

IN-STORE

## Fairmont Royal York opens “Bee Hotel” to spur environmental action

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*"Bee Hotel" at Fairmont Royal York*

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By JOE MCCARTHY

Fairmont Hotels and Resorts is increasing its commitment to bee preservation with an expanded "Bee Hotel" at its Royal York hotel in Toronto.

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**Luxury Daily**

The existential threat posed on many fronts to bees has been widely discussed and has sparked a rescue effort by many interested parties. Fairmont intends to spur further action by emphasizing that bees need more land, hence the hotel, in addition to cleaner environments.

"Lack of habitat is one of the main issues affecting the decline in numbers," said Mike Taylor, director of public relations at [Fairmont Hotels and Resorts](#), Toronto.

"We've decided to expand our efforts and provide spaces for these bees to reside," he said. "The bees live in these spaces, so we thought it was a great way of framing it that they're living in a bee hotel."

"We're certainly hoping to positively sustain and support the bee species, but we're also doing this to drive awareness and education, so this issue comes to the surface and hopefully others will take action."

## Pollinating the future

Without pollination from bees, many plants would cease. Foods that consumers take for granted such as apples, oranges, almonds and onions would have no way to make it to their next cycle.



*Pollinator bee*

Consequently, Fairmont uses its bee sanctuaries to spread awareness of this critical link.



*Pollination Garden Celebration at Fairmont Royal York*

Fairmont teamed up with skincare brand Burt's Bees, Sustainable. TO Architecture + Building and Pollinator Partnership Canada to create five sustainable bee hotels made from wood, twigs, fallen branches, soil and pith-filled holes, the first of which appeared at Fairmont Royal York. According to Fairmont, "the hotels are designed to attract, support and protect native, lost and solitary bees by replicating their natural nesting sites. This allows the bees to breed, lay eggs and seek protection from predators."



### *Bee Hotel at Fairmont Royal York*

Rather than solely fostering honey bees and reaping the ensuing sweets, the brand also houses bees that just pollinate. Fairmont's bees pollinate its herb gardens, so the hotel chain is able to showcase the contribution made on its menus alongside the 800 pounds of honey it harvests annually.

Guests can go to the hotel's Epic restaurant for a three-course \$69 meal featuring pollinated produce. For instance, the "Pollination Garden Celebration" includes slegger greens, vine ripened tomatoes, pickled red huckleberries, sea buckthorn berries, monforte chevre, candied walnuts, royal york honey and white balsamic vinaigrette.

At the property's Library Bar guests can order a "Buzz-tini," paired with with Burt's Bees lip balm. Proceeds from the cocktail go to Pollinator Partnership Canada.



## *Buzztini*

The hotel has had a rooftop garden for 15 years and first established an apiary in 2008 that now supports six hives. The program has since traveled to 25 other brand properties.

An extension of the Bee Hotel is the latest effort by the Royal York to spark action. The property tries to keep its guests involved in the developments by opening the herb garden and apiary for tours every Saturday and Sunday through the summer.

### One chapter

Fairmont views its bee sustainability actions as part of its larger environmental action narrative. Mr. Taylor said that the property has been trying to reduce CO2 emissions, improve energy standards and water conservation among other efforts. The hotel chain also aims to get guests involved.

For instance, the brand's "Community Connections Month" invited Fairmont colleagues and hotel guests to work with local organizations to volunteer at shelters, improve elderly facilities, spread knowledge of bee preservation and perform other charitable activities. Making a sweeping effort to aid community outreach projects appeals to luxury travelers who search for brands engaged in authentic philanthropy ([see story](#)).

Fairmont is not the only luxury hotel brand actively pursuing higher environmental standards.

Starwood Hotels and Resorts is making the case that environmental stewardship and social responsibility are essential business practices in its inaugural "Global Citizenship at Starwood" report.

The report outlines the company's environmentally sustainable efforts, community initiatives and other projects that it deems not simply just but also "urgently needed" in this "Age of Great Change." The conglomerate's attempt to familiarize consumers with its progressive efforts may spur other companies to up their game in similar areas ([see story](#)).

The more big brands that engage with the environmental movement, the brighter the future will look.

"We've been a leader in this space for two decades, so this is just another initiative that supports our focus on a responsible tourism," Mr. Taylor said.

### Final Take

*Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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