

# giving peace a chance

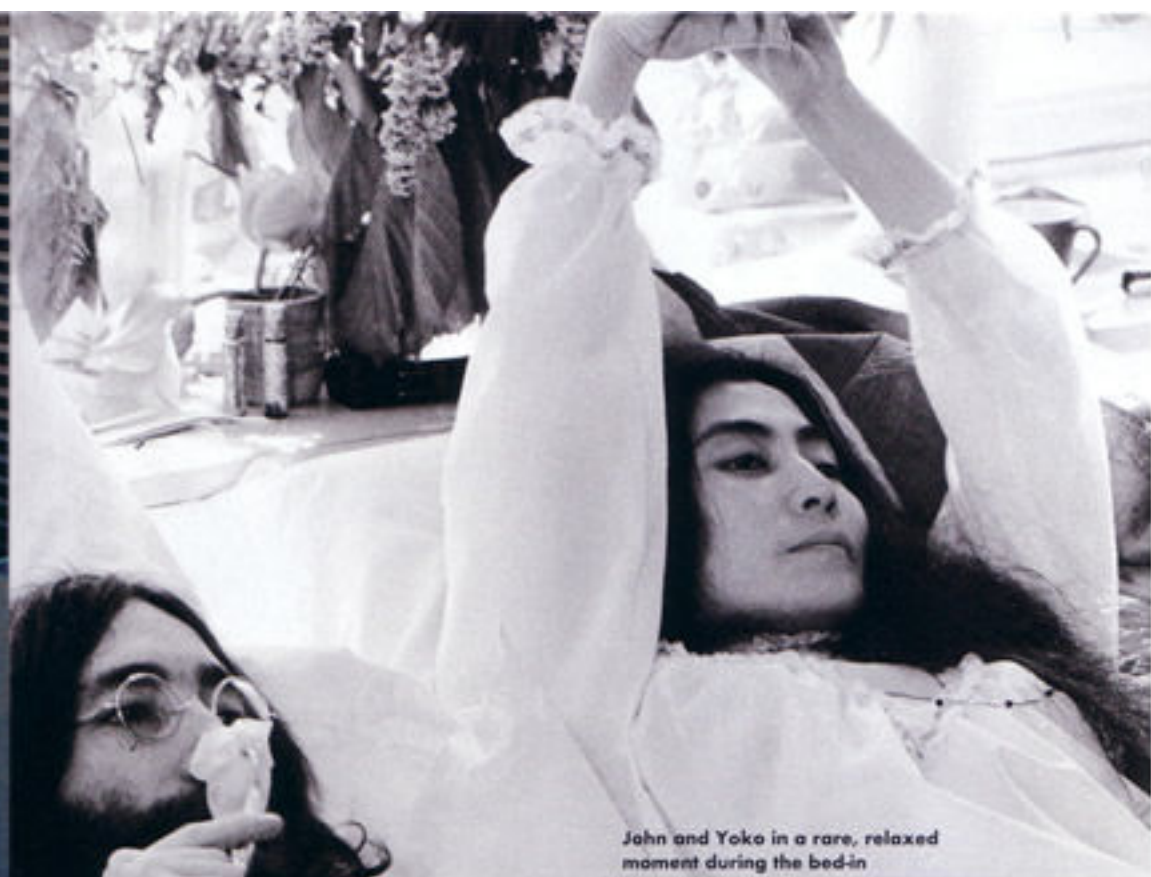
ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF JOHN AND YOKO'S FAMOUS 'BED-IN' AT MONTREAL, **JULIE EAGLETON** VISITS THE PLACE WHERE IT ALL HAPPENED, AND WHERE YOU CAN NOW SPEND A WEEKEND IN THE BED THAT MADE HISTORY

**a**ccording to the hotel's house-keeping records, furniture was found in the corridor, pictures were taken off the walls, and all that remained was a double bed placed in the sitting room. To complicate matters, a housekeeper had to vacuum three to four times every day since John Lennon liked to throw flower petals into the air.



The bed-in

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John and Yoko in a rare, relaxed moment during the bed-in

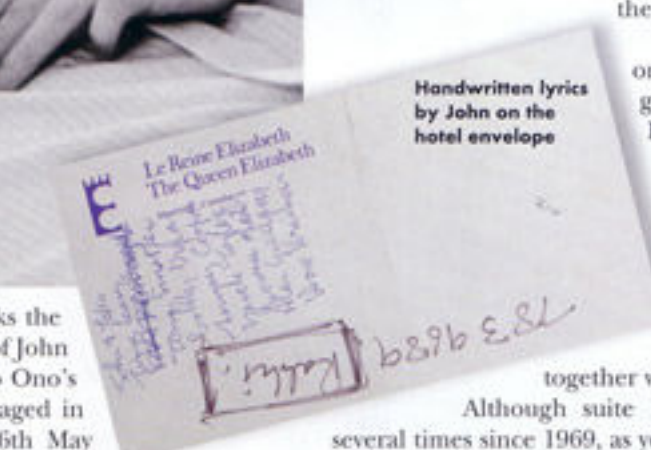
producer Andre Perry, converted the suite into a makeshift recording studio. Around 50 people contributed to the recording of the song, including icon of 1960s counter-culture, psychologist Dr Timothy Leary, and singer Petula Clark, after which it was immediately broadcast around the world.

Forty years on, in commemoration of this historic event, guests of the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel can now experience their very own bed-in. The Imagine package includes one night's accommodation in the John & Yoko suite, breakfast for two and a CD of the original recording together with a copy of the lyrics.

Although suite 1742 has been refurbished several times since 1969, as you step across the threshold, the special history remains palpable. It's still instantly recognisable from the black and white film footage of the '60s, which shows John and Yoko, in white pyjamas and nightdress, holding court from their simple mattress placed under square windows whilst journalists practically kneel at their bare feet. Walking around the suite, flashbacks to the memorable peace campaign flood the senses: One can almost hear echoes of the unifying hand clapping which prevailed throughout the recording of 'Give Peace a Chance'. The space towards the back of the room where renowned photographers and cameramen jostled amongst wires and equipment to capture history in the making, is now home to a luxurious bed; the same square windows that were once obscured with hand written 'Hair Peace' signs now afford wonderful views over the

This year marks the 40th anniversary of John Lennon and Yoko Ono's historic bed-in, staged in Montreal from 26th May to 2nd June, 1969, at the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel. Seizing worldwide media interest without even having to get out of bed, John and Yoko spoke to more than 150 journalists each day. In the United States alone, 350 stations broadcast their promotion for peace and helped to flash their message around the globe to support those already protesting against the continuing war in Vietnam.

The highlight of this unique event was John Lennon's composition of 'Give Peace a Chance' on 1st June, during the bed-in. He wrote the song on the spur of the moment and, under the direction of renowned music



Handwritten lyrics by John on the hotel envelope

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Suite 1742 at the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel, Montreal



Yoko Ono

Montreal skyline and the small marbled bathroom (which John and Yoko reserved for themselves, whilst guests were invited to use the one next door), remains intimate – yes, you can use the same loo as John Lennon! Fascinating memorabilia decorates the walls, including a 'Give Peace a Chance' gold disc, as well as a rare collection of music, lyrics, photographs and press articles, all of which reminds you this is no ordinary hotel room.

Upon waking, you can authenticate your stay by ordering the same breakfast as John and Yoko did.

#### what you need to know

- The package is available from Canadian \$599 per night, based on double occupancy. Inquiries, +1 514-861-3511. [www.fairmont.com/queenelizabeth](http://www.fairmont.com/queenelizabeth)
- Until 21st June, 2009, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts will hold a special, free exhibition entitled *Imagine* featuring artwork by Yoko Ono as well as photographs, records, movies and clips detailing their famous week-long peace protest. Inquiries, [www.mmfa.qc.ca/en/index.html](http://www.mmfa.qc.ca/en/index.html)
- The Beatles' home town, Liverpool, is also hosting an exhibition to mark the anniversary. 'Give Peace a Chance' – John Lennon and Yoko Ono's *Bed-In for Peace*, runs at the Beatles Story, Albert Dock, Liverpool until 15th August, 2009. Inquiries, [www.beatlesstory.com](http://www.beatlesstory.com), +44 (0) 151-709-1963



The star members of the Plastic Ono Band relax after the final take

How about scrambled eggs with crispy bacon and grilled tomatoes, vegetable salad or maybe fillet of sole? Or you may like to try one of John's favourites: 'Spanish Smiles' – that's orange juice with honey (but no eggs) and, of course, staying true to his Northern English roots, lots and lots of black tea.

For those looking for something a little stronger, the hotel has created a special 'Give Peace a Chance' martini. The British gin is for John; the Japanese sake for Yoko; the grenadine signifies love and the lemon symbolises that sometimes love is bitter.

Several guests have reported experiencing a mystical aura when staying overnight in the suite. Otherworldly or not, there's no doubt that some powerfully charged historical and musical residue remains but, sadly, the carpet of flower petals has long since gone. □



The Yoko Fresh

Robert David News