



The Ritz-Carlton, Chicago Review



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Though the Chicago area has been my home for decades, the view from the Water Tower Suite on the 26th floor of [The Ritz-Carlton, Chicago](#) made me gasp. I had admired Chicago's dramatic skyline many times, but never from this angle. Through expansive windows, the skyscrapers of

900 N. Michigan Ave. and the John Hancock Center, now named 875 North Michigan Avenue, rose to my right. Far below, the landmark Chicago Water Tower nestled in a ring of trees. One of the few survivors of the Great Chicago Fire, a turning point in the city's history being remembered on its 150th anniversary in 2021, the Gothic Revival relic resembled a fairy-tale castle in a children's playset.

Architecture and art figure significantly in a recently completed \$100 million renovation of the luxury Gold Coast hotel. The transformation by San Francisco-based, award-winning design firm BAMO showcases the city's architectural innovation through striking modern art and design in guestrooms and shared spaces. A minimalistic approach to 434 refashioned guestrooms and suites allows city skyline and Lake Michigan views to shine through extra-large picture windows.

Guestrooms range from 380 to 1,500 square feet and in nightly rates from around \$450 to \$1,500. All rooms come with Nespresso coffeemakers, down duvets, thick terry robes and slippers. Guests in club accommodations have access to The Ritz-Carlton Club Lounge with a dedicated concierge and five food and beverage offerings throughout the day incorporating taste of Chicago food presentations and craft cocktails. Club hours currently are limited to Fridays from 4 p.m. to Sundays at 11:30 a.m.

The Ritz-Carlton, Chicago's location makes it a fine base for exploring the city. It adjoins Water Tower Place Mall on Chicago's Magnificent Mile and sits kitty-corner from the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. Lookingglass Theatre Company, temporarily closed by the pandemic, is across the street in the old Water Tower Pumping Station. Oak Street Beach is a short walk away.

I enjoyed a late lunch at Torali, a modern Italian steakhouse off the 12th-floor lobby and came back in the evening for a cocktail and appetizer in its copper-clad bar. When weather permits, drinks and shared plates can be enjoyed on The Rooftop at Torali overlooking the Magnificent Mile, not from the roof but from the 12th-floor terrace. Just inside, natural light floods the greenhouse-inspired The Café, offering coffee, sandwiches and sweets. For banquets and meetings, the hotel has 25,000 square feet of space including the city's largest luxury category ballroom accommodating 900 participants.

Guests can book a variety of custom offers and experiences. Wellness Seeker, for example, includes a \$100 spa credit and \$100 in food and beverages. The Shopaholic offer comes with savings at the nearby 900 North Michigan Shops. For families, the hotel partnered with American Girl Doll in Water Tower Place to offer children a keepsake and doll bed to take home. Families find child-sized robes and child toiletries in guestrooms and can book spa treatments for kids. Experiences for the upcoming December holidays include peppermint pedicures, cookie decorating with Pastry Chef Toni Roberts, holiday afternoon tea, and Christmas dinner with carving stations, seafood display and an array of desserts.

Pampering and fitness take over the hotel's 11th floor. The Ritz-Carlton Spa has five treatment rooms and a menu of facials, massages and nail services. Natural light pours through a glass atrium above a 52-foot lap pool. State-of-the-art equipment in the fitness center hugs a corner

with oversized windows. There's that impressive view, again, this time facing Lake Michigan and Navy Pier so guests can time a workout to lapping waves and the spinning of the pier's Ferris wheel.

The Ritz-Carlton, Chicago

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