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## Where Obama plans to sleep during G8

By [Shia Kapos](#) February 20, 2012

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**SHIA  
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TAKES NAMES



The Sheraton Chicago Hotels & Towers will serve as headquarters for President **Barack Obama** during the NATO/G8 summits in May.

The hotel, which has three presidential suites, each with a separate parlor and conference table for 12, has plenty of experience handling high-profile guests in town for heady events.

The Sheraton served as headquarters to former President **Bill Clinton** during the 1996 Democratic Convention and during the Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue in 2002, and it's been the hotel of choice for the former president for events related to his Clinton Global

Initiative.

In September, the Sheraton was the site of a high-profile fundraiser for Mr. Obama's re-election bid.

Now that the president has settled on a home base for the mid-May summits, hotels are hoping the rest of the G8 delegations — the delegations hoteliers care about most — will fall in accordingly.

There's been some jockeying as to who would be willing to stay in the same hotel as whom — does anyone want to stay with the Russians?

Dignitaries have made verbal commitments, but they haven't yet signed on the dotted line.

"They're taking their time about it," one hotel source says.



### *The Lyric goes long*

Lyric Opera's revival of "Show Boat" is a watershed moment for the company.

Sellout crowds and fawning reviews have, in part, prompted Lyric to plan an American musical-theater piece every year, starting next year with "Oklahoma!"

It's all part of a master plan to appeal to the next generation.

Lyric has an edgy ad campaign, and it's laying the groundwork to reach out to neighborhoods beyond its Wacker Drive address.

"We're in the process of redefining, in a broader sense, what the opera company means to the city and the community," says **Ken Pigott**, right, president and CEO of the Lyric.

Don't be surprised to see the opera company offering a mariachi performance in Pilsen, for example.

The idea was inspired by the success Lyric General Director **Anthony Freud** found in Houston, where he commissioned a similar opera in immigrant communities all over that city.

Last week, the Lyric teamed up with the Art Institute for a schmoozy cocktail party and conversation around the upcoming production of "Rinaldo." The story depicted in Handel's opera is portrayed in four paintings at the Art Institute, so the two institutions held curatorial talks about the music and artwork.

"It's a little bit of a trial balloon," Mr. Pigott says of the gathering. "It's about generating interest across different platforms."

One of the most important of those is the Lyric's donor base.

"It's incumbent on us to bring our board along in this process as we evolve," Mr. Pigott says. "So far the buy-in has gone really well. They've been absolutely supportive."

► [Read more of Shia Kapos on her blog.](#)

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