

RIVERFRONT DELTA MIXES BUSINESS AND PLEASURE



ROCHELLE LASH
Hotel Intel

The reimagined Delta Trois-Rivières by Marriott is a shiny new star on a historic horizon.

It's bringing urban style and a high-tech environment to Canada's second-oldest city (founded in 1634, after Quebec City and before Montreal).

Built over three centuries on the fur trade, pulp and paper and iron making, today's Trois-Rivières is a lifestyle centre, hopping with festivals and stage shows. With its splendid riverfront on the Saint Lawrence, it's also a major port for cruise ships from New York and Europe.

And situated halfway between Montreal and Quebec City, it is a crossroads for conventions and trade shows. Enter the Delta hotel and its conference centre, Le Centre d'Événements et de Congrès Interactifs (CECI), a business and leisure complex at the heart of downtown.

Both structures were recently rebuilt, creating a hospitality hub with attractive accommodations, striking contemporary design, the latest business technology and an indoor pool. Factor in the upbeat restaurant Le Brasier 1908, a Starbucks café and the Millénia Spa Urbain, and it's a complete getaway package.

"CECI and the Delta reflect our contemporary side," said Daniel Rioux, head of Tourisme Trois-Rivières. "And the conference centre's vibrant red exterior makes it a new landmark."

Delta hotel: The sweeping lobby is set up for meetings or mingling with a computer counter and conversation corners. Large LCD monitors announce the day's happenings. I liked the substantial gift-and-sundries shop, a sign of a full-service hotel. The front-desk staff is well-informed and helpful, but Marriott members can go all-tech and check in using a Marriott app on their smartphone.

They might miss out on the oatmeal cookies and apples at the reception desk, but they'll get a mobile key-code to open the room door and can chat online to ask for tourism tips or extra pillows and bathrobes.

The 225 rooms and suites are modern and modular, with polished wood floors, cascading white curtains against silvery walls and 55-inch flat-screen



"The vibrant red exterior makes it a new landmark," Daniel Rioux of Tourisme Trois-Rivières says of Le Centre d'Événements et de Congrès Interactifs. PHOTOS: ÉRIC MASSICOTTE

TVs. Many rooms have reach-out-and-touch views of the Saint Lawrence River and they all have work desks and vivid abstract artwork by local artist Patricia Kramer. Some of the suites have sofa beds, double bathroom vanities, high-topped dining tables with seating for eight people and 65-inch TVs in the living rooms.

Delta guests earn points on the new Marriott Bonvoy program.

Perks, depending on your loyalty level, include complimentary refreshments at the Elite Pantry, a convenience kitchenette.

Conference complex: The conference complex, a.k.a. CECI, is buzzing with 21 meeting rooms and four large halls, decked out with the latest in lighting for exhibitions and audiovisual gear for meetings. Event organizers can plan for up to 1,600 people.

"It goes beyond everyday technology," said Joyce Godbout, the Delta's general manager. "It's

all new technology that is rolling out over the next weeks."

Projects will include Bluetooth connections at large-scale events, interactive smartphone applications that connect guests to the moderator for real-time surveys and digitized information kiosks. **Le Brasier 1908:** Executive chef Pierre-Jean Beaudoin and his family run Trois-Rivières's No. 1 place-to-be. It's flashy and buzzy with casual cuisine and keen service, plus a range of options from a TV bar to private dining.

If you start with a drink, this resto-bistro has everything — a huge wall of wine, microbrews, cocktails, mocktails and fancy coffees. Le Brasier 1908 serves brawny portions of Quebec comfort classics like poutine with pulled pork, plus shepherd's pie and burgers. Inspiration comes from the U.S. south, too, with barbecue ribs and fried chicken.

IF YOU GO

Trois Rivières is a 90-minute drive from Montreal.

Delta Trois Rivières by Marriott: 819-376-1991, deltahotels.com; 1620 Notre Dame Centre St., Trois-Rivières. Best rate available at Marriott.com; Marriott Bonvoy points apply.

Conference centre: 819-372-5971, ceci3r.com.

Rates fluctuate: Rooms are approximately \$139-\$254 (suites cost more), including fitness centre, pool/whirlpool, guest computers, in-room coffee/bottled water, baby gear, mini-fridge. CAA discount. Indoor/outdoor parking available (fees apply). Car charging stations. Pet-friendly.

Le Brasier 1908: 873-387-1908, brasier1908.com. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, children's menu.

Millénia Spa Urbain: 819-841-1741, milleniaspa.ca; closed Sunday.

Trois-Rivières tourism: 800-313-1123, tourismetroisrivieres.com, 1457 Notre-Dame St.



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