

**COOL
HUNTING®**

A Dip in BASIN Glacial Waters

Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise's indoor-outdoor bathhouse merges wellness, luxury and a connection to nature in Banff National Park

BECKY EATON—18 NOVEMBER 2025



Photo by Chris Amat | @christopheramat, Courtesy of Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise

Staring into the turquoise blue of Lake Louise is mesmerizing in itself, but doing it from the comfort of a warm infinity pool is simply next level. BASIN Glacial Waters, the thermotherapy experience at the historic Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise in Banff National Park, opened in September 2025. Its modern design seamlessly integrates into the surrounding landscape and boasts an indoor-outdoor water circuit we won't soon forget.



Courtesy of Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise

The space, designed by award-winning architect Matteo Thun, pulls inspiration from the surrounding Canadian Rockies and picturesque lake. BASIN's smooth lines and green roof thoughtfully integrate into the land and "a carved incision in that landscape becomes a place of shelter," Thun says. "Embraced by nature on three sides and from above, the building reveals itself as a quiet intervention that opens up to an uninterrupted, breathtaking view of Lake Louise and its glacier. A continuous structure runs from back to front, reinforcing the sense of enclosure and security, while subtly anchoring the architecture within the site."



Photo by Scott Bakken | @scottcbakken, Courtesy of Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise

From the heated indoor-outdoor pool with chrome water jet chairs, to the hot stone floor meditation room, cold plunges at a variety of temperatures, warm foot baths and dramatic Aufguss sauna experience, there's something for everyone to experience. Guests can choose their own adventure and make up a water circuit route, or they can opt to follow a curated "trail" designed for specific wellness goals like relaxing, detoxing or grounding. A hydration nook provides a variety of herbal teas and infused waters for hydration, while the Glacier Lounge offers simple, nourishing dishes like sushi rolls, bone broth, elixirs and nootropic shots.



Photo by Chris Amat | @christopheramat, Courtesy of Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise

Honoring both the surrounding land and the historic nature of the site was of utmost importance for the BASIN project. Thun's team often works within the confines of national heritage and existing historic structures, but "what made this project particularly unique was the level of care we had to dedicate to the surrounding natural environment. The passion that every professional, from designers to builders, brought to the project reflects the deep love and respect they have for this land and its natural beauty," he says. An initial design that was perhaps more architecturally striking had to be amended. "We soon realized that the light pollution caused by such an approach could interfere with the animals that have inhabited this environment for centuries."

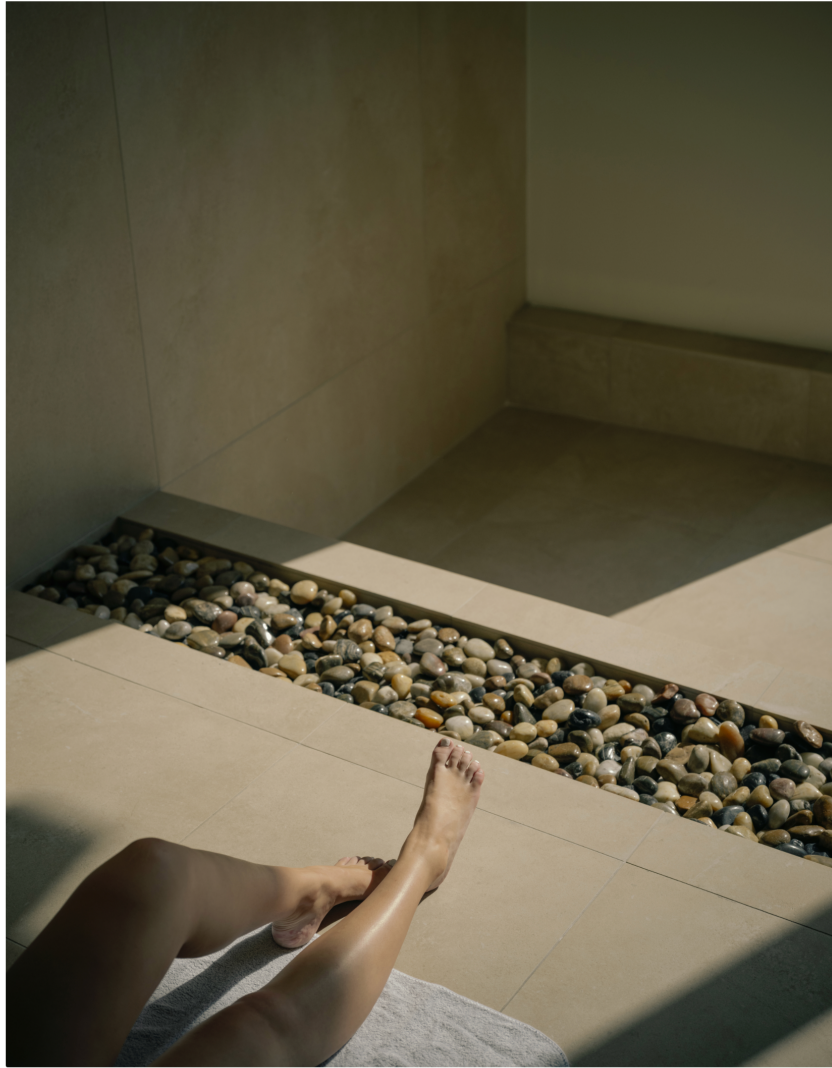


Photo by Chris Amat | @christopheramat, Courtesy of Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise

The original Chalet of Lake Louise was built here in 1890—followed by a post-fire rebuild in 1894 and many renovations since—and the location of BASIN Glacial Waters nods to the property’s heritage. It’s built on the site of the hotel’s circa-1926 open-air heated pool where guests could swim and admire Lake Louise. Today, the Vitality Pool offers the same striking view of the lake, glacier and mountains beyond.

The goal was to create “a world-class wellness facility that would honor its iconic location, yet appear as though it had always been part of the hotel,” Tracy Lowe, General Manager of Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, says. “It was important to honor the glacial water source that naturally flows from Victoria Glacier into the basin of Lake Louise, which sustains the hotel and the facility itself.”



Photo by Chris Amat | @christopheramat, Courtesy of Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise

Thun also incorporated natural elements into BASIN's design. The purity of the thermal experience itself—with its focus on water and air, body and spirit—called for an equally pure architectural environment. “We have a deep appreciation for materials that connect with their surroundings, both aesthetically and emotionally,” Thun says. “By moving beyond fleeting trends and focusing instead on the distilled essence of wellness, we believe these experiences speak a universal language. The principles behind them are fundamentally human—embraced by anyone, anywhere in the world.”

Smooth stones, timeless lime plaster and other organic textures peacefully invite guests to interact with the space, while sustainably-sourced Canadian wood featured in the minimalist wall panels, beamed ceilings, saunas and sun-drenched lounge areas evoke a sense of calming warmth. “Wood is a remarkable material: it’s alive, responsive and capable of transforming a space as it evolves over time, much like the human body,” says Thun, proving that every material was considered not just for aesthetics, but for its sustainability and how it would live harmoniously in this iconic setting over the years.

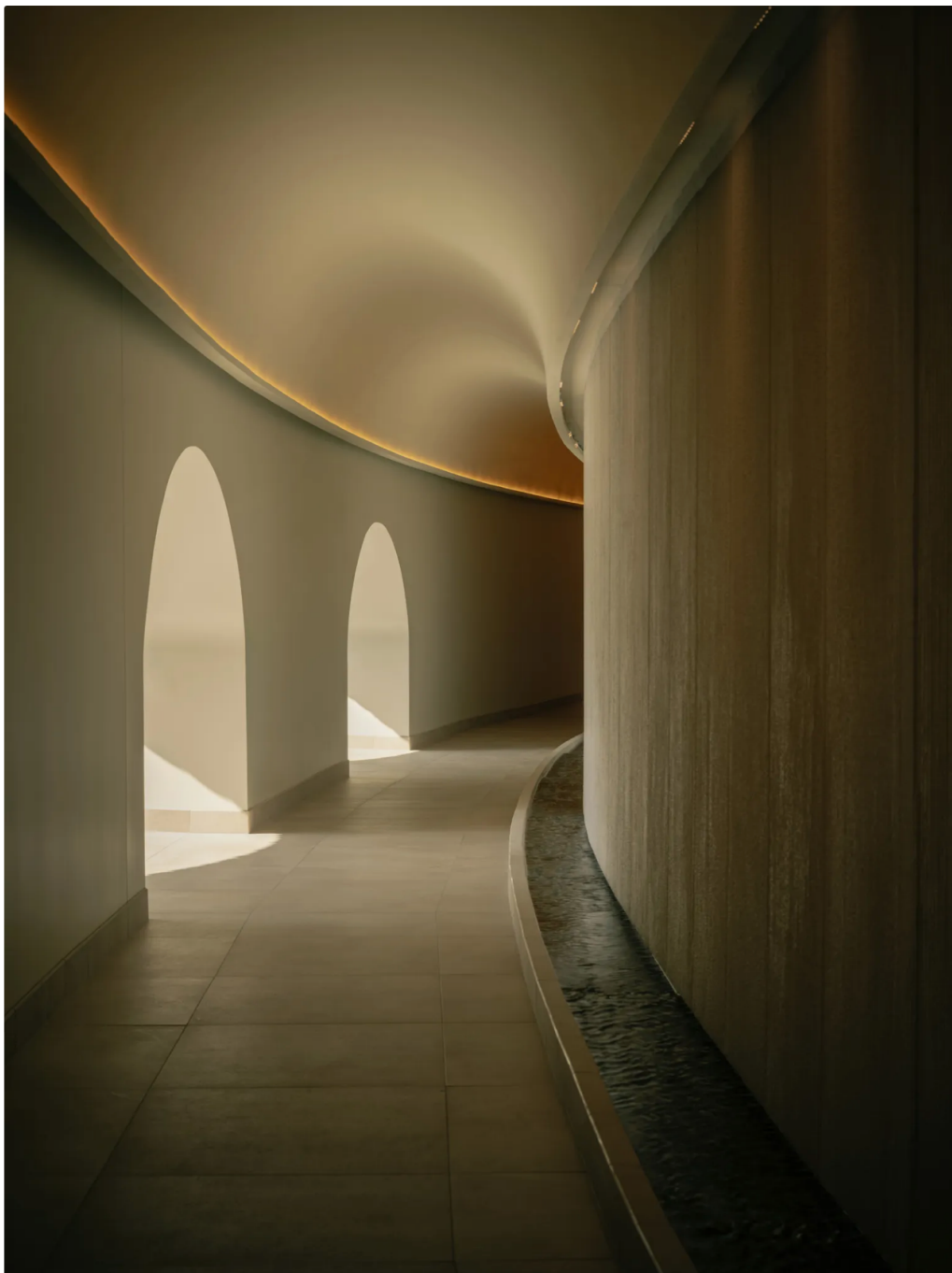


Photo by Chris Amat | @christopheramat, Courtesy of Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise

It's hard to pick our favorite: the Silent Salt Relax room lined with pink Himalayan salt bricks, or the Aufguss' oil-infused steam ceremony complete with a complimentary felted wool sauna hat? Maybe the Kneipp Walk for its standing hot-cold bathing experience, or the outdoor terrace for the ultimate post-sauna meditative moment? For Thun, his favorite feature is obvious: "the sensory passageway," the reception area that gradually descends to the main BASIN floor. "The curving slope subtly guides guests downward, encouraging body and mind to attune with the world revealed beyond the arch," he says. "As guests walk, water—perhaps the most powerful element for releasing tension and reconnecting with the soul—flows beside them. A narrow channel runs along the path, and the calming sound of water trickling over lake pebbles enhances the journey, evoking a deeply meditative state."