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## **Air Canada, WestJet, Porter prepare for big storm...Drake Hotel romance in T.O.**

### **DRAKE HOTEL TORONTO HAPPENINGS**

Star man Adrian Brijbassi was over at the Drake Hotel the other day, checking things out in advance of Valentine's Day. Here's his report.



With all that snow expected, the Drake Hotel's Apres Ski Lodge actually seems apropos and not just clever marketing. The Drake is in the habit of keeping things cool and the Ski Lodge is another example. On Fridays and Saturdays in winter, the Sky Yard covered patio — which in the summer is packed with diners — is turned into a cozy space with a bonfire, blankets and roasting marshmallows. Things get cooking on the second floor from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. both nights. There's a vintage Ski-Doo and a functioning fireplace to add to the ambience.

Highlights are the specialty cocktails: Drake Nog with White Chocolate S'mores, boozy hot chocolate and others. It's the third winter for the Ski Lodge and the property just keeps going with this blend of modern and retro, trendy and traditional, cool and stunningly unpretentious.

"We're always on the hunt for fun new ideas at Drake and our climate-defiant Apres Ski Lodge is no exception," says Rachelle Stark, a publicist for the lodge campaign.

Along with the Ski Lodge, the hotel has a culinary tour on Mondays and a Trivia Night on Wednesdays that draws a crowd. For Valentine's Day, they've got a Pillow Fight promotion that lets guests invite their "lover to sleep over at Drake with a custom invitation in the form of a goose down pillow that will be delivered to their door in advance of your stay". Maybe not the thing for a first date, but it is fun and cheeky.



And the Drake also has its mainstays: the sexy lounge restaurant whose menu reminds visitors they can get a room; the Underground that's home to concerts and readings midweek and late-night clubbing on the weekends; the Corner Café and Bistro reminiscent of an old school American diner; and, of course, the rooms that have made it one of the most acclaimed hotels in our city. With it all, it manages to appeal to a lot of people without losing its cred. You can be sure there are local hipsters who wouldn't hang out with 905ers and tourists anywhere else in the city but the Drake.