



# Staying in Ottawa?

## Discover Bostonian Executive Suites

It's not every business that can open its doors and months later survive two of the biggest economic shocks to hit Ottawa in recent years. It's even more of an achievement to do so in what is already an extremely competitive sector – the luxury hotel business.

But that's exactly what the management of Ottawa's newest luxury hotel, the Bostonian Executive Suites, was able to do when it commenced its operations at 341 McLaren Street in March 2001.

The timing of the opening of the Bostonian was to say the least, inauspicious. Months after the hotels' opening September 11 occurred putting a damper not only on the booking of airline seats but of hotel rooms.

The impact of the disaster compounded the affect on the tourism industry which was already reeling from the surprise downturn in the hi-tech sector.

In fact, the Bostonian was created in part, to capitalize on the spin-off business from the hi-tech boom but by the time the building was renovated and open for business, the industry had taken a turn for the worst. (Market research at the time

revealed that an apartment hotel such as the Bostonian would tap into an eager hi-tech based market). The Bostonian, like many other luxury hotels, had no choice but to absorb the double blow of September 11 and the demise of the hi-tech sector.

General Manager Sheila Love says the downturn in the corporate sector including hi-tech has reduced the number of forecasted long-term stays at the hotel. At the moment, around 40% of the hotel's clients are long-term stays. The remainder of the guests are regular hotel clientele who stay at the hotel from one night to a couple of weeks.

Despite this, the Bostonian has shown every indication that it hasn't merely weathered the storms of the recent past but that it is positively thriving and is experiencing full occupancy rates. Part of the explanation for the Bostonian's success lies in the unique niche that it occupies in Ottawa's marketplace. The Bostonian isn't any ordinary hotel. It specializes in offering a home away from home for executives on long-term work assignments in Ottawa. Typically, many executives remain at the hotel for up to six months or longer.

All of the suites are finely furnished and fitted with a full fridge, stove, microwave and dishwasher. In keeping with executive needs, the units also have a workspace complete with executive chairs, wireless Internet services and workstation.

The lobby area is also suitably executive in style. Guests are greeted with brass sliding entry doors opening into an oak and marble finished lobby and reception area, which opens conveniently into the meeting room and lounge area.

The Bostonian's convenient location in the historic neighborhood of Somerset West completes the package. The Bostonian is readily accessible to major Ottawa landmarks such as the Parliament buildings and entertainment venues such as the National Arts Centre.

Clearly, the formula is an attractive one. Clientele who frequent the Bostonian include parliamentarians, senators and diplomatic staff along with senior public servants, hi-tech executives and relocated government personnel.

It's no real surprise then to learn the Bostonian was conceived by a high-powered executive for other high-powered

executives. Owner of the Bostonian Executive Suites, Boston-based Richard Leibovitch is managing director of Putnam Investments, the fourth largest mutual fund company in the United States. Mr Leibovitch bought the site for the Bostonian in October 2000, when it contained The Montebello Apartment Hotel.

Acting through his vision, managers of the property, District Realty Corporation transformed the once run-down hotel into a world-class establishment catering to an up-market clientele in five short months. In keeping with Mr Leibovitch's vision, the Bostonian design team – Robert Chaban and Associates – produced a comfortable working environment for Senior and executive personnel. The design teams



efforts were aided by a consulting team – headed by DSP Hospitality – brought in to preside over interior design, mechanical and electrical engineering, systems consulting, elevator and security consulting and a purchasing agency. The efforts of DSP Hospitality and Robert Chaban and Associates were supported by purchasing agent Cresswood Consolidated Inc.

All three firms have indicated high profile clients in their portfolios including The Four Seasons, Hilton International and the Radisson Hotels and Marriot Hotels. The Bostonian is somewhere where high-powered executives want to stay.

Director of Sales, Ceka Michaelis says much of the Bostonian's success is also explained by the strong demand for superior executive accommodation in Ottawa. Even despite the economic dampers of September 11 and the hi-tech

downturn, the Bostonian has clearly tapped into a demand that is expected to grow as the economy ramps up.

Given Ottawa's low vacancy rates for apartments, which have hovered between zero to two percent in recent years, the Bostonian has been made more attractive to government and human resource professionals. This is due primarily to its furnished apartment-hotel styled suites combined with its hotel-styled services.

By choosing the Bostonian, clients get the best of both worlds – well-serviced hotel style apartments on a daily or monthly basis.

But the Bostonian is not only an oasis for high-powered executives or weary travelers. The Bostonian plays an active role in the community through its support

and sponsorship of several high-level community events in the national capital region. These include the Canadian Tulip Festival and the Ottawa Greekfest. Last year, the Bostonian was proud to be designated the "Official Executive Suite Hotel" of the Canadian Tulip Festival's 50th anniversary.

The Bostonian is also a champion of the Bravo Orchestra Series at the National Arts Centre and has committed its support for the 2002, 2003 and 2004 seasons. The Bostonian works with the National Arts Centre by providing lodging for musicians and other persons associated with the Centre who are on tour in Ottawa. This is in keeping with the Bostonian's aim to not only be in the community but to play a leading role in it as well.

Despite its successes, management at the Bostonian hasn't been content to rest on its laurels. As of November 2002, executives staying at the Bostonian no longer needed to scour the city after a busy day for a gym. Mr Leibovitch purchased a property adjacent to the Bostonian and an agreement was entered into to make a fitness centre available to Bostonian clients. This continual striving for hotel perfection looks set to guarantee Ottawa's newest luxury hotel is around for a long time to come. ■