

HOTEL INTEL

FLASHY ENCORE TAKES BOWS IN BOSTON

Wynn resort hotel offers sublime spa life, creative cocktails and terrific cuisine



ROCHELLE LASH

Encore Boston Harbor is a ravishing new resort hotel and casino, just north of the centre of New England's best-known city. If I were in the ratings game, I would award it six stars for its jaw-dropping beauty, excellent service, gastronomy and overall dedication to quality. Arguably the most expensive hospitality development on the eastern seaboard, Encore Boston Harbor is an entertaining extravaganza created by Wynn Resorts of Las Vegas. Flashy and high-spirited, Encore is rocking staid New England, especially the Boston area and beyond. Open only a few months, Encore Boston Harbor resonates with day-to-night diversions, including sublime spa life; creative cocktails and terrific cuisine at an amazing 15 venues; Harborwalk, a waterfront park; the Wynn Collection boutique, which sells Stella McCartney, Jimmy Choo and Zegna; and of course, the casino, larger than those of Wynn Las Vegas and Encore Las Vegas combined, with more than 240 table games and 3,000 slot machines. Encore's décor is a flight of fancy that sparkles with gold and mirrors, a delightful blend of grandeur, character and whimsy. The lobby's focal point is a moving carousel of 10 prancing ponies, festooned with blossoms and jewels. The intricate architectural details and stunning chandeliers have flourishes of Rococo, the Renaissance, Old Shanghai and ancient Rome, all against a contemporary backdrop. **Guest rooms:** Encore boasts the largest standard rooms in New

IF YOU GO

Everett, Mass., is a five-hour drive south from Montreal. Encore Boston Harbor runs bus, limo and boat shuttles for the eight kilometres to downtown Boston. **Encore Boston Harbor:** 857-770-7000, encorebostonharbor.com; One Broadway, Everett, Mass. Casino gaming accrues Red Card points for hotel, food and beverage benefits. **Price:** rooms start at US\$266; suites start at \$315; all including fitness room, Harborwalk promenade and gardens, in-room iPads, Nespresso, evening turndown, Alexa, Bluetooth. **Extra:** Spa day pass (steam, sauna, lounge, hot tub) US\$48; spa treatments; valet parking; beauty salon; business centre. **Dining-drinks:** Ask about dress suggestions, hours, children's policies and over-21 age requirements. Other venues are: BRU café; Dunkin', a 24-hour coffee shop; Fratelli Italian; Red 8 Cantonese-Sichuan; The Buffet; On Deck Burger Bar; Memoire, a weekend nightclub with VIP service and music; Center Bar in the Casino; Garden Lounge for artisanal cocktails.

England, a full 650 square feet of soothing earth-toned décor, plus Wynn Dream Beds, large closets and spacious bathrooms with double vanities. And then there are the suites! Clearly, big is beautiful, with gorgeous get-



Encore Boston Harbor, a five-hour drive from Montreal, is an opulent new hotel with a huge casino and 15 terrific dining and drinking venues. PHOTOS: ENCORE BOSTON HARBOR



The state-of-the-art conference centre and event lawn at the new Encore Boston Harbor, a ravishing casino hotel.

aways at 1,350, 3,350 and 5,800 square feet. My favourite feature in all of the 671 guest rooms is the wall-sized, floor-to-ceiling window, and many rooms have breathless views of both Boston's skyline and the scenic Mystic River. Encore's tech is the latest: iPads and Alexa for music and room controls; as well as Netflix, Amazon Prime and Hulu (using your accounts); and Bluetooth for tunes. **Food/drink:** High rollers and gastronomes head for Rare Steakhouse, a soignée dining room decked out in white leather club chairs and dark wood accents. Rare offers a connoisseur's choice of wine, spirits and cocktails to match the perfectly marbled beef that includes Japanese Wagyu, Kobe and Kagoshima, as

well as dry-aged cuts from the best U.S. ranches. There are many more familiar items, all splendidly presented: starters such as roast quail, crab cakes, vegan meatballs; main courses of filet mignon and ribeyes with black-truffle butter or porcini rub; and for a break from steak — short ribs en croûte; roasted cauliflower or seafood. Encore's other standout dining spots include: Sinatra for updated twists on Italian classics, truffle agnolotti, osso buco "My Way" and the signature veal parmesan; the Garden Café for crab Benedict or lobster BLTs; Mystique for sushi, Japanese robata and roast duck; the Oyster Bar for Atlantic seafood and lobster rolls; and Waterfront for local spirits and brews, paired with beef sliders or lobster

poutine. I cannot say enough about dessert. Pastry chef Joel Reno supplies each of Encore's eateries, so you'll never be far from his marvellous chocolate cigar, tiramisu, warm apple cranberry crostata or the gluten-free macaroon with flavours of raspberry and lychee. **Casino:** This is serious gaming, if you want it to be. Encore Boston Harbor's casino includes a high-stakes area with 53 high-limit slots and 143 high-limit table games such as baccarat, blackjack and poker. Lady Luck was with me, in a modest way. I parlayed 30 U.S. greenbacks into an hour of fun at the blackjack table, and came out \$20 richer. I quit while I was ahead, although it wasn't a big win.

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