

Checking In: A smaller financial bite in the Big Apple

Hotel Week NYC offers great deals

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE OCTOBER 4, 2013



The Jade Hotel, which opened earlier this year in a Georgian-style building, is a chic new addition to Greenwich Village.

Photograph by: Ari Burling Photography, ©Ari Burling Photography

Travellers will be able to take a bigger, sweeter bite out of the Big Apple during the third-annual Hotel Week NYC that will run Jan. 3 to 12.

The lodging promotion will feature advantageous room rates at 30 hotels in most of Manhattan's hot neighbourhoods: Chelsea, Murray Hill, SoHo, TriBeCa, Hell's Kitchen, Greenwich Village, Herald Square, Midtown, Times Square, the Fashion District and the Lower East Side.

A variety of three- and four-star hotels will run between \$100 and \$200 US per night. At least one deluxe boutique property, The James New York, a vision of glass walls, stylish understated decor and contemporary art, will cost \$300 instead of more than \$400.

The Jade Hotel is a chic new addition to the artsy Greenwich Village scene. Opened earlier this year, it is a petite bijou with 113 rooms in a tall, slim, Georgian-style building, recently built.

The interior is a showcase of geometric lines and gentle curves of art deco style, like a dressy Parisian salon where literati and glitterati might mingle. The handsome staircase blends alabaster marble with polished mahogany. Decadent white velvet ottomans with fringes and a tufted lavender settee are tucked up against a fireplace.

It's graceful and sensual, the sort of discreet place where Gatsby might have met Daisy for a tryst, with too much Champagne and not enough time.

Today, the pretty, feminine rooms look just right for a girlfriends' getaway. There are fine burled wood escritaires where you can pen billets-doux to the men you have left behind.

Most rooms have one queen bed, but a few have two queens, although the space is tight. A sliding screen of cloisonné enamel cleverly opens to reveal a flat-screen television. Red velvet drapes and bed throws, a handsome carved armoire and tiny black-and-white tiled bathrooms give the room a boudoir feeling.

The design was the work of Andres Escobar & Associates, which has offices in Montreal's Griffintown and New York's financial district. Colombia-born Escobar moved here to study engineering at Dawson College but discovered design. Over the past 20 years, he has wowed 'em with prestigious commercial and residential projects in Canada, the U.S. and Europe.

The Jade is in a relaxed, inviting neighbourhood on a quiet, tree-lined street. What I particularly like is that people actually live here. Within a block are a hair salon, a walk-in medical clinic, a wine shop and Zena, the clairvoyant, just to make sure you remember this is Greenwich Village, seat of America's Bohemian life. Bleecker St. and Washington Square are a short walk away.

I missed out on the new chef and his menu at the Jade's Grape & Vine Restaurant & Bar, but I was mesmerized by its display of photographs by the late Village Voice photographer Fred McDarragh, who captured American entertainment icons of the 1960s and 1970s.

You'll get goosebumps with these rare images of Bob Dylan, Woody Allen, Bette Midler, Andy Warhol and a famous trio on the set of Taxi Driver: Martin Scorsese, Jodie Foster and Robert De Niro.

My timing was off, cuisine-wise. The new chef, Kevin Hester, arrived after my visit and only two weeks ago introduced specialties such as cocoa-cinnamon braised short rib, littleneck clams with salsa verde, pan-seared halibut with Swiss chard and scallops with avocado mousse. Hmm, maybe next time.

IF YOU GO

New York City is an approximately six-hour drive from Montreal via New York Highway 87 south to Route 9A/Henry Hudson Parkway (West Side). Air Canada, West Jet, Delta and American are among the airlines that fly daily to either La Guardia or J.F.K. airports.

The Jade Hotel Greenwich Village: 212-375-1300, www.thejadenyc.com; 52 W. 13th St. between Fifth & Sixth Aves.; New York City. Parking, \$30 for 24 hours.

Price: \$300-\$500 US, per night, including 24-hour fitness room, library lounge. Discount of 15 per cent if you reserve and pre-pay 21 days in advance. Family package includes snacks and games.

Grape & Vine Restaurant & Bar: 212-300-4525, www.grapevine-nyc.com, open daily for breakfast, lunch/brunch, dinner.

Hotel Week NYC: Jan. 3 to 12; go to www.hotelweeknyc.com to book online. Or by telephone, mention Hotel Week.

Some of the 30 participating hotels offering rates starting at \$100 US include: GEM Hotel SoHo (GEM uses uppercase name to stand out), 212-358-8844; The Hotel 212-484-1222; 151 W. 34th St. between Seventh Ave. & Broadway, (one of several locations); www.nycgo.com for maps, events and online bookings with discounts on hotels and sightseeing tours such as New York CityPASS, New York Explorer Pass and Downtown Culture Pass.

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