

A Home With History

An Interview with Reginald Archambault, General Manager, The Rittenhouse

EDITORS' NOTE *Reginald Archambault started his career in the hospitality industry in 1991 serving as restaurant manager at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island in Florida. He quickly moved up the ranks of The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, holding senior leadership positions at The Ritz-Carlton's San Francisco and Cleveland hotels. In 1998, Archambault made the move to Philadelphia, serving as Assistant Director of Food and Beverage for two years at the former Four Seasons Philadelphia hotel. He went on to serve as Director of Food and Beverage at Four Seasons Hotels in Nevis, Aviara, San Diego, California and Toronto. After eight years with Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, Archambault held hotel manager positions at Luxe Sunset Boulevard Hotel and Hotel Bel-Air, both in Los Angeles. He made the move back to Philadelphia in 2012 to assume his current role as general manager of The Rittenhouse. Archambault earned his BA degree in English from the University of Rhode Island.*



Reginald Archambault

generations of young Philadelphians were educated. In the late 1960s, architect Donald Reiff drew up the angled design of the current building, which has offered stunning views of the Square and the city for the maximum number of guests since opening its doors in 1989. Today, it remains one of the most historic hotels in Philadelphia with much of the charm of the hotel's original design still reflected amongst striking and modern upgrades that have been made by way of renovations that took place in 2012 and 2018.

Will you provide an overview of the suite product at The Rittenhouse, and do you see the suite offering as a differentiator for the property?

Of our 118 guestrooms, The Rittenhouse boasts an impressive 24 suites ranging from 650 to 1729 square feet, many of which have been recently updated to reflect the timeless elegance of the hotel while maintaining a relaxed, home-like feel. The unique configurations and generous size of our suites are a clear differentiator for The Rittenhouse, as is our appointment on the edge

of Rittenhouse Square and proximity to the key sights of the city. Each of our suites boasts separate living and sleeping areas and stunning views of either the city or the park with ample natural light that makes you truly feel at home. Uniquely, we can work with our guests to combine our suites into configurations that work best for their stay. For example, guests can choose to reserve all of our third-floor suites to create a private four-room wing, which includes three King One Bedroom Park Suites and our Premier Park Suite, perfect for families or larger groups.

How has The Rittenhouse approached its restaurant/food and beverage offerings and what are the keys to being successful in this part of the business?

In a food-obsessed city like Philadelphia, it's been important for us to continue to evolve our food and beverage offerings while staying true to our roots. Our fine-dining outpost, Lacroix, debuted in 2002 under the leadership of culinary visionary, chef Jean-Marie LaCroix. Over 20 years later, his sophisticated approach to serving up local, seasonal, and fresh ingredients with meticulous presentation still guides the ethos of the restaurant under the leadership

PROPERTY BRIEF *The Rittenhouse (rittenhouse hotel.com) is a Forbes Five-Star, Independent Collection® Hotels & Resorts property and member of The Leading Hotels of the World. Located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the property is a standout among luxury hotels in Philadelphia's Center City, offering visitors a Forbes Five-Star experience with well-appointed rooms and suites, world-class service, and the most desirable location in town. From food and beverage experiences at the award-winning Lacroix and Scarpetta to the Library Bar and Bar 210 to the urban wellness oasis that is The Rittenhouse Spa & Club, the property offers personalized experiences and provides the perfect balance of sophistication and relaxation.*

Will you discuss the history of The Rittenhouse and how the property has evolved?

We like to say that The Rittenhouse is a home with history because it's had many incarnations over the years. That's part of what makes the hotel a real part of the fabric of its community, Rittenhouse Square, which was named after celebrated Philadelphian David Rittenhouse. The property on which The Rittenhouse now stands was first a mansion owned by Pennsylvania Railroad magnate A.J. Cassatt before being sold to the Episcopal Church of Pennsylvania, which established the Academy of Notre Dame, where



Lacroix Main Dining Room at The Rittenhouse

of our executive chef Eric Leveillee, who also oversees the culinary programming for the hotel. His exceptional and innovative menus, including our famed 6-7 course Carte Blanche and Sunday Brunch spread, served alongside unique cocktails and robust selection of beer and wine, honor the Lacroix legacy. In the lobby, The Library Bar, which opened in 2013 as a refined hideaway for a cozy cocktail for those “in the know,” has become a true destination for those seeking innovative concoctions served in an intimate setting. Afternoon Tea at the Mary Cassatt Tea Room, named in honor of Philadelphia impressionist Mary Cassatt, also debuted in 2013 with an elevated menu of custom blended teas and inventive sweet and savory dishes to complement. Today, both The Library Bar and Mary Cassatt Tea Room have become must-do Philadelphia experiences for locals and visitors alike. To round out our culinary experiences, Scarpetta opened its doors in 2016 bringing LDV Hospitality’s approach to modern-Italian cooking to Philadelphia. Guests can enjoy casually elegant Italian fare from the second-floor dining room overlooking the Square or a few light bites and beverages during happy hour at the bar. Within all of our dining outlets, we continue to seek new ways to reach our customers through timely and authentic events and activations, whether that’s a stunning floral installation in honor of Philadelphia’s famous Flower Show in The Library Bar or our monthly chef collaboration dinners at Lacroix, where chef Leveillee invites peers from around the city and beyond into his kitchen for an evening of fun.

How do you define a true luxury hotel experience and how important is it to provide personalized service and a customized guest experience?

In 2024, The Rittenhouse was once again honored to receive the prestigious Forbes Travel



The Library

Guide Five-Star rating. We are also the first and only independent Forbes Five-Star hotel in Philadelphia for two consecutive years, which is a clear testament to our unwavering commitment to luxury hospitality. While our luxury amenities certainly set us apart, it’s the authentic Philadelphia experience and memorable moments we create for our guests that make us shine. We define a true luxury hotel experience as one that starts even before you walk through our doors and we pride ourselves on offering our guests the utmost attention to detail and unparalleled service. Our staff goes the extra mile to attend to guests’

needs, from overnight shoe shining and to-go coffee to luxury Jaguar driver service and complimentary in-room amenities for our young guests, like in-room movies and popcorn and child-sized bathrobes at turndown time.

Did you always know that the hotel business was where you wanted to spend your career?

I had no intention of getting into hospitality early on. I earned a BA degree in English with the idea that I would become a teacher and, throughout school, held various jobs in food and beverage, starting as a dishwasher/busser/prep cook before moving to serving and bartending. A fellow server and good friend of mine graduated college ahead of me and got a job as a sales manager with the Ritz-Carlton in Naples, Florida. I visited him and was struck by how well orchestrated service was at that hotel and the level of professionalism and warmth in service. At the time, they were interviewing for the opening of the Ritz-Carlton Amelia Island and I was offered a job as an assistant cafe manager. I took it, thinking it would be a good experience for a year or two. I have been managing luxury hotels ever since.

What advice do you offer to young people interested in pursuing a career in hospitality?

The best advice I can give to anyone who is just starting out in any career is to discover what you truly enjoy doing and commit to yourself being the best you can be at that. When you love what you do, it really doesn’t feel like work and the relationships you make and experiences you have will open one door after the other. I am very fortunate to work in an environment where we are able to impact people’s lives positively every day. This goes for co-workers as well as our guests. People never forget their experiences at great hotels and to play a part in delivering those memories is a gift. ●



Deluxe King City View Suite