

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL GRESHAM PALACE BUDAPEST

| BY TRACY BEARD

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[Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace Budapest](#) opened in 2004, after a two-year \$110-million restoration, as one of the newest historic treasures for the hotel company and as one of the world's finest examples of Art Nouveau architecture with stunning winter gardens, grand staircases, stained glass windows, mosaics, and ironwork. The Hotel rests on the banks of the Danube River and boasts 179 inviting guest rooms of differing sizes, including 19 suites. Modern luxuries abound throughout the building, including a spa and fitness center, indoor pool, café and restaurant, the Bar and Lobby Lounge, and a spacious meeting space. The Hotel also showcases its glorious heritage with tall, vaulted ceilings.

THE PERFECT HOME BASE

Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace resides in the best spot. It is an short walk to cultural activities and shops and offers easy access to the city's business, art, and entertainment district. The Budapest Franz Liszt International Airport is approximately 30 minutes away by car, and the Big Red Bus stops almost directly across the street from the Hotel, giving tourists another option for getting around the city.

THE HISTORY OF THE GRESHAM PALACE

The Gresham Palace, originating in 1906, was an icon representing prestige and luxury. The Palace was built for the Gresham Life Assurance Company. At that time, insurers were not allowed to invest in the stock market or other risky investments, so the company invested heavily in the new building to showcase its financial wealth. The history of the Palace is fascinating as it began as an insurance company and a prestigious residence, then gave way to communist-era housing, and now has been transformed into a luxury hotel owned by Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.

In the past, before World War II, the Palace was also home to one of the most popular coffeehouses in the city, the Gresham-Venezia

Café. The name came from a group of influential Hungarian artists who regularly met there from the 1920s onward.

THE ARCHITECTURE

Zsigmond Quittner and his associate, József Vágó, were commissioned as the primary architects to design the Gresham Palace in 1904. They took inspiration from the Art Nouveau / Secessionist movement that originated among groups of avant-garde artists in Paris and Vienna. The concept highlighted bright colors, graceful lines, and themes from nature and imaginary designs. Funds were plentiful, so Quittner hired the most talented Hungarian artists and craftspeople of the day.

The Palace boasted beautiful and exciting art pieces. Miksa Róth, a talented glass painter and mosaic maker, crafted the exterior glass mosaics and the stained glass windows. Maróti, Róth, and Jungfer of the world-renowned Teatro Nacional in Mexico City created the magnificent interior spaces.

In its day, the Palace was not only an exquisite piece of architecture but was also known for its technological innovations, like its central heating and a unique centralized dust extraction system. The T-shaped interior shopping arcade roofed with glass was also a new innovation.

Gyula Jungfer created the three Peacock iron gates that lead into the Palace's interior. Today, there is one original, and the other two are copies. There were no cars during the building's construction, so the entryways were designed for those arriving by horse and carriage.

Years later, when Germany invaded Hungary, the 1944 siege of Budapest wreaked havoc on the Palace. Still, in 2004, the Four Seasons Resort Company hired wrought-iron specialists, silversmiths, stained-glass makers, ceramists, mosaicists, and other craftspeople to restore any remaining artwork and to rebuild the Palace based on its original design into a stunning hotel.

That year, the beautiful Palace, now a Four Seasons Hotel, was repaired, including a restored glass cupola highlighting the lobby and walking passage lined with boutiques and the Hotel bar. This area is popular for relaxing on the cozy sofas, sipping cocktails or local wine, and savoring the luxurious surroundings.

A SECRET LOVE STORY

Zsigmond Quittner, the Hungarian architect who designed the building, was in love with a woman who would become a tenant in the Palace after construction. He hid hearts throughout the Palace, representing his devotion to



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her. These hearts can still be found in the mosaics, near the elevators, and in the ironwork and the stained glass. No one knows the total number of hearts hidden inside the property, and although it is just a building, it is filled with emotions, and many guests, even today, get caught up in the past romance.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The unique architectural structure of the Hotel offers unusual room configurations. The Hotel's two towers showcase stunning views of the Danube and Buda. The two Tower Suites feature a king bedroom with domed ceilings and a large living room on separate levels.

Specialty suites offer luxurious living spaces with fireplaces and dining rooms, and the two Presidential Suites offer Danube views from the third or fourth floor and a furnished step-out balcony. The Royal Suite is located on the Hotel's second floor and boasts a large terrace with panoramic views of Buda Castle, Matthias Church, and historic Budapest.

FOUR SEASONS HEALTH CLUB AND SPA

The Health Club and Spa features a range of invigorating therapies, massages, and spa treatments. Budapest has more thermal water springs than any other city, and these waters are rich in minerals and used in the Spa to stimulate and tone the skin. The Spa has seven private massage and treatment rooms, a sauna, a whirlpool, steam rooms, and a relaxation and exercise room. The indoor, infinity-edge lap pool provides an excellent opportunity for guests to exercise any time of the year.

WINING AND DINING

MÚZSA bar and Kollázs – Brasserie & Bar are the perfect venues for a quick bite, breakfast, lunch, dinner, high tea, or a delectable cocktail any time of day.

A RECENT VISIT

Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace Budapest is an ideal place to stay. During my recent visit, my husband Steve and I explored the city, dined in the brasserie, took tea at MÚZSA bar, and explored the city of Budapest with the help of a 72-hour Budapest Card (the official city pass) from [Budapest Brand](#), which gave us free public transportation, free museum entrance fees, a free walking tour, and more. When visiting Budapest, Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace Budapest is the place to stay. ❖



