

The Listel, Vancouver's Most Art-Full Hotel

Located in the heart of Vancouver's shopping and restaurant district, the Listel Hotel (TheListelHotel.com) has earned several affectionate descriptions: Vancouver's most art-full hotel, the "cool" hotel, and a hotel with a unique genius. Looking beyond the hospitality industry for innovation and inspiration, its owners and management first embraced the idea that their hotel should be more than a first class place to sleep and eat during a renovation of the 129-guest room facility in 1997. The arts-theme ideas began to flow immediately and have never stopped.



Just one block away from the hotel, the Buschlen Mowatt Galleries (BuschlenMowatt.com) with an impeccable local and international reputation for representing world class artists from Canada and abroad, became an early and enthusiastic partner. For nearly 14 years, they have curated the Listel's two Gallery Floors, providing original art and prints for each room. Art work is hung or otherwise positioned as it would be if it were being given a prominent place in a client's home, definitely not where a hotel manager would think of placing it! In every guestroom is information about the featured artists as well as the paintings and books specific to the artists or their periods. Roughly 30 artists are represented at any one time throughout the hotel.

Building on the success of the Gallery Floor concept, the Listel next took the bold step a few years later of partnering with the prestigious University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology (Moa.ubc.ca) also in Vancouver, to showcase the dramatic First Nations native art of Canada's northwest coast, presenting paintings, prints, pottery and carvings of contemporary native artists. The Museum Floors today comprise two floors or 40% of the hotel. Guests in these rooms and suites may also expect reading material about the artists and the indigenous culture as well as native-carved cedar headboards and armoires, offering an impressive immersion experience.



Staff at the Listel Hotel says the innovative attitude begins at the top with its owners, the Suzuki family of Japan, always encouraging creativity with all its properties. Independent ownership has undoubtedly been a factor in giving the Canadian management team freedom to take bold steps which a chain property would find hard to do.

One of the major motivators in the Listel's artistic development is Lise Magee, the hotel's long-time public relations director. "We wanted to work with our neighbors," says Magee, "and that's what we've done. Initially we thought we would sell the art, but realized it was too difficult to replace the art overnight! Now we just refer our guests to the Gallery or to the Museum."



General Manager, Jim Mockford, associated with the hotel since 1989, underscores the same pioneering sensibility. "We think that a hotel is only as interesting as the partnerships it forms. Our owners have always encouraged us to be as independent as they are," he emphasizes, "to respect traditional hotel management methods while experimenting with new ideas." Certainly qualifying as an innovative idea, the present art collection is valued at over \$2 million dollars through partnerships with the UBC Museum of Anthropology and Buschlen Mowatt Galleries.

With visual senses so delightfully satisfied, it is not much of a stretch to step into the hotel's O'Doul's Restaurant & Bar (Odoulsrestaurant.com) where Vancouver's finest jazz music artists entertain seven nights a week. Expect the finest west coast signature fare, an award-winning wine list and the best live jazz west of the Rocky Mountains, consistently delivered for the past ten years.

By Alison Gardner

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