

## President's Message

By Sean Morley

Fellow Members,

In more normal times I would have had the pleasure of seeing and speaking with many of you at the Club over the festive season, either at the Yuletide Lunch, the Fortified Lunch, the Christmas club dinner or any of the other events that we look forward to and which bring us all together as members of a fine club. These events have always provided the perfect opportunity to catch up on events of the year and look forward to the year ahead – and this year seems incomplete without them. While we haven't been able to get together in person very much this past year, at the end of what has been a very difficult year for many and a highly disruptive year for all, I want to wish all of you a very happy Christmas, a peaceful and safe holiday season and best wishes for 2021.

As a club, we enter 2021 with optimism that we will soon be able to resume normal activities and enjoy the Club as we have been accustomed to over years past, but also with the reality that the duration and pervasive impact of the pandemic present significant challenges for the Club; optimism must be balanced with a healthy dose of pragmatism as we approach the year ahead. We are each part of a wonderful Club, full of extraordinary members and programming, and it is tempting to strive to return to a Club unchanged from what we enjoyed prior to the pandemic. To thrive, I expect we will need to challenge ourselves and reimagine the Club as we emerge from the pandemic and address what may be long-lasting effects. Recently, a wise member of long standing pointed out a line from Giuseppe di Lampedusa's *The Leopard*: 'If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.'

## Simplicity is the Ultimate Sophistication

By: Jill Hutchison, Membership Director

During his October event, world-class artist, squash pro, musician and friend of the club John Lennard quoted this famous Leonardo da Vinci line when speaking on 'the

creative process' to a group of thirty University Club members and guests over Zoom, live from our Main Lounge. Although the phrase was interesting in the moment, the talk went on to focus instead on finding the essence of one's subject, the creative environment, one's intent as an artist, and the relationship between elements, as one may expect from a talk on artistic creativity.

However, after the well-received event, the da Vinci quote continued to re-play in my thoughts. For weeks, I mulled it over without a clear reason as to why it had resonated so strongly. And then suddenly I understood. Sure, the concept of simplicity being the ultimate sophistication is poignant in the world of fine art, but the significance of the phrase for me was the fact that it rings even *more* true in the context of our new COVID reality.

As we all re-learn to enjoy the small things in life, and to appreciate a slower pace day to day, in many ways, we are also coming to appreciate that simplicity really is the ultimate sophistication. A fancy dinner learned to be made at home, the time to pick up an interesting book, perfecting a hobby or skill and of course, spending more quality time with loved ones at home are all simplicities that we may have not made time for previously but that add to our personal growth and sophistication.

Similarly, it seems to me, that the club has always embodied simplicity as the ultimate sophistication. From our early days when the tone of the club was set as a place 'where one doesn't have to let someone take off their coat and put it back on' unlike the other clubs at the time, to modern day where members and their guests can find refuge from the hustle and bustle of the downtown streets in our gracious yet unfussy clubhouse.

And so, we may have been pushed into appreciating simplicity in 2020, however I look forward to willingly appreciating it for what it is, the ultimate sophistication, in 2021.

## On Set

By: Sarah Freeman, General Manager

While we have been busy putting together some fun food and wine matches and hosting the occasional overnight guest, it's been a far cry from our usual pace of

business at this time of year. So imagine how pleased we were when we received a call from a location agent asking about availability. Given the Covid lockdown in Toronto, we were happy that not only did a production house want a location similar in tone to the Georgian residences in Washington DC, but that film production is apparently deemed an essential service.

While we can usually only offer a two-day weekend for film locations – or three if there is a statutory holiday thrown in, this time, with the Club shut down for all but take-out foods, it allowed us to provide our space for two weeks. The resulting TV series pilot *Langdon* follows the early adventures of famed author Dan Brown's fictional character, Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon, who finds himself pulled into a series of deadly puzzles when his mentor is kidnapped. Watch for our second-floor rooms when the series is aired – we don't have a date yet, but I'm sure there will be plenty of press on its release.

I have to admit, with a few exceptions, I'm not a great fan of television from our neighbour to the south. I miss the subtlety and humour of productions where the writers put a bit more effort in. As a result, I spend most of my viewing time on Netflix or Acorn watching international series. It's fun to exchange recommendations to help fill the dearth of good content, and one of the members suggested we offer up a little list of goodies, just as we offer wine recommendations! I'm afraid TV tends to follow a pattern, so the genre of the moment is crime – or legal series (I watched one from the UAE which was sort of fascinating in a 'looking from the outside' way) – so these tend to follow that theme, but some of my faves include:

- Fauda* (Israel)
- Keeping Faith* (Wales)
- Trapped* (Iceland)
- Babylon Berlin* (Germany)
- Rebecca Martinsson* (Sweden)
- The Crime* (Poland)
- The Heart Guy* (Australia)
- The Bridge* (Sweden/Denmark)
- Borgen* (Denmark; also on TVO this past year as well)
- Bordertown* (Finland)
- Shtisel* (Israel)
- Dicte* (Denmark)
- Rita* (Denmark)
- The Break* (Belgium)
- The Honourable Woman* (UK)
- Unorthodox* (Germany)
- Unbelievable* (US)

I have a local neighbour who writes a blog on latest finds for foodies and other items of interest in our area – and sometimes beyond. Given the refined, and may I say excellent, taste within our circle of members, it would be fun to expand on that theme and offer up some suggestions which we can pass on in a section of our e-blasts, so if you have some thoughts, send them on to us to share!

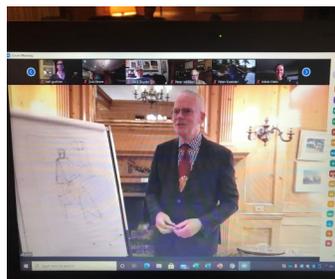
## Order of Canada appointments

The Governor General announced new appointments to the Order of Canada late last month. This would normally have happened on Canada Day but was delayed because the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the Order's advisory council from meeting (had they not heard of Zoom?).

Congratulations to the Hon. Allan Rock, a non-resident member of the Club, on being recognised 'for his contributions to the advancement of global humanitarian issues, and to the fields of law, politics and education', as the citation from Rideau Hall reads.

It is also good to see that Sarah Milroy, a UCT friend (but not member), has been appointed a Member of the Order of Canada 'for promoting Canadian art and artists through her roles as editor, publisher, critic and curator.'

## Photos from Past Events



John Lennard's Talk on "The Creative Process" in October



Stuffed Chicken Breast from December's Cooking Class.



"Commanding Hope" Book Talk with Dr. Thomas Homer-Dixon in November



Sean Morley addresses the membership at the festive get-together in December.