

INSIDE OUT

FIVE GREAT PLACES

to visit the loo



Moxie's restaurant takes luxury loos to the next level.

BY DAYANTI KARUNARATNE

1. Moxie's
601 Earl Grey Dr., 613-599-5000, moxies.ca
Open 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. weekdays, 10:30 a.m. to 2 a.m., Friday and Saturday

Why it's good: This chain of restaurants takes luxury loos to the next level. Ladies get a floor-to-ceiling mirror, cushioned and cosy silver seating with flexible hinged mirrors. It's all decorated in a pink-violet-silver palette (down to the tiled purse shelf located in each stall). In the men's, flat screen televisions above each urinal and a wide screen atop the gas fireplace make every trip entertaining. Both rooms feature marble countertops and slate floor tiles.

Accessibility: Wheelchair accessible.

Tip: For guys who are missing a game because of a date or a family gathering, Moxie's always has the urinal screens tuned to TSN.



Full-length shuttered doors give the facilities an English cottage feel.

3. Château Laurier
1 Rideau St., 613-241-1414
fairmont.com/laurier
Restaurants open daily from 6:30 a.m. to midnight

Why it's good: Full-length shuttered doors allow privacy and give the facilities an English cottage feel. The soft lighting — complete with ornate fixtures — makes every trip a regal one. Plus, with all the politicians and pedigreed personalities who trot through the hotel, who knows who you might run into in the loo?

Accessibility: Wheelchair accessible (facilities are for hotel and restaurant guests only).

Tip: On your way back to your table, visit the Heritage Gallery, where images of Princess Diana, John Lennon and Yoko Ono adorn the walls.



Bridgehead's bathrooms feature wide circular sinks and marble columns.

4. Bridgehead
109 Bank St. (at Albert), 613-230-8548
bridgehead.ca
Open 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday.

Why it's good: This Ottawa chain of fair-trade coffee houses led the movement to bring low-flush toilets to the mainstream. Their Caroma 3000 offers two flush options — low flow and regular — and the bathrooms are kept very clean. The two unisex units also feature wide circular sinks and marble columns from the original building.

Accessibility: Wheelchair accessible (though due to the high traffic it may require some patience). And unlike some other Bridgehead locations, there's no need to nose around for a bathroom key.

Tip: Great coffee and people watching opportunities. The café also features self-serve lemon water.



Jazz'oo's sinks feature smooth tumbled river stones cradled in a transparent glass basin.

2. Jazz'oo European Bar & Lounge
132 Sparks St., 613-232-6161,
jazzoobarandlounge.com
Open 11:30 a.m. daily; kitchen closes 9:30 p.m.

Why it's good: The cool factor of this lounge is continued with a novel sink design — smooth tumbled river stones cradled in a transparent glass basin. The restaurant's sleek, dark decor is echoed in the loo's lighting and colour palette, plus a brown leather bench is perfect for doing that bathroom girl talk thing.

Accessibility: Wheelchair accessible (though that slick seat might be an obstacle).

Tip: The bathroom is also featured in a short film — one of many shot on location at Jazz'oo. Based on Neil Simon's Barefoot in the Park, the video Lucky or Not can be viewed on the restaurant's website, jazzoobarandlounge.com.



Multiple mirrors create an airy feel and let you check out your new yoga bod.

5. PranaShanti Yoga Centre
52 Armstrong St., 613-761-9642
pranashanti.com
Classes run 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Why it's good: Simplicity and serenity is the mantra for this bathroom, which was designed by Nathalie Lamont — the same visionary behind the bathrooms at Le Nordik Spa in Chelsea. Multiple mirrors create an airy feel, while low-flow taps and toilets keep it eco-friendly and a marble countertop brings rugged character. Plus, a floor-to-ceiling mirror lets you check out your revitalized yoga bod.

Accessibility: No stairs, but the stalls are all standard size.

Tip: With the latest Somerset Street construction, OTranspo's No. 2 Bayshore bus is now routed directly past this new studio. Jump off on Armstrong to visit PranaShanti's sparkling new facilities.

Circus: 'It's a flight to Hell'

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Need to know

If you haven't seen Les 7 doigts, think of the troupe as a chamber-music version of the Cirque du Soleil. The performers, who work as a collective and create their shows collaboratively, perform in smaller venues than the vast tents and arenas in which the Cirque performs. In the process, they allow patrons and performers to share a closer experience.

New York-based Australian producer Ross Mollison commissioned *La Vie* to be performed in New York in an intimate and opulent 100-year-old Spiegelent, much like the one for the performance at Tulipfest. Mollison asked the company to add a dramatic narrative that would connect the acrobatics. The artists created a story about a group of characters who meet in a cosmic waiting room somewhere between heaven and hell, following a devastating plane crash. A ringleader says he has a file on everybody and will be reviewing their lives to see what will happen to them next.

"It's a flight to hell which never quite gets there," troupe member Samuel Tétrault told *Montreal Gazette* writer Kathryn Greenaway last September, when the show opened in Montreal following performances in New York and New Zealand.

"We thought the best way to talk about *La Vie* (life) is to talk about death. In our culture it's a subject we avoid talking about. We don't celebrate it like other cultures do, as a part of the natural cycle — a beautiful end to a journey."

Tétrault plays a ruthless CEO who is forced to re-examine his compassionless behaviour in life when faced with extreme adversity in purgatory.

"It's a piece that makes you think about the way you are living your life," Tétrault said. "I think I have compassion (unlike his CEO) but I often feel guilty because I'm so absorbed by my work with the company and don't think I spend enough time with my family."

The artists' circus skills are woven into the dramatic, and at times humorous, fabric of *La Vie*.

Tétrault said the tent's tiny, circular, cabaret stage and the proximity of spectators creates a rapport with the audience.

"The end is powerful. With people sitting so close to the stage, I can see their faces, and I've seen people in the

What: *La Vie*, presented by Les 7 doigts de la main
When and where: May 15 to 17, Canadian Tulip Festival Mirror Tent, grounds of Ottawa City Hall.

Languages and times: May 15, 7:30 p.m., English; May 16, 10 p.m., English; May 17, 10 p.m., French

Tickets: \$38 general; \$58 reserved section. Call: 613-599-3267.
Tulip Festival: The Canadian Tulip Festival continues through May 18. Venues include Tulip Festival Mirror Tent on Ottawa City Hall grounds on Laurier Avenue and Dominion-Chalmers Church. For more information: tulipfestival.ca

Online: Check out our website for features and a schedule of events. ottawacitizen.com/entertainment

audience moved to tears. I've been moved to tears."

As for the brief nudity, Tétrault said, it's "not nudity of a sexual nature. It plays a role in a really good joke. We do keep the irreverence of the cabaret."

In her review of *La Vie* for the *Gazette*, Greenaway praised it as "a thoroughly entertaining show you won't forget anytime soon. *La Vie* is about death and about all those dirty little secrets we harbour while alive. It is at times raunchy and makes no apologies for its adult-cabaret tone."

Greenaway praised the "crisp, darkly comic script" and said "tucked into the tight scenario are amazing circus feats performed by skilled artists ..."

Those feats, she said, include "a stunning contortion and aerial fabric combo ... a beautiful balancing routine and tango segment and a tipping clown ... surviving hellish pratfalls of all sorts, balancing anything tossed his direction. The defining moment of the show came at the very end with a stunning pas de deux featuring Sebastien Soldevila and the exquisite femme fatale Emilie Bonnavaud. It was theatre circus at its most extreme, most memorable and most artistic. Emotional, brash, subtle, violent, perfect, touching and technically astounding," Greenaway wrote in her review.

"There is an elegance to the way 7 doigts de la main creates. The tricks are there, but only to serve the larger narrative. Long live *La Vie*."

Sleepless in Sweden

Kenneth Branagh does some of his own detective work in researching his latest TV role

BY BECKY KRISTAL

Kurt Wallander might look like your typical overworked police officer. But for actor Kenneth Branagh, becoming that character involved a thorough study of how to appear appropriately dishevelled and exhausted.

"I did a whole sleep graph for Wallander ... and he rarely has two hours at a time," Branagh said. "He's always waking up in the middle of the night in the grip of a case. He is utterly preoccupied to the detriment, obviously, of his personal life."

Branagh plays the Swedish detective in three new TV mysteries on PBS, and he said he developed the persona based on his impressions of several Wallander novels by Henning Mankell that he had first read for fun.

On top of the sleep graph, the first-person scouting included contemplating how often Wallander would shave — "not very often, I can tell you," Branagh laughed. And he shopped on location for Wallander's clothes, probably

Wallander, 9 p.m., May 10, May 17 and May 31, PBS

a foreign concept for a detective who is perpetually in need of a clean shirt.

Viewers will be able to chart the course of Wallander's stress over the three 90-minute episodes airing as part of *Masterpiece Mystery!* Wallander may end up joining PBS' rotating detective lineup: three more episodes will be shot this summer.

Branagh, an Oscar-nominated and Emmy-winning actor-director-producer whose previous roles include Henry V and Franklin D. Roosevelt, took some time to do a little more detective-worthy analysis of Wallander.

What kind of pressure did you feel in playing a character both you and other readers felt so attached to?

I knew that there (were) the imaginations of the many readers of the books that would have their own Wallander. And then there are some Swedish television ver-

sions. There are German television versions. So I did feel a keen sense of responsibility, but I suppose I decided — and Henning Mankell encouraged this — to follow my own instincts.

What do you like about Wallander?

There's a sort of deep-seated ordinariness about him. He's not heroic. He doesn't have, like many fictional police and some real ones perhaps, any particular kind of front, or particularity that he puts on to do his job. He cannot help but be himself, and himself is a very flawed individual.

Why does he take all of his cases so personally?

He's very aware of the fragility and the preciousness of life. He continues to be, in a way that of course isn't very helpful to him as a human being, to be astonished by the capacity in other human beings to perform acts of violence or acts of cruelty. And I think he almost perversely decides that he must allow himself to take it personally.

What role does the Swedish scenery play in the storytelling?

I had a strong sense that people were more introspective and more reflective in that part of the world. Most of



In the seaside town of Ystad, Sweden, Inspector Kurt Wallander (Kenneth Branagh) has been solving heinous crimes for his entire middle-aged career in the PBS drama Wallander.

them live on the coast. If you go inland, you can drive for miles and miles and miles without seeing anyone and barely without seeing a building. I think that that has an impact on people, and I think that it's an atmosphere that engenders and encourages reflection.

What can make Wallander happy?

What I think is going to be interesting to see ... is that he does begin to understand — and what's very touching about him, I think — is that he does try and do something about his isolation. He does try and do something about

his dysfunction. ... One of the things I think the audience is going to enjoy as we do some more is just seeing this character try and just sort of lead a more normal life, have more social contact. Washing his clothes more regularly.

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