

# New upscale hotel in Canandaigua offers modern amenities with a nod to the past

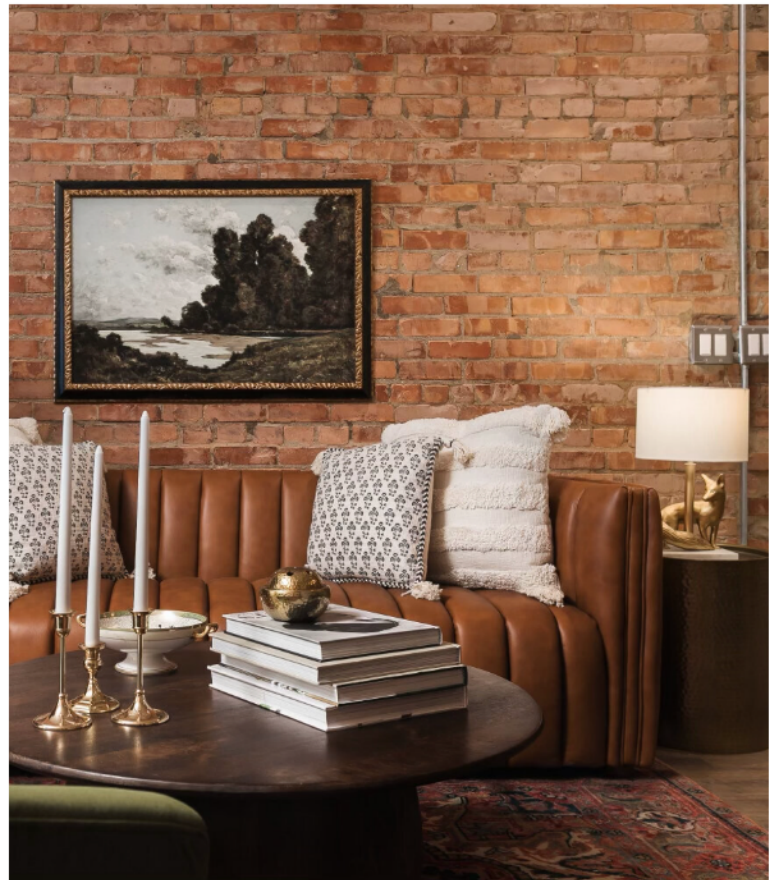
ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT & CHRONICLE - WRITTEN BY MIKE MURPHY

CANANDAIGUA, NY – Back when Danielle Clement and David Lefebvre started dating, he performed a card trick for her. She picked a card, then placed it back in the deck at which point he struck the deck and the cards went flying, all except for one.

Clement held the card she chose, the two of spades, which she kept in her phone case for years. That is, until the day she accidentally left the phone on her car and drove away. Bye, bye phone, but more important, "My card was missing," Clement said. "I can't believe I lost that two of spades."

These days it's easier for Clement to share the story, from the comfort of a suite inside their new upscale boutique hotel, Canandaigua 1892 Hotel, 31 S. Main St. They opened the doors for tours as part of a ribbon-cutting ceremony Thursday.

Don't worry, there is a happy ending to the tale of the missing playing card and it's tied to the next chapter of the hotel, which is expected to open to paying guests over the Memorial Day weekend.



## More about Canandaigua 1892 Hotel

Here's what guests can expect: a stylish studio, two one-bedroom and two two-bedroom suites with chef's kitchens.

The renovated space offers a bit of the new – tankless hot water heaters, auto light switches and multi-zone heating and cooling, for example – and an homage to the past – original, reclaimed wood for privacy walls.

Lefebvre, a real estate investor, was originally planning to renovate the space and rent out apartments. Instead, they thought bigger: tourists, event and wedding crowds, and corporate visitors.

"We just felt like this could present something more for our area than just long-term apartments," said Clement, of Danielle Clement Homes and also partner in the boutique real estate brokerage, Tru Agent Real Estate.

Next to Patty's Place, the hotel is walking distance from downtown's shops, restaurants, and craft breweries and in close to Canandaigua Lake and the rest of the Finger Lakes. And it now joins The Lake House on Canandaigua as a new option for visitors to the region, as will the soon-to-open Hotel Canandaigua at the lakefront.

The hotel is housed in what is known as the Village Square Building, erected in 1892 where the Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham land office once sat. The office is recognized as the place where many of the Phelps and Gorham land purchases in the late 1700s of what is today largely western New York were made.

Some of the rooms offer unique views of Main Street and the Public Square, where the Canandaigua Inn Park, fountain and the City Hall and Ontario County Courthouse buildings sit. The building was partially destroyed by fire in 1970, as noted by the framed copies of a photo and newspaper article are displayed in one of the hotel rooms.

## What they're saying

The project fulfills the long-term vision of many city and business leaders – a place for guests to stay downtown, for one, but also increased use of the upper floors of downtown buildings. Most successful downtowns offer some kind of hotel, said Denise Chaapel, manager of the Downtown Canandaigua Business Improvement District.

The Hotel 1892 guests will be in the middle of everything downtown Canandaigua has to offer, from shopping to dining to exploring to, for a lucky few, enjoying "a breathtaking view of the courthouse," Chaapel said.

Mayor Bob Palumbo praised Clement and Lefebvre for not only their work at preserving a historic building but helping to boost the local tourism economy by bringing people to Canandaigua, two goals spelled out in the city's comprehensive plan for future development. "This checks off so many boxes," Palumbo said.

# One story ends, another begins

Well, the story of Hotel 1892 is just beginning, but back to what happened to Clement and Lefebvre, who are now engaged. Both are veterans of the real estate industry, but even they didn't realize the renovation work they were about to tackle before getting inside and getting to work.

Six months in, as Lefebvre was taking out multiple layers of plaster in the staircase connecting the second and third floors, he broke into a wall. Amid the debris was, a card – the two of spades. "We've had so many moments with the project that we were, I would say, we never had a regret, but we thought we knew what to expect, but we didn't," Clement said. "We thought we could handle it. It was unbelievable the amount of debris we had to remove. It was wild." "But," said Clement, as visitors filed in and out of rooms, "here we are."

INTERIOR DESIGN BY [WWW.LINDSAYLAINE.COM](http://WWW.LINDSAYLAINE.COM)

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