

CHECKING IN

History meets chic hospitality

EXchange Hotel offers sophisticated stay

ANDREW MCCREDIE

Oh, if this barrel vault lobby could talk. There'd be fables of fortunes won and lost. Stories of scams and scoundrels. Tall tales of golden opportunities and whispered secrets of can't miss ventures.

From 1929 to 1947, this lobby witnessed the comings and goings of city's business elite as the entranceway to the Vancouver Stock Exchange Building at 475 Howe Street. The building opened in the summer of 1929, just months before Black Monday and the stock market crash, and was designed by Fred Townley and Robert T. Matheson, architects who a half-decade later would create their magnum opus, Vancouver's art deco city hall. According to This Week in History reporter John Mackie, who wrote about the building

in 2020, the stock exchange building was described as "gothic" at the time of its opening but today is considered in the deco style.

The Vancouver Stock Exchange is no more, having ceased operation in 1999, but the glorious building that served as its home during the Depression and Second World War lives on as the EXchange Hotel, a four-star hotel with 201 rooms and suites, penthouses and an executive floor and club lounge.

And while precious few touchstones to the one-time financial centre remain, that glorious lobby does and greets guests who enter the hotel off Howe Street. The medieval English heraldry and symbols decorating the ceiling are as fresh today as they were nearly a century



Hydra Vancouver Estiatorio Mediterranean is the EXchange Hotel's in-house restaurant and offers great Greek food and an excellent wine list. HYDRA VANCOUVER

ago thanks to the painstaking work of a volunteer who spent hundreds of hours recreating the original. Her work was not in vain, as guest after guest

entering the lobby cast their eyes upward as they awaited the elevator that would take them to the check-in floor.

I don't how many times I

have walked by this building, with no inkling that such a historic piece of Vancouver was mere metres away, so I too lingered a little longer

when I arrived at the EXchange Hotel.

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