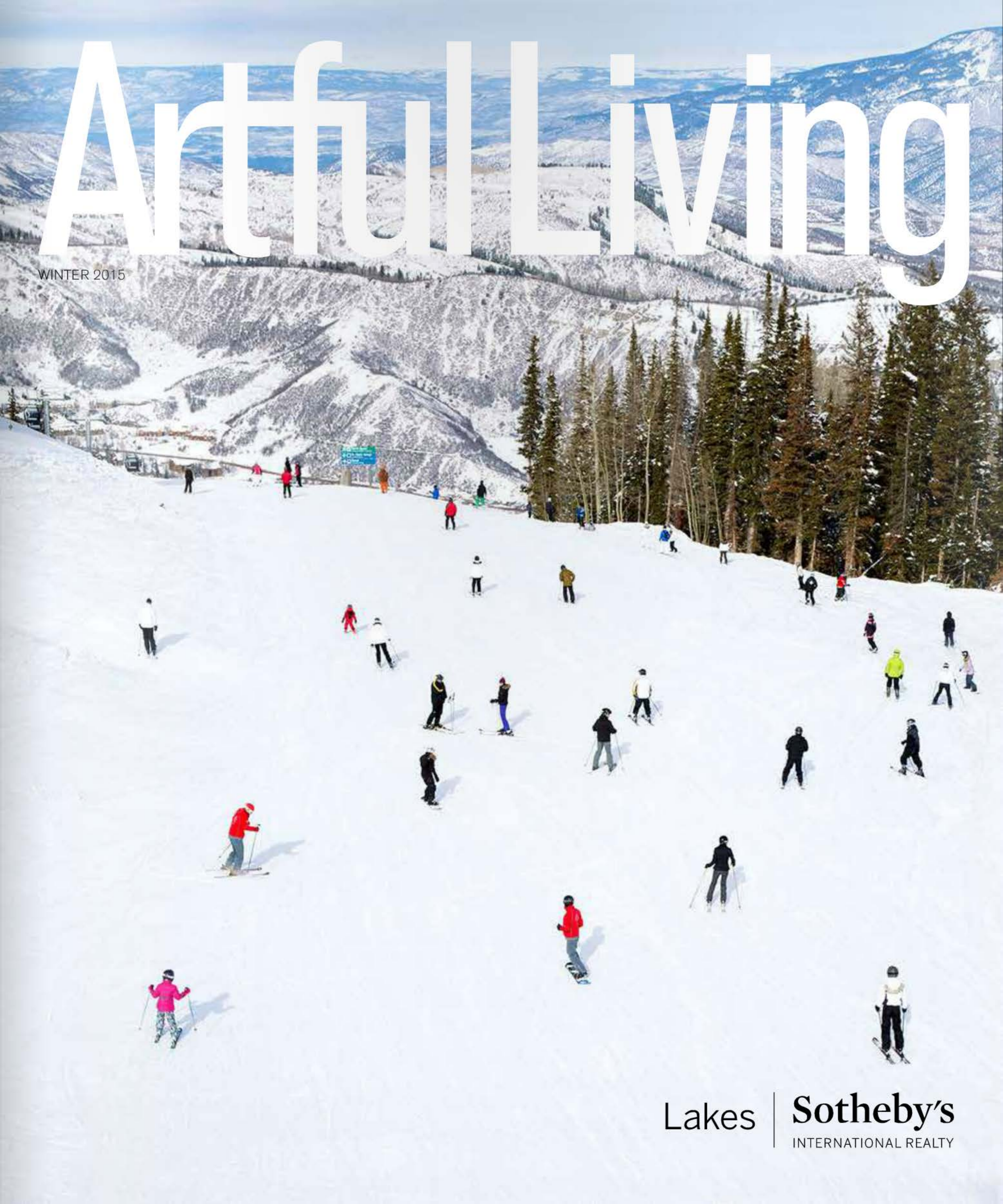


Artful Living

WINTER 2015



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INTERNATIONAL REALTY



French Connection

Escape to Montreal for a worldly long weekend. | BY KATE NELSON

Montreal's appeal is palpable: Old-world charm blends with big-city buzz. French is the city's official language, which makes a quick getaway feel like a trip across the pond. An intersection of history, arts, food and fashion earns Montreal its rightful designation as Canada's cultural capital.

There's no better place to enjoy the bon-vivant lifestyle than the iconic Ritz-Carlton. The first hotel to bear the luxury chain's name, the "Grand Dame of Sherbrooke Street" has hosted visiting dignitaries and celebrities for more than a century. (Case in point: In 1964, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton tied the knot in the 4,700-square-foot Royal Suite, a favorite among illustrious guests.) The AAA five-diamond hotel recently underwent a \$200-million renovation to blend the latest amenities with the splendor of the past.

Let the concierge plan your stay, including in-room massage services. Revel in the state-of-the-art technology throughout the spacious guest rooms: window shades that adjust with the touch of a button, thermostats that remember temperature preferences and light sensors that know when guests enter the room. And don't miss the finest meal in the city, conveniently served just downstairs at celebrity chef Daniel Boulud's Maison Boulud.



Ask to be seated overlooking the beautifully manicured garden, a view available even in winter thanks to the 46-seat glass greenhouse just off the main dining room. Opt for the five-course prix-fixe menu (available even if the seasonal, local menu doesn't list it) to fully enjoy the eatery's modern spin on French culinary traditions.

The best way to bid adieu to your new favorite French city? The Ritz-Carlton's long-standing afternoon tea held in the famous Palm Court, complete with a selection of fine teas alongside homemade canapés, scones and pastries. **AL**