

## BRINGING BACK THE BENGAL: VICTORIA'S ICONIC VENUE USHERS IN A NEW ERA, REOPENS AS BREAKFAST HOT SPOT

- One of Victoria's most storied rooms marks a new chapter with a fresh design -



**VICTORIA, BC (February 9, 2026)** – The wait is officially over. One of Victoria's most beloved spaces is welcoming guests once again, ushering in a new era for a storied location inside [Fairmont Empress](#). The Bengal has reopened as the hotel's breakfast room, marking chapter one of an evolving vision—one where history and contemporary refinement come together to create a renewed sense of place.

Long known as The Bengal Lounge, the space has been woven into the social fabric of the City of Victoria for generations. Originally opened in 1912 as the 'Reading & Writing Room' following the hotel's grand extension, it evolved in 1954 into the Coronet Lounge—the city's first cocktail lounge of its kind—creating a new era of social gathering. From milestone celebrations to quiet conversations, it has long served as a place that felt both intimate and special. Now, The Bengal returns with renewed energy, inviting guests to rediscover a room that has grown and transformed alongside the city it serves.

"The Bengal has always been an integral part of The Empress and a place that holds real meaning for our community, and we're incredibly proud to officially open once again," said General Manager Dan McGowan. "We're reintroducing this iconic space in a way that feels both familiar and new, with the intent to create an unforgettable experience for the guest of today. We cannot wait for people to experience it now and for everything that's still to come as the space continues to evolve."

Originally celebrated for its rich heritage architecture—defined by beams, pilasters, and intricate carvings—the new Bengal is a loving homage to its past while embracing a brighter, more inclusive setting. The heritage-style beams remain as anchors to history, while plush velvet seating, cane textures, and a lighter, organic palette soften the room and create a seamless



connection to the gardens just outside. The result is an atmosphere that feels elegant, welcoming, and unmistakably The Bengal.

Every morning, The Bengal is ready to welcome hotel guests and locals alike for breakfast from 6:30am to 11:00am. Serving dishes inspired by the breakfast menu at Q at the Empress, along with feature items that give a subtle nod to the former lounge, including dishes inspired by the Mango Lassi Chia Pudding and the Bengal Tartine. Click here to review the [menu](#).

The Bengal is also available for dinner while Q at the Empress undergoes renovations. [Reservations](#) are available and walk-ins welcomed based on availability.

Looking ahead, the reopening of The Bengal is only the beginning of its transformation. Once renovations at Q at the Empress are complete, the space will become Victoria's largest private dining room, offering an exceptional and opulent setting for memorable gatherings, celebrations, and special occasions. Having served as a venue for private events since 2016, The Bengal is uniquely positioned for this next evolution.

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### **About Fairmont Empress**

Recognized as the #1 Canadian City Hotel in Travel + Leisure's 2025 World's Best Awards and honoured as a top Western Canadian Hotel in the 2025 Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards, Fairmont Empress is located in the heart of Victoria, BC overlooking the city's sparkling Inner Harbour. The MICHELIN Key and Forbes-recommended hotel is a distinguished 4 Green Key property committed to sustainable practices—and is proud to be double Green Key certified, with its meeting space earning its own Green Key certification. The 1908 historic site offers 431 beautifully appointed guest rooms and suites, Fairmont Spa featuring signature West Coast experiences, and Q at the Empress, which serves Pacific Northwest cuisine accompanied by an award-winning wine list, all while being home to one of the world's most iconic Afternoon Tea experiences. Following a \$60+ million restoration completed in 2017, the hotel has transformed into an elegant must-visit destination where modern luxury intertwines with timeless charm. In 2023, the property introduced a reimagined Fairmont Gold Experience. 88 Fairmont Gold rooms await to be guests' home away from home, while a newly renovated lounge offers guests a cozy haven in the city and a private outdoor terrace peers over a perfectly manicured landscape. Historic Hotels Worldwide honours the property's prestigious grounds as one of the Top 25 Most Magnificent Gardens in the World, making it the perfect starting point for exploring Vancouver Island's stunning natural beauty.

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### **Photos**

High resolution photos and video can be downloaded by visiting the [link](#).

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