

POST



Post Hotel – NUMBER ONE in Canada

The January 2008 edition of Travel + Leisure Magazine has named the Post Hotel & Spa as the Number One hotel in Canada.

Travel + Leisure have a global team of editors and reporters that culled together the 500 highest rated hotels in the world. An impressive total of twenty-one hotels from across Canada made the list with the Post ranked first overall. When compared with the 500 best hotels from around the world, the Post placed thirty-second.

The only other Canadian hotel to crack the top 100 finished eighty-fourth.

In the same month, January 2008, Condé Nast Traveler announced their "Gold List" of the world's best places to stay. Here, in a special category for food and wine, the Post was named as the best hotel for food in the Americas (Canada, Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean).

When asked to comment on the success André Schwarz, who owns the Post with his brother George, paid tribute to the staff (all 150 of them) "our employees are like family to us". He says the secret is to find the right people, who buy into the same vision of excellence as he and his brother George.



André (L) and George (R) Schwarz.



For THIRTY YEARS DETAILS DEFINE SUCCESS For THE POST HOTEL BROTHERS

Author Kim Gray
Freelance Writer for the Calgary Herald

Perched along the Pipestone River in Lake Louise, the Post Hotel and Spa – flagged recently as both Canada’s top hotel (Travel and Leisure) and winner of the Best Food in the Americas category (Conde Naste) – offers the extraordinary to savvy local and international travelers.

The lodge’s success is indisputably linked to the business acumen of hoteliers George and Andre Schwarz. Last week, we sat down with the Swiss-born owners and asked them to reflect with us on their life’s work – 30 years this year in the making.

Q: What is the secret to success in your business?

André: I can’t tell you. It wouldn’t be a secret any more. OK., I’ll tell you. Look, you can have a hotel with all sorts of marble and chandeliers and everything is nice and beautiful.

But a hotel is not just about that. It needs to have soul – a soul the customer can feel. And this takes time to develop. Years in fact.

Part of building this is finding the right people who buy into your own vision of excellence and who want to stay with you for a long time. Our employees (150 in total) are like family to us.

Q: What was your response when you were voted Best Hotel in Canada by Travel and Leisure?

André: What took them so long! O.K. Seriously? It’s very nice but one has to take these things with a grain of salt.

George: We were excited and elated. It was a big surprise. Ever since we got started 30 years ago, our goal was to become as good as we could get.

Q: Two brothers in business together. Does this pose any challenges?

André: You have to stay out of each other’s hair.

George: Yah, this is like a marriage here.

André: For sure. The result is fantastic, but the process? It’s hell.

(Both men laugh out loud)

Q: Are you there now?
As good as you can get?

George: We’re maybe physically close. The new spa cost between two and three million. But it makes a huge difference. It’s what today’s travelers expect. It rounds out the experience of coming to the hotel. Maybe it’s a rainy weekend in May and people will say let’s go to the Post and have a nice dinner and go to the spa. We also built the wine cellar when we built the spa. We have 30,000 bottles of wine now. People love our wine cellar. We have dinners and wine tastings down there. The wine list we offer features more than 2,200 selections – one of the top four or five selections in Canada.

André: It’s challenging because since the Travel and Leisure story, people come and they try to prove you wrong. Truthfully, customers have become more demanding over the years. So you really have to stay abreast of the level of service.

Q: What are the Post’s greatest strengths?

George: When we started out 30 years ago, we had an old lodge with linoleum floors. At that point, we brought in a great chef. We were the place to come for food. But our dream was to become more than just a restaurant in the mountains. For sure, our food is still a highlight. I eat in the dining room five times a week. I’m constantly working with people trying to improve things. Service has to be good and the food has to be tasty and hot when it comes.

André: Definitely the food to start with and then the human touch. This is what brings people back. We’re always around, spending time with our guests. They know us. They’re our friends.

Q: How would you say your personal styles differ?

André: George is more focused. I’m too busy dreaming about skiing while George is the hotel man. It’s in his blood. He knows details whereas I don’t see them.

Post Hotel mid 1960's.



The fresh flowers everywhere? That's George. We have someone full time just on the flowers and floral arrangements. I'm more interested in the general feeling of the hotel. When the harmony isn't there, if an employee isn't happy or a department doesn't function – it upsets me. I also deal more with the technical things. I know the place inside out with regards to maintenance and mechanical and heating systems.

Q: How do you want customers to feel when their stay at the Post is complete?

George: I want them to feel sorry that they're leaving and I want them to book right there to come back. That is the best compliment and we get that a lot.

André: We want people to walk away feeling happy. Feeling that their needs and expectations were met by staff who delivered our product in a harmonious way – with ease and with elegance.

Q: Where do you go when you're looking for the ultimate vacation spot?

George: When I go somewhere, I like to go

where it is quiet and where they leave me alone. My favorite place is on the island of Lana'i in Hawaii. It is the Four Seasons in Manele Bay now, but only for the last two years. I've been going there for 12 years. It's very quiet and there's no shopping. I know I'm on holiday here because I'm not checking out the hotel's operations any more.

Q: If you're staying at a reputable hotel, what expectations do you have and what bothers you most given your expertise in the business?

André: What really bugs me is when you pay a lot more than what you are charging at home and you get less than what you give at home. That really bugs me. It's not the money that bothers me as much as the principle of the matter. I wonder how these people can be so successful.

George: In general, what we're trying to do here is give people an experience and have them walk away and say, "yes, it was expensive but it was worthwhile." When you go to a place and think "it was expensive and it was not worthwhile" it's disappointing.

Q: What are the benefits of running a mountain hotel versus a city hotel?

George: We're in one of the most beautiful places in the world. People come here to relax. If you're working in a city hotel, life is stressed. You get the stress of your customers. Here they come to relax.

André: Of course, this isn't the fault of the city hotel. It's the nature of the city because people are there for work.

Q: What do you love most about your work?

George: Improving things. The constant striving to get better. This is the biggest reward for me.

André: For me, it's the people. Meeting people. Many guests ask me – "Do you spend the whole year here?" And I say yes, the whole world comes to visit. We have a strong European clientele – from Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland and England.

Very interesting people come. This is not a difficult place to be. We both love the outdoors and we still love to ski and hike.

A JOURNEY TO COMPLETE RELAXATION

Treat yourself to 135 minutes of complete bliss. Our luxurious Temple Mountain Escape signature spa treatment erases tension, releases toxins and infuses moisture. Enjoyed equally by men and women, the treatment gently coaxes mind and body into complete relaxation with soothing hands, warmth, essential oils and aromas.

"You feel like you've had a work over and a work out, but you're very relaxed and your skin feels absolutely beautiful," spa manager Anne Witzaney says.

Your Temple Mountain Escape starts with a gentle body polish. This exfoliation allows the skin underneath to absorb the moisture of the Rose Clay body masque. Imported from France's Provence region, this delicate clay is filled with nutrients that bring a glow to your body.

"Our Rose Clay is a natural way to detoxify the body – it draws out toxins like lactic acid and leaves you feeling refreshed and cleansed," Anne says. "The clay also 'clears the way' for the skin to absorb moisturizers."

A calming scalp massage takes you further into your journey of relaxation. Your body begins to feel fluid and supple. Your mind starts shedding thoughts about schedules, deadlines and everyday pressures.

These feelings continue during our exotic Herbal Thai Stem Massage. Ingredients such as lemongrass, tumeric, plai, mountain ebony leaves, jeang leaves and kaffir lime peel are wrapped in unbleached cotton to create a massage tool that's been used in Thailand since ancient times.

As the stems are heated, they release an aromatic blend of aromas and essential oils. As your treatment wraps up, you feel both calmed and awakened.

We invite you to discover (or rediscover) the timeless tradition of caring for mind and body at Temple Mountain Spa. We recommend reserving your Temple Mountain Escape and our other signature treatments.

Château D'YQUEM ... AN UNFORGETTABLE TASTING

Some wines are made to be remembered. Especially those created by Château d'Yquem. The most famous wine of Sauternes, the Graves region in France renowned for its sweet white wines, Château d'Yquem is arguably the best of its kind in the world.

In February 2008, the Post Hotel wine cellar was the setting for a remarkable once-in-a-lifetime event. Calgary based Dream Wines presented an extraordinary vertical tasting of rare vintages 1893, 1921, 1929, 1945, 1947, 1959, 1967, 1975, 1983, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1997, 2001. None other than Pierre Lurton himself, CEO of Château d'Yquem and Château Cheval Blanc flew in from France to conduct the tasting.

A small and very fortunate group of guests in attendance had come from across the continent and, not surprisingly, were overwhelmed.

\$100,000 TO KID'S CANCER CARE

At the Post Hotel's 2007 Wine Summit, a silent auction was held once again to benefit the Kid's Cancer Care Foundation of Alberta. With rare wines, special holiday adventures and unique artwork "up-for-grabs", more than \$42,000 was raised putting the running total donated from the Summit to over \$110,000.

The popularity of Wine Summit Lake Louise continues to grow and the 2008 event (May 29th to June 1st) has been sold out since the middle of March. Featured at the 2008 event will be another group of world-class wineries: Château Mouton Rothschild, Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier, Dom Pérignon, DuMOL, Gaja and Ridge Vineyards.

Château D'Yquem Tasting.



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