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Which state is called The Show-Me State? [GeoQuiz answer, Page 3](#)

Chicago Tribune TRAVEL



BISHA HOTEL TORONTO

TORONTO'S HOTEL SCENE HEATS UP

The city boasts 4 exciting newcomers in 4 different areas

The rooftop pool area at the very stylish Bisha Hotel Toronto is a glamorous spot to take a dip or just catch some rays on a sunny day; it offers superb views of the downtown area.

By **JIM BYERS** | Chicago Tribune

TORONTO — Four distinct hotels. Four different areas of the city.

Toronto has been lauded the last few years for its expanding food scene. Now the hotels are catching up, offering visitors a variety of places to sleep after a fine meal, a ballgame or a visit to the Toronto International Film Festival in September.

Here's a look at four cutting-edge places that have opened their doors recently.

Bisha Hotel Toronto

This is the sexy star of the bunch: a hotel from Toronto nightclub owner Charles Khabouth, whose nickname as a boy in Lebanon was Bisha. Front-desk workers wear slick, black leather jackets, and the hotel's signature scent is piped in as a welcoming embrace. The 96 rooms feature more shades of black and white, and welcome splashes of bold purples or burnt orange, as well as a black metal cart to hold your in-room liquor. You'll find prints from Andy Warhol on the walls and cool shots of rock stars and celebrities. Nestled in the city's entertainment district, it's unlike any other lodging in the city and feels more South Beach than North of the Border. One of the floors was designed by rock star Lenny Kravitz. The lobby's Mister C Bar Room is dark and lush, and prob-



ROBERTO MACHADO NOA/LIGHTROCKET

"Red Rocket" streetcars rumble past The Broadview Hotel, which opened last year in Toronto.

ably best appreciated in winter. In better weather, head to the rooftop pool for fab city views and to soak up some rays, or enjoy a meal at the sunny Kost restaurant. Another restaurant, Akira Back, is one of the best dining spots in the city, serving ahi pizza and a sushi roll with foie gras. Weekend rates in mid-July were listed around \$325 a night.

The Broadview Hotel

This handsome 1891 structure housed a notorious strip club only a few years ago and had fallen into disrepair. Designers and architects did a magnificent job bringing the building back to life, putting up wallpaper in the main floor restaurant that's based on one of the 19 or so original layers they found during restoration work.

Rooms contain a "lovers kit" with ticklers and other trinkets that recall the building's naughty past. The hotel is a nice boost for the Leslieville area of Toronto, a trendy district a couple of miles east of — and an easy streetcar ride away from — downtown. Several outdoor spaces overlook downtown's growing skyline and the rumbling "Red Rocket" streetcars on Queen Street East. The 58

rooms feature hardwood floors, turntables and white-noise machines, among other bells and whistles. My minibar offerings included spicy ketchup chips — a supremely Canadian snack. The main floor restaurant, The Civic, has a Queen Victoria-era feel, with forest-green walls and comfy chairs. The cod was good, while the rabbit was sensational, cooked sous vide until it fell off the bone and served with spelt to soak up the juices. Rooms in July typically start at about \$240.

Hotel X Toronto

This property comes from the folks at Library Hotel Collection, whose portfolio includes highly regarded boutique properties in New York City, Prague and Budapest. The hotel is a mile or so west of downtown on the city's Exhibition Place grounds, where you'll find the annual Canadian National Exhibition fair (Aug. 17 to Sept. 3) and BMO Field, home of the Toronto FC soccer team and the Canadian Football League's Toronto Argonauts. The sports theme continues at the hotel, as it's connected to a massive athletic complex called TenX, outfitted with four indoor tennis courts, nine squash courts, hot-yoga facilities and more amenities available to hotel guests. The lodging boasts an art gallery, a 250-seat theater and an intimate screening room, making it a

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Toronto's lodging heats up

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place that works in all seasons. Rooms and public areas showcase spectacular nature photography from a Canadian artist. The 404-room hotel has an *au courant*, spacious design and at least a half-dozen outdoor patios. The rooftop includes several bars, a year-round pool and a lawn area for lazing. Views of the city skyline and Lake Ontario are fantastic. Part of the hotel is built on the foundation of a 19th-century military barracks,



HOTEL X TORONTO

Nature photography by a Canadian artist adorns the rooms at Hotel X Toronto.

which you can see through a glass floor. One of the former military buildings next door is being refurbished and will hold a restaurant and craft brew-

ery starting next year. Maxx's Kitchen is a casual, sunny spot on the second floor open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. A new Mediterranean restaurant

is in the works. The hotel offers free transportation to downtown Toronto and Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, served by Porter Airlines. Rooms in mid-

July are around \$275.

The Anndore House

This boutique spot near Yonge and Bloor streets sits at what's arguably the crossroads of the city, where the two Toronto Transit Commission subway lines meet. The hotel, which opened this spring, is less than a 10-minute walk to the posh Yorkville area and Bloor West Village shopping district. Rooms have comfy leather chairs and Crosley turntables that are compatible with iPhones. You'll find 113 rooms on 11 floors, ranging in size from 225 square feet up to a roomy 550 for a master suite. White shutters give the huge windows a nice, homey touch. The restaurant, Constantine,

focuses on what's billed as Middle Eastern favorites made with Italian techniques. Look for sea bream wrapped in circles around artichokes and charred tomatoes, a variety of pastas and tender short ribs with Middle Eastern spices. For weekend brunch, try the toasted sourdough with ricotta, poached pears, honey and marjoram. The restaurant is a pretty space, surrounded by hundreds of brilliantly lit white vases. The hotel bar features a variety of craft cocktails, such as the Isla Desierta, made with Canadian whiskey, Campari, coconut-ginger syrup, lemon and a spritz of smoky Laphroaig Scotch. Rooms in July start at \$211.

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