

David Connor, Maître Hotelier

**Regional VP, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts Eastern Canada
and General Manager, Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth**



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Originally from Montreal and fluent in English and French, David Connor, Maître Hotelier, brings more than 30 years of experience in the hotel industry — both in Canada and the U.S. — and has held progressive positions with Starwood Hotels since 1991. As of January 3, 2017, David became the new regional vice-president, Eastern Canada for Fairmont Hotels & Resorts. Based in Montreal, he will also manage Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth — currently undergoing a complete transformation — and also has regional responsibilities which include overseeing Fairmont’s iconic hotel portfolio; Fairmont Le Château Frontenac (Quebec City), Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu (La Malbaie), Fairmont Tremblant (Mont-Tremblant),

Fairmont Le Château Montebello (Montebello) and Fairmont Château Laurier (Ottawa).

“I am delighted to be joining the Fairmont brand, well-known for its luxurious landmark properties. I am pleased to arrive in time to prepare the reopening of Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth following its reinvention and to guide the hotel into an exciting new phase of its history,” says David. “As well, I look forward to working closely with the general managers of the Eastern-Canada region to ensure memorable experiences for our guests.”



Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth

After obtaining his degree in Hotel Management from Montreal’s LaSalle College and his MBA from Concordia University, David began his career as director, Total Quality Management and hotel manager with Le Centre Sheraton Montreal. He relocated to California in 2000 as general manager, Hilton Sonoma County, Santa Rosa and held that position until 2002 when he returned to Canada as general manager, The Westin Calgary. In 2005 he was appointed as opening general manager for The Westin Boston Waterfront.



Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu (La Malbaie)



Fairmont Le Château Frontenac (Québec City)

In 2013, David was appointed as area managing director – Eastern Canada with Starwood Hotels & Resorts, where he was responsible for seven properties in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Burlington, Va., as well as general manager for the Sheraton Centre Toronto until accepting his most recent position with Fairmont.



Fairmont Tremblant (Mont-Tremblant)

Recently, David took a moment to answer a few questions on his background and culinary outlook for La Chaine in Canada.

1. Where does your love of gastronomy come from?

I grew up watching my father cooking for our family and learned to love cooking myself. Over the years in the industry, from hotel school to today, food and wine has intrigued and interested me very much. I am a want-to-be chef at heart. In turn, I love to handle all things cooking for my family on weekends, often cooking breakfast through dinner. My children joined me in the kitchen very early on, aided by a step stool, so my son Christian could reach the counter.

[Photos courtesy of Fairmont Hotels & Resorts]



Fairmont Château Laurier (Ottawa)

2. You have obviously inspired a lot of young chefs and professionals in the industry – from where (or who) do you draw your inspiration?

I admit that I am a Food Channel junkie. I can watch hours of food shows and often try to recreate the recipes the television chefs make on their shows. Many of our meeting planners these days are foodies themselves and they are interested in offering exciting food events for their attendees. I love this approach because it pushes us to create new concepts and presentation styles to meet and even exceed their expectations.

3. What would you say have been the biggest developments in gastronomy, wines, and hospitality that you have witnessed in your years as a Hotelier?

While I am not a culinary professional, I feel one of the biggest developments in recent years is the introduction of Rationale-type ovens in our kitchens. The flexibility we gained by cooking with a mix of steam and heat, the ability to re-therm plates effectively, and the reduction of loss of yield from meats has been a huge improvement in our quality and costs for those chefs who embrace the technology and use it for all it can offer. The trick remains to push our chefs to use the equipment for much more than simply cooking proteins.



Fairmont Le Château Montebello.

4. What do you think are the most significant trends and perhaps challenges faced by gastronomy and hospitality today?

The popularity of food shows on television is probably one of the most significant trends that can also be a challenge, as our guests are much more food knowledgeable and are self-proclaimed foodies. I see this change as exciting, however, as it forces our culinary teams to strive to develop new dishes, experience with combining difference ingredients, and to create interesting presentations.

5. What do you think today's industry professionals should be doing to keep moving gastronomy to a new level?

I believe one area to focus on is the fusion of ingredients from other parts of the world that are lesser known in North America from a food perspective. Examples are: Iran, Pakistan, Morocco, etc. These flavour profiles are somewhat different from what we are accustomed to in North America and can heighten typical dishes on our menus.

6. What advice would you give to young and aspiring chefs, Hoteliers and Sommeliers?

I believe the most important advice to young culinarians is to ensure they gain experience from multiple areas and other chefs on a very regular basis. Push yourself out of your culinary comfort zone often so you are exposed to differing styles early. This will help expand your horizon and will create an excellent foundation to create your own style.

