

# KÉROUL PROMOTES TOURISM THAT’S ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL



ROCHELLE LASH

The welcome mat is out for travellers with limitations. Kéroul, a non-profit organization that promotes accessible tourism, has created a travel database called Québec for All. “For all” means for travellers with reduced mobility, or those with hearing and vision impairments. Québec for All provides details about more than 1,800 establishments certified as “fully accessible” or “partially accessible” by Kéroul. They include cultural and sports venues, nature sites, recreation paths and tourist attractions, plus about 370 lodging establishments, from campsites to five-star hotels. The platform’s search engine enables travellers to geo-locate establishments that fit their needs. Québec for All covers urban life in Montreal and Quebec City and also the country-

side, from the Gaspé in the east, to the Eastern Townships in the southeast, Outaouais in the west and Saguenay and Abitibi in the north. In addition to the Québec for All rating system, Kéroul runs several travel-centric services at no charge, including an information service, by phone or email, and Facebook updates. As well, for an annual membership fee of \$25, subscribers receive Le Bala-deur magazine and a newsletter. Kéroul also organizes conferences so people with disabilities can pick up travel tips. “The accessibility of a tourist establishment is not only about infrastructure,” said Julie-Anne Perrault, Kéroul’s marketing and communications coordinator. “It’s about the experience a traveller will have ... the customer service, the assistance and tourism advice. “All this adds up to make people comfortable and makes a place truly inclusive.” Some of the adapted activities that Kéroul recommends are: La Grande Roue de Montréal (Ferris wheel) in the Old Port; water-skiing at Camp Massawippi; sailing



Marie-Eve Buisson, left, and Noah Silletta at Vita Bella B&B. It is the only fully certified accessible B&B in Quebec. TOM SILLETTA

## IF YOU GO

**Vita Bella B&B:** 819-327-5037, 450-271-9224, vitabella.ca; 280 Chemin de Bellefeuille, St-Adolphe-d’Howard; \$120 for two, including breakfast, Wi-Fi, trails, lake access with small craft, and snowshoes in winter. **Kéroul and Québec for All:** 514-252-3104, keroul.qc.ca or quebecforall.com; annual membership, \$25. **Transportation:** Québec for All has details about accessible transportation, including trains, airplanes, taxis, ferries, buses or rentals of an accessible van. Among them are: Monastère des Augustines in Quebec City, a remarkable makeover of a 17th-century nunnery into a darling boutique hotel with a wellness theme and religious art exhibits; Hotel Monville in downtown Montreal, a high-tech, modern getaway with a robot; ready-to-camp tents at Parc national d’Oka in the Lower Laurentians; Auberge des Gallant in Rigaud, the go-to place for good

food and special occasions; and Chalets U, two gorgeous cottages in Austin in the Eastern Townships. Also at the top of the list is Vita Bella B&B in St-Adolphe-d’Howard. Owned by Tom Silletta and his wife, Line Caissy, it is the only fully accessible B&B in Quebec. In 2018, Vita Bella received an impressive rating of 9.9 out of 10 in the guest reviews of Booking.com. In 2017, the Quebec tourism ministry awarded Vita Bella its Prix Excellence. Silletta has an unshakable commitment to the principles of Québec for All. He has coached both the Canadian Olympic cross-country ski team and the Canadian Paralympic team (his athletes won three gold medals in Vancouver in 2010). Vita Bella, free of obstacles and clutter, has interiors with hardwood floors, extra-wide doorways and carefully positioned furniture. The three guest rooms have lots of space and super-sized bathrooms equipped with vanities of a certain height, as well as roll-in showers or a tub with a transfer bench and security bars. The closet racks, thermostats and electrical outlets are within wheelchair reach, and the B&B has a phone that lights up, for hearing-impaired guests. Outdoors, Silletta installed ramps around the property, so all guests can relax at the gazebo, the rock garden, the fire pit and the picnic table. Vita Bella overlooks Lac Vingt Sous, and the B&B supplies small craft — two canoes, a pedal boat and a kayak.

# Don’t judge a ship by its inside cabins

Entry-level accommodations good option for budget-conscious cruisers, light sleepers



AARON SAUNDERS  
Ports + Bows

This column is all about value. In a few days, I will be setting off on a 16-day cruise through the Canadian Maritimes and Greenland — and I’ll be doing so in an inside cabin. Inside cabins — a room located within the inner section of the ship lacking a windowed view — are some of the most frequently maligned cabins on board any cruise ship. Their downsides are

immediately apparent: small and lacking natural light, the mere mention of an inside room introduces fears of claustrophobia and entrapment into even experienced cruisers. However, inside cabins have several advantages. First of all, they’re economical: you won’t find more value-packed accommodations aboard any ship. For a fraction of the price of a balcony cabin — and hundreds less than a windowed oceanview stateroom — passengers in an inside cabin get to experience the same cruise, itinerary and amenities as guests in nearly every cabin grade. Only suite guests are typically privy to a few extra niceties. Inside cabins also are ideal for light sleepers: no windows mean

no bleed-through from sunlight that can disrupt sleep patterns in places such as Alaska and — you guessed it — Greenland, where the days are long during the summer months and darkness is in short supply. As a side note, I never thought I was bothered by this until I cruised to Arctic Svalbard a few years back and experienced the worst bout of insomnia in my life thanks to the region’s near-constant daylight. Inside rooms can also be cooler, as they’re not affected by the heat of the sunlight beaming through the window in places like the Caribbean. And some lines even offer “virtual” port-holes in inside cabins. Take Disney Cruise Line (cruise.center/disney), for starters: On board its Disney Dream and Disney Fantasy, a digital screen is hooked up to position-relative cameras on the

vessel that mimics a real outdoor view — with some special Disney surprises, too. Royal Caribbean (cruise.center/royalcaribbean) has “virtual balconies” on some of its inside cabins, using a similar system. And some ships even have great inside cabins dedicated to solo cruisers. A trip years ago on Norwegian Cruise Line’s (cruise.center/norwegian) Norwegian Epic had me salivating over the ultra-hip “Studio Insides” with their own private corridor, lounge and mood lighting. My reasons for booking my inside cabin were more prosaic — everything else was sold out. The truth of the matter is that, given the choice, we’d all like to cruise in a suite, just as we’d all like to fly business class and graze forever in the lounge on the Fairmont Gold floor. For most of us, these are all aspirations: one-off splurges that define honeymoons, anniversaries and special occasions. I feel great about cruising in a small, windowless room. I still get to sleep on the same comfy

bed as everyone else. I get to enjoy the same voyage. And I saved a bundle of money in the process — money I can put toward splurging a little onboard or doing something interesting ashore. The couple in the inside cabin that didn’t stretch their budget is the couple that might take a helicopter and land on a glacier in Alaska. This column is really for new and experienced cruisers alike. Don’t be afraid to take that entry-level accommodation. There is absolutely nothing wrong with saving a little money — especially if it makes the difference between taking that dream cruise or never doing it at all. Happy cruising. Visit [portsandbows.com](http://portsandbows.com), sponsored by [Expedia CruiseShipCenters](http://Expedia CruiseShipCenters), 1-800-707-7327, [www.cruiseshipcenters.com](http://www.cruiseshipcenters.com), for daily updates on the latest cruise news, best deals and behind-the-scenes stories from the industry. You can also sign up for an email newsletter on the site for even more cruise information. Aaron Saunders may be contacted directly at [portsandbowsaaron@gmail.com](mailto:portsandbowsaaron@gmail.com)

WHERE  
TO STAY  
TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CALL  
514-987-2279



VERMONT

**GREEN MOUNTAIN SUITES HOTEL**  
401 Dorset St, South Burlington, VT 05403, USA  
[www.greenmountainsuites.com](http://www.greenmountainsuites.com)

Escape to beautiful Burlington, Vermont and Experience all the Charm of a Boutique Vermont Country Inn. Luxurious One-Bedroom King Suite As low as \$189 Weekdays. As low as \$229 Weekends. Includes Fireside Breakfast served each morning & Fireside Reception with Beer, Wine and Dinner (M-TR). Heated Indoor Pool/Jacuzzi & Exercise facility. Walking distance to University Mall and close to Lake Champlain and the Church Street Marketplace. Promotional rate may not be available during select periods. Inventory for this promotional rate is limited. Please contact hotel for more information. Toll-free reservations 866.337.1616

VERMONT

**SMART SUITES**  
[www.smartsuitesburlington.com](http://www.smartsuitesburlington.com)  
1700 Shelburne Rd., So. Burlington, Vt.  
Toll free 877-862-6800

Come and enjoy our hospitality. FALL/WINTER SPECIAL: NEW RATES: Studio \$95.00US/night or a one bedroom suite at \$95.00US including a deluxe continental breakfast and free WiFi. Mention The Gazette special. Not valid with any other discounts and may not be available on certain week-ends. Rates effective November 1, 2018 - May 1, 2019. Take Exit 13 off I-89, left on Rt 7/Shelburne Rd. for 1.5 miles. Same entrance as Holiday Inn Express.

