



**Lisa Davis**

[Luxury Travel Examiner](#)

At the tender age of six months, Lisa Davis took her first flight and did it in style: First class, first row. Lisa's five-star discoveries have appeared in major publications and on national radio and TV shows. Have a luxury travel find? E-mail Lisa at [lisadavismedia\(at\)yahoo\(dot\)com](mailto:lisadavismedia(at)yahoo(dot)com).

## Historic luxury hotel Palmer House Hilton finishes renovations and opens new restaurant and lounge

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The Palmer House Hilton (17 E. Monroe St.) is one of Chicago's grand dame landmarks. (Did you know it was once the largest hotel in the world?) Located in Chicago's Loop area, this historic luxury hotel was where my great, great grandfather Eugene L'Hote spent many nights when he was president of the Illinois Press Association and is now where I dine and soon will sleep and "spa" with completion of the hotel's much-needed multi-million dollar renovation that included renovating more than 1,000 guest rooms (with French baroque touches) and the 11-room penthouse. A new Spa Chakra and fitness center were also added.

For dining, the Palmer House Hilton created a new lobby-level restaurant called Lockwood named after the hotel's founder Potter Palmer's wife Bertha Honoré's beloved brother Lockwood, known for his innovative ideas and positive impact on Chicago's history, and a new bar that replaced the tiki-inspired Trader Vic's called Potter's Lounge named after Potter Palmer himself who originally built the hotel as a gift for his bride, Bertha.

I recently had a chance to dine at Lockwood Restaurant and Potter's Lounge. (In a separate column, I will review the hotel's new rooms and spa.)

### **Lockwood Restaurant**

Lockwood is about contemporary cuisine rooted in French and Italian traditions and is headed by chef, Chef Phillip Foss.

Some of my favorite dishes that Foss does brilliantly include the Hot & Cold Tomato appetizer (\$12) with consommé, granité, mini caprese, and basil - the dish comes with a tomato sorbet with basil and a warm tomato consommé that you pour over the sorbet to wake up the basil, topped with a garlic croustade that soaks up the soup; Canolli (\$12) with prosciutto, crenshaw melon, tarentaise cheese, almond and truffle honey; and the Slow



Cooked Scottish Salmon (\$34) with hearts of celery, haricots vert, figs, walnuts.

For dessert, Executive Pastry Chef Fabrice François Bouet came up with nine to 10 "classy" desserts that are made from scratch, and are also made with a twist, such as "caviar" made out of chocolate and pistachio and a brownie paired with chocolate wine ice cream. Interestingly, the Palmer House Hilton created the brownie 120 years ago when the hotel's pastry chef was asked to make a dessert that could be taken on a picnic.

Lockwood has a well-edited list of reds, whites, and sparkling wines and includes 1,200 bottles displayed in a wine tasting room, with 20 selections by the glass. The list is updated weekly. Lockwood also featured regular wine tastings and dinners.

### **Potter's Lounge**

Potter's is a great place for cocktails and an appetizer. Some of my favorite cocktails include the Pomegranate Orange Crush with Van Gogh Pomegranate Vodka, orange juice and Ginger Ale; the Strawberry Basil Margarita with Patron Silver, Cointreau, fresh strawberry and basil balsamic. Both of these cocktails are \$13. I also like the Orange Blossom with Van Gogh Orange Vodka, Gran Marnier, Creme de Cacao, Amaretto, and these yummy Cholives - chocolate olives with a hint of orange juice (\$14).



Food wise, you can't go wrong with a bowl of truffled potatoe chips (\$6); Potter's bruchetta is to die-for with this addictive farmer's bread that is moist and chewy and comes with three toppings, including red and yellow tomatoes; portabella; and heirloom tomatoe and mozerella (\$12); the Caprese salad with fresh heirloom tomatoes, buffalo mozzarella, argula and shaved parmesean (\$12); or Bertha's Famous Brownie that comes with a glasss of chocolate mousse, chocolate ice cream and a chocolate-shiraz sace (\$10). <http://www.potterschicago.com/>

If you do stay the night at the Palmer House Hilton, it is good to know that it is within walking distance to the Art Institute of Chicago, Grant Park, Millennium Park, Navy Pier and the upscale stores on State Street and Michigan Avenue,