





## Condo of the Year Quarterfinalist

Written by James M. Russell  
Photography by Ron Jocsak

# The Ritz

The Residences at the Ritz-Carlton are the epitome of luxurious living not just because of their Ritz-Carlton pedigree or because movie stars hang out there, rather the Residences at the Ritz-Carlton is a coveted address because “it’s an exciting place to live”



EXTERIOR IMAGE: COURTESY RITZ-CARLTON







**Y**es, DEQ, an urban oasis located on the ground floor of the Residences at The Ritz-Carlton, is one of Mr. Clooney's favourite watering holes when he is in town for the Toronto International Film Festival.

"He and his girlfriend were sitting at a corner table," said Board Member and Treasurer, Dan Stock of his thrilling 'Clooney Sighting' a year or two ago.

But the Residences at the Ritz-Carlton are the epitome of luxurious living not just because of their Ritz-Carlton pedigree or because movie stars hang out there, rather the Residences at the Ritz-Carlton is a coveted address because "it's an exciting place to live," says the Board's Director, Joanna Ramessar-Chung, a sentiment echoed by the other Board members, residents, and management alike.

"We're living in the Capital of Toronto's Entertainment District with the Rogers Centre, movie theatres, CN Tower, and hundreds of restaurants a mere five minute walk away," says the Board's President, Richard Ho, who picked up stakes and moved 'across the pond' from England directly into the Residences at the Ritz-Carlton two years ago. "Like myself, many of us had never lived downtown before so we love the location."

"The residents are such lovely, lovely people," says Joanna with a glowing smile then adds, "And I love the white-glove level of service." The Board's Treasurer, Dan

Stock says with pride, "We share a real sense of community and since moving here two years ago I think I've met more of my neighbours than I had ever met when I was living in my previous single family home."

The Residences is one of about forty-five Ritz-Carlton branded sites around the world - some of which are 'co-locations' (hotel + condominiums) and some are 'stand-alone' (condominiums only).

Built in 2011 on a former parking lot where, two-hundred years ago, once sat the residence of Chief Justice and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, John Elmsley, the Ritz-Carlton has Simcoe Place to its east; the CBC Headquarters to its west, Simcoe Park to the south and a expertly landscaped green space to the north. The one to three bedroom suites range from 1,200 to 10,000 sq feet.

The lower twenty floors of the fifty-two storey building are devoted to the hotel while the condominium residences begin at the twenty-second floor.





*“He and his girlfriend were sitting at a corner table,” said Board Member and Treasurer, Dan Stock of his thrilling ‘Clooney Sighting’ a year or two ago*

## Amenities

**T**he condominium owners and residents of the Ritz-Carlton do not have many of the amenities typical of condominium residents typically enjoy. Instead, they have full access to the hotel’s pool, sauna, and extensive gym – although the residents do have a spacious and beautifully furnished, twenty-first floor Sky Lounge that looks out on Roger’s Centre and the lake beyond. They also have a twelve seat media centre, richly appointed board room, pantry kitchen for catered

events, a billiards room, guest suite, and a gym which, although smaller than the hotel’s, is reserved for the resident’s exclusive use. Rather than condominium committees, it is the hotel’s staff who plans the social events, which cater to hotel guests and residents alike. Some of the social events include: Sushi nights, an annual BBQ, Yoga workshops, Mix and Mingles, and bartending classes.

In addition, to the twenty-four hour concierge, an elegantly dressed door-attendant stands sixteen hours a day with perfect posture and an ever-represent smile, waiting to smooth the resident’s arrivals and departures. Suite owners also receive a room rate discount at any Ritz-Carlton in the world.

## The Board

“There’s a certain uniqueness to our management agreement with the Ritz-Carlton. Of course being associated with such a prestigious company could have its disadvantages but not in our case as the Ritz-Carlton has always respected and recognised our condominium corporation’s individual needs and desires,” says the Board’s President Richard Ho who

along with fellow Board members: Dan Stock, Treasurer; Khalid Khawaja, Vice-President; Dr. Frank Lista, Secretary; and Joanna Ramessar-Chung, Director, have met the challenges of managing a newly-minted downtown condominium with an efficiency and grace that made their sometimes difficult jobs seem easy.

Of course helping a condominium corporation that bears the Ritz-Carlton's brand brings unique challenges and one of those is the resident's expectation of full trans-

parency. "Our residents expect nothing less," says the Board's Secretary Frank Lista, who moved to the Residences at the Ritz-Carlton from Palace Pier, a condominium development on Toronto's waterfront.

The Board's excellent fiscal management skills and success at achieving and maintaining transparency were never more evident than when the Board faced a recent financial challenge.

"In the 2012-2013 fiscal year (July 1-June 30) there were numerous unexpected expenditures that resulted in a \$376,000 budget shortfall by year end," says Director of Residence, Nathania Norrie, B.A., RCM. The corporation also had to take into account the expiration of warranties for the common areas in the transition from the developer. Through proactive planning, energy savings initiatives and a very professional, budget conscious Board, the corporation was able to recoup the shortfall without the need for a special assessment or negative impact to suite owners.



*"The residents are such lovely, lovely people," says Joanna with a glowing smile then adds, "And I love the white-glove level of service."*



**Above**  
Doorman: Richard Ford

**At left**  
Board Members:  
Khalid Khawaja  
Dan Stock  
Joanna Ramessar-Chung  
Dr. Frank Lista  
Richard Ho (absent)





## Management

T

he Ritz-Carlton's two-person management team of a Residence Manager and a Residence Operations Supervisor is headed by Nathania who came to the Ritz-Carlton in December 2012 after six years of service as a property manager for Brookfield. "I love working at the Ritz-Carlton. It's exciting, partly because every day is different. But more than that, living at the Ritz-Carlton carries a regal element and so the residents have high expectations from the management team in regards to customer service and quality."



**Above**  
Concierge: Ruth Vigon

**Doorman:**  
George Karapapas

**Bottom**  
Management Team:  
Nathania Norrie  
Maria Paz-Castillo  
Andrew Leech (absent)

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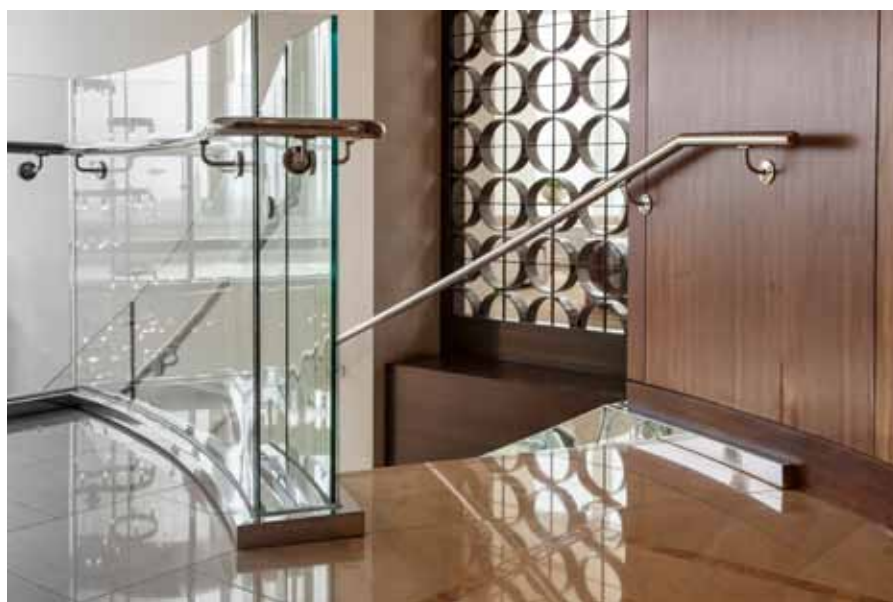
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*“Engage, contribute and inspire” are the guiding principles of the Ritz-Carlton’s social and environmental responsibility program.*



As part of addressing those expectations, management publishes a one-page Week at a Glance and a quarterly, four-page newsletter, The Ritz-Carlton Life that includes building related news, operations and maintenance reports, and menu specials for the Ritz-Carlton's two restaurants.

The customer service and cleaning staff are not only in-house but each employee must undergo a four week training program conducted by the Ritz-Carlton hotel before coming to work on the residential side.

## The Community Footprints Initiative

“**E**ngage, contribute and inspire” are the guiding principles of the Ritz-Carlton's social and environmental responsibility program. Their Community Footprints Initiative vows that all Ritz-Carlton hotels will be positive, supportive members of their communities and sensitive to the environment.

“We have created resident food and clothing drives aimed at providing the necessities to families and individuals who are unable to provide for themselves,” says the Board's Secretary Frank Lisa. Ritz-Carlton residents and employees have volunteered to assist The Herbie Fund, a charity that provides complicated surgical procedures to children who have grown up in a developing nation. Residents and employees also volunteer their time at the Yonge Street Mission during the holidays to give those in need a warm meal during the coldest months of the year. And, in keeping with their guiding principles, the residents and employees of the Resi-

## Condo Spotlight

**Jason Rivait** BA., LL.B.,  
Heenan Blaikie LLP

# Condo HOTELS



can be set up in different ways. Some condo-hotels are created as two separate condominium corporations, one being the condo-hotel and the other being the condo-residence. You can purchase a unit in the condo-hotel (and live in the unit, rent the unit, or both) or purchase a unit in the condo-residence. Other condo-hotels are created as a combination of a standard residential condominium corporation and a commercial property that contains a hotel. Under this set up, you can purchase

Toronto's status as a world-class city has been enhanced in the last decade with the development of a number of luxury condo-hotels. These developments target residents and guests who desire top-of-the-line service and the conveniences that luxury hotels offer their patrons. The residents living in a condo-hotel not only have high-end gourmet restaurants an elevator ride away, but can also utilize other hotel services, such as room service, laundry service and use of the spa facilities. In most cases, condo-hotels are managed by well-known branded managers that specialize in delivering the finest level of service to discerning residents and guests. The expectation is that the property and the services will meet the standards of the brand.

From a legal perspective, condo-hotels







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dences of the Ritz-Carlton participate in a monthly community park clean up of their neighbourhood parks to ensure that all residents of the community have a clean and safe natural environment.

The Points of Light Institute, a world-wide organisation that promotes citizen empowerment, recently awarded the Ritz-Carlton its 2013 Corporate Engagement Award of Excellence in recognition of the Community Footprints Initiative's unique design. In presenting the award, Michelle Nunn, Points of Light's CEO said, "We celebrate companies that incorporate their employee volunteer programs the way they do business, with the ultimate goal of making social progress."

## Energy Conservation and Other Capital Improvements

With a Board and management that has placed energy conservation and fiscal responsibility as one of their foremost goals, the Board of the Residences at the Ritz-Carlton have, over its first two and a half years, completed a number of initiatives. "We have installed LED lights in all of our common areas which has resulted in a fourteen-percent savings in hydro since March 2013. We have monitored garbage and recycling efforts and have had great participation from residents in our waste removal program which has resulted in a fifty-percent reduction in waste in the last year," says Nathania.

Additionally, the Board has initiated or completed:

- Enhancements and floor restoration in the Terrace

## Condo HOTELS

a unit in the residential condominium corporation but not the hotel. In either case, residents of the residential condominium corporation can utilize the hotel services and amenities, some of which are on a pay-for-use basis.

Reciprocal agreements between the residential condominium and the hotel (whether it's a condominium corporation or commercial property) are a must. These agreements, as always, deal with the intricacies of shared facilities, services and amenities. The differences between the typical reciprocal agreement for two resi-

dential condominium corporations and one that is found at a condo-hotel is that the latter will usually include a vast array of services (i.e.: laundry service, room service, valet service, etc.) that are shared. If you thought the standard reciprocal agreement was complicated, read one that is found at a condo-hotel.

This article will profile three illustrious condo-hotels that have hit the Toronto market: Trump International Hotel & Tower, Residences at the Ritz Carlton and One King West Hotel & Residence. While all of them offer luxury, each one is unique.



### CONDO PROFILE

## Trump International Hotel & Tower (aka TSCC 2267 and TSCC 2279)

**MAJOR INTERSECTION:** Bay St. and Adelaide St.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD:** Financial District

**NUMBER OF UNITS:** TSCC 2267 (Hotel): 261 units  
TSCC 2279 (Residential): 118 units

Trump International Hotel & Tower (Trump Tower) consists of two separate condominium corporations, even though there is only one physical tower. It is located in the heart of the financial district. When asked what makes Trump Tower unique, Yasmeen Nurmohamed, Director of Owner Services, mentioned that while the condo-hotel has 261 hotel units, they can be individually purchased. Owners have the option of living in these units, renting these units, or both.

Trump Tower has created a reservation program so that owners do not need to bother finding hotel guests. Should owners have a schedule which requires frequent travel for extended periods of time, this program gives them the flexibility to rent their unit during the time they are away. Every unit has a lock on the closet so that owners can rest assured that their valuables are secured when others are residing in their units. Before returning, housekeeping will clean and prepare the

unit to the owner's standards.

Trump Tower offers the hotel amenities to the residents of the residential condominium, including room service, banquet spaces, valet, concierge and bell-man services, not to mention the Quartz Crystal Spa, the fitness centre and a 65-foot salt-water infinity pool. Trump Tower has high-end restaurants right in the building: Suits Lounge and Stock Restaurant.

The residential units can be found on floors 33-56, with the hotel units found on floors 11-30. There is a separate lobby and elevator bank for the residences. The residential elevators are key-fob operated and only open to the floor on which the owner resides. If a unit is equipped with a fully-private elevator vestibule, then only that owner has access to that floor. For the art aficionados, Hermès inspired pieces, as well as Bohemian crystal chandeliers and art, can be found on both the hotel and residential floors.



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- Cleaning of all the dryer vents and exhaust systems to improve fire safety
- Conversion of the residence's six chandeliers from tungsten to energy efficient LEDs
- Restoration of the marble floors throughout the common areas
- Replacement of the hot water pumps with larger-sized units to improve hot water flow
- Installation of new floral arrangements by Coco and Lily, one of Toronto's leading florists
- Repainting the guest suite

Heating, always a sizeable line item on any board's budget is done entirely by steam. "We have no boilers," says Nathania. Part of Enwave's system, the Residences at the Ritz-Carlton, like more than 140 other commercial, residential, government, and institutional buildings in Toronto are cooled in the summer with water from Lake Ontario and heated in the winter with steam from one of Enwave's three district steam plant.

## Priceless!

**D**uring TIFF, the residents are used to stepping through the front doors of their building and running into a wall of paparazzi wildly snapping photos, then, when the excitement dies down, whispering to the photographer standing beside them, "Who was that?" Of course the answer is that the person enshrined in their digital photo is not a super star like the debonair and sage George Clooney but merely a resident who knows that the value of quality, location and, superior customer service is ... priceless. **CV**

## Condo HOTELS



### CONDO PROFILE

## Residences at The Ritz-Carlton

(aka TSCC 2165)

**MAJOR INTERSECTION:** University Avenue and Wellington Street West

**NEIGHBOURHOOD:** Financial/Entertainment District

**NUMBER OF UNITS:** Hotel: 267 units,  
Residential: 158 units

The 53-story The Ritz-Carlton hotel is situated mere steps away from some of Toronto's popular attractions, including Rogers Centre, Air Canada Centre and the TIFF Bell Lightbox. The 158 residential units making up the Residences at The Ritz-Carlton (Residences) are located on the top floors of the building. The Ritz-Carlton hotel is located directly underneath the Residences in the same building. You can purchase a unit in the Residences but not The Ritz-Carlton hotel, as it is set up as a commercial property. Owners in the Residences may lease/rent their units with a minimum 12 month term.

When Nathania Norrie, Director of Resi-

dences, was asked what makes the Residences unique, she advised that unit owners in the Residences have unfettered access to shared hotel amenities such as Spa My Blend by Clarins, a salt water pool deck and yoga studio, as well as exclusive amenities to the Residences that include a billiard room, board room and media room. The scenic Sky Lounge located on the 21st floor features a terrace with barbeques overlooking views of Toronto's harbourfront and the islands. As in most condo-hotels, unit owners have access to a 24-hour personal concierge service and 24-hour valet parking. The building is home to Toca Restaurant, Ritz Bar and DEQ Lounge.



### CONDO PROFILE

## One King West Hotel & Residence

(aka TSCC 1703)

**MAJOR INTERSECTION:** Yonge St. and King St.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD:** Financial District

**NUMBER OF UNITS:** Hotel: 325 units,  
Residential/Other: 250 units

One King West Hotel & Residences (One King West) is conveniently located in the financial district, and is in close walking distance to Yonge-Dundas Square and St. Lawrence Market. Yehudi Hendler is the President of Y.L. Hendler Ltd.,

the property management company of One King West. When asked what makes One King West unique, Hendler said that because the hotel units are spread throughout the building on each floor, it allows for different unit sizes to



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## Condo HOTELS

be offered. Each floor has hotel units, office units, live-work units and private residences. Typically, condo-hotels have either separate towers or separate floors dedicated to private residences and hotel units, respectively. Hendler mentions that these unique features give One King West a boutique-like atmosphere.

In addition to a spa, exercise room, outdoor terrace area, valet parking, 24-hour concierge services and meeting rooms, One King West includes heritage property which puts this modern building in touch with its past. The heritage property includes the TD Chairman's Board Room, the Grand Banking Hall, the Austin Gallery and the Vault, which is the original bank vault built directly into the bedrock in 1913; residents are encouraged to use these areas for business and private functions. One King West is also home to Bistro on King and Henri's Bar.

There are three separate corporations (each with their own board of directors) involved in One King West. The condominium corporation owns all of the assets of the building; Events at One King West Ltd. is the company (which is not a condominium corporation) that operates the food and beverage service, which is managed by a hotel management company; and the third corporation is another company (again, which is not a condominium corporation) that operates the hotel's rental pool. The owners who choose to enter their unit in the rental pool receive profit distributions as determined on a pooled basis of all the hotel rooms available for rent on any given night or period of time. With the rental pool concept, a unit in the hotel rental pool qualifies for a distribution irrespective of whether it is rented. This reduces the risks for the hotel unit owners if their individual unit is not steadily booked by guests.

*Special thanks to Alessia Kalish, Summer Student at Heenan Blaikie LLP, who assisted with the preparation of this article.*

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