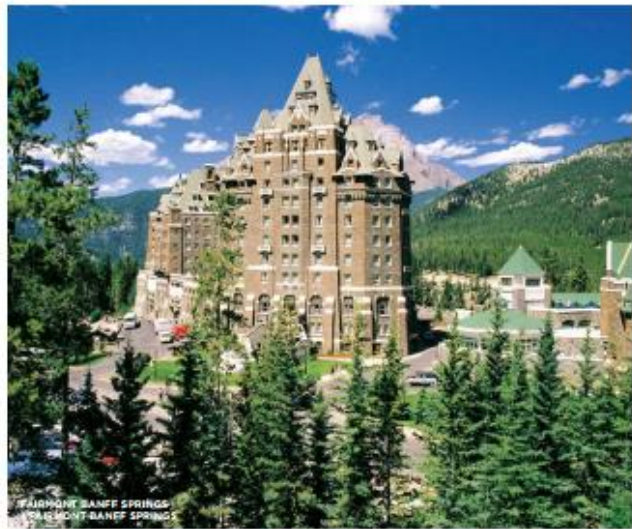
FAIRMONT CHATEAU LAKE LOUISE, ALBERTA

While Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac may be the most photographed hotel in the world, surely the glacial Lake Louise must be one of the most photographed lakes. Located within Banff National Park, the otherworldly emerald waters are hugged by thick bunches of stately pines, which are overseen in turn by formidable mountain cliffs. Add the man-made wonder of Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise to this picturesque tableau, and you've got a photographer's dream setting.

Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise was originally built in 1890 as a one-story log-cabin. It wasn't until 1911 that the modest chalet was transformed into the chateau-like extravagance we know today. The luxury mountain resort is renowned for its year-round outdoor activities, such as hiking and skiing.



FAIRMONT LE CHATEAU FRONTENAC
#FAIRMONTLECHATEAUFRONTENAC



FAIRMONT BANFF SPRINGS
#FAIRMONTBANFFSPRINGS



CAMPFIRE AT FAIRMONT CHATEAU LAKE LOUISE
#FAIRMONTCHATEAULAKELOUISE



FAIRMONT ROYAL YORK, TORONTO, ONTARIO

Built across from Union Station, this storied structure is one of Canadian Pacific Railroad's last official historic railway hotels. When it opened in 1929, the 28-storey accommodation was the tallest and one of the largest in the British Commonwealth and epitomized the highest standards of hospitality. The grandiose goal was to create a hotel that was essentially a "city within a city" such that a guest's every want and need could be satisfied within the confines of the Fairmont Royal York. To this end, it had every modern convenience and more, including 10 passenger elevators, a concert hall with a 50-ton pipe organ (the largest in Canada), a roof garden completely enclosed in glass, a massive 12,000 book library and even its own bank and golf course. It was also reputed to have the biggest hotel kitchen in the country and could make more than 15,000 French rolls a day.

When it was unveiled, it was unlike any hotel Toronto or the country had ever experienced. The lavish interior was elegance personified and featured hand-carved artwork, elegant furnishings, ornate chandeliers and hand-painted ceilings. While a series of renovations and changes in

ownership over the years have meant the loss of some historic elements, many of the hotel's original features, such as the painted ceilings and travertine pillars, can still be viewed today. Guestrooms have also recently been renovated with luxury amenities while still honouring the hotel's historic touches and details.

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