



THE GOLDEN KEYS

Unlocking Extraordinary Experiences with Les Clefs d'Or Concierges



The world of luxury hospitality is a realm where discerning travellers spare no expense in their quest for the finest accommodations. The allure of prime locations and opulent amenities often guides their choices. However, there is an essential element that can transform a hotel stay from merely luxurious to truly extraordinary - the presence of a Les Clefs d'Or concierge.

Les Clefs d'Or, translated as "The Golden Keys," the keys that can open any door, represents an association of elite hotel concierges. These individuals are highly experienced and

knowledgeable in the realm of hotel concierge services, possessing a remarkable wealth of expertise and extensive professional connections. They are recognized as the most reliable local experts and ambassadors for their respective destinations. With an unwavering commitment to excellence and an adamant refusal to say "no," they embody a service philosophy built on the cornerstone of surpassing expectations. Their personalized service and unique ability to open doors inaccessible to others sets them apart.

You can easily spot a Clefs d'Or concierge by the distinctive symbol they proudly display on their uniforms - the crossed golden keys. Encountering a concierge adorned with the pin of two golden keys on their lapel is like hitting the jackpot—a gateway to a world of unparalleled assistance and bespoke experiences.

In this article, we not only delve into the history of the prestigious professional association of hotel concierges that now boasts more than 3,400 members spread across more than 80 countries and 530 destinations worldwide. We will also introduce and chat with the National President of Les Clefs d'Or Canada, Dillon Carfoot of the Oak Bay Beach Hotel in Victoria, BC.

The History

The roots of Les Clefs d'Or trace back



to October 6, 1929, when Pierre Quentin, Head Concierge at the renowned Hotel Ambassador in Paris, joined forces with ten fellow concierges from prominent establishments in the city. Recognizing the value of collaboration and the power of pooling their knowledge and connections, they embarked on a mission to enhance the indispensability of their services. This led to the formation of the first-ever association dedicated to concierges. The Founder General Assembly held on November 27, 1929, witnessed over a hundred members uniting under the Les Clefs d'Or banner.

Over the years, the association flourished and expanded its reach. In 1936, Les Clefs d'Or found its headquarters at 12 rue Cambon in Paris, becoming the hub of its operations. The pivotal moment arrived in April 1952, when delegates from nine countries convened in Cannes under the patronage of Ferdinand Gillet, Chief Concierge of the prestigious Hôtel Scribe in Paris. This historic congress marked the birth of "U.E.P.G.H." - L'Union Europeene des Portiers des Grands Hotels, known today as Les



Clefs d'Or. Gillet, hailed as the "Father" of the organization, played a pivotal role in its formation.

The emblematic Golden Keys, now an internationally recognized symbol, were adopted as the official badge of Les Clefs d'Or in 1953.

What started as a purely European organization swiftly transcended boundaries. By 1970, Les Clefs d'Or had expanded its membership to 16 countries. The association's 20th International Congress in 1972 marked a significant turning point, as it transitioned from a solely European entity to an international

powerhouse. This expansion allowed countries such as Canada, Singapore, and Brazil to join the esteemed ranks of Les Clefs d'Or.

At the 42nd International Congress in January 1995, the organization underwent an official name change, becoming the "Union Internationale des Clefs d'Or," and later adopting the full name of "Union Internationale des Concierges d'Hotels Les Clefs d'Or." This alteration reflected the association's global reach and reinforced its commitment to excellence in the art of hotel concierge service. In 1998, esteemed Swiss jeweller Bucherer created the official version that we now see on the lapels of these exceptional concierges.

Today, Les Clefs d'Or continues to stand as the epitome of unparalleled service, where the motto "In Service through Friendship" guides the actions of its esteemed members. As guests embark on their journey to find the perfect hotel experience, they

should not overlook the immense value of a Les Clefs d'Or concierge. These extraordinary individuals possess the golden keys that unlock unforgettable moments and turn ordinary stays into cherished memories. So, next time you encounter the crossed golden keys, prepare to immerse yourself in a world of extraordinary service, where the impossible becomes possible, courtesy of Les Clefs d'Or.



Dillon Carfoot, National President
Oak Bay Beach Hotel in Victoria, BC

In September 1975, 6 concierges from the best hotels in Toronto decided to create the Association Les Clefs d'Or Canada and in 1976, Canada was the first section to join Les Clefs d'Or outside of Europe. Today, the 92 members of Les Clefs d'Or Canada form one of the largest member sections in the world, passionately assisting guests in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Niagara, Montreal, Quebec City and Atlantic.

Elected in May 2023 as the President of Les Clefs d'Or Canada, Dillon Carfoot has previously completed two terms as National Vice President, demonstrating his leadership and dedication within the organization.

With a career spanning over two decades, Dillon's journey in the concierge industry began in 2001. He made history as the first Les Clefs d'Or concierge at the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge in 2004, initially as an apprentice member. In 2006, Dillon achieved full membership while working at the renowned Fairmont Empress in Victoria, BC.

Dillon's commitment to Les Clefs d'Or Canada extends beyond his personal achievements. He served on the BC regional board, progressing from Regional Treasurer to Vice Director and ultimately becoming the Director of the BC Region. His contributions fostered collaboration and upheld the values of Les Clefs d'Or in British Columbia.

With an impressive participation in 22 National, Pan American, and International Congresses, Dillon has gained invaluable knowledge and forged lasting friendships within the industry. These esteemed events have allowed him to network with industry leaders and bring back fresh insights to his work at the hotel.

"For the last 21 years, I have tried to give back as much as I have received from this wonderful association, and I will continue to do that for as long as possible," Dillon states. "None of my achievements would have been possible without the unwavering support of the Oak Bay Beach Hotel and General Manager Madone Pelan," he adds.

Dillon Carfoot's exceptional achievements, extensive experience, and unwavering dedication to the concierge profession solidify his position as a leader within the hospitality industry. Vive Les Clefs d'Or!