

Posh boutique hotel opens in historic Saratoga

Pavilion Grand has deluxe suites with cool spa, cuisine



ROCHELLE LASH
CHECKING IN

I arrived fatigued, frazzled and famished at the Pavilion Grand in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., and the smart, new boutique hotel passed the travellers' welcome test, with honours.

The Pavilion Grand is two short blocks from Broadway, Saratoga's fabled main street, an all-new construction that blends in with Saratoga's vintage red-brick cityscape. The tiny lobby is a delight, a welcome oasis with fashionable, colourful decor against a backdrop of soft greys.

I checked into an urban-chic suite and immediately called the spa to request a restorative smoothie blended with spinach, apple, banana, lemon, plus the current wellness cure-all from here to Hollywood, coconut water. Things were looking grand.

Opened in May, the Pavilion Grand is one of the new breed of "lifestyle hotels" that offer cool, contemporary essentials such as mixology, gluten-free cuisine and yoga. At the top of the upscale, the posh, private penthouse suites are ideal havens for the non-stop influx of A-list entertainers who stream through Saratoga.

James Taylor was scheduled at the prestigious Saratoga Performing Arts Center last week and the Real Housewives of New York recently sashayed through the Saratoga Race Course, decked out in ribboned picture hats. John Travolta will be honoured by the National Museum of Dance on Aug. 9, and SPAC will showcase the Bolshoi Ballet July 29-Aug. 1; Kiss, Aug. 5; and Chicago, Aug. 19.

After the frenetic summer season, the hotel aims to be a destination on its own, with cooking classes, spa packages and special-occasion celebrations. Saratoga is both prime wedding territory and a business conference hub.



The new Pavilion Grand Hotel in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., features distinctive penthouse suites with rooftop decks.

PHOTOS: PAVILION GRAND HOTEL

You're home

The Pavilion Grand is both pretty and practical. It has 48 deluxe suites in sizes ranging from studios to plush, VIP-worthy two-storey apartments, each with two bedrooms, two-and-half bathrooms and private rooftop terraces, upstairs and down. All of the suites are fully loaded with designer kitchens, pod-coffee makers, laundry machines and luxurious cotton sheets, bathrobes and towels. Some rooms have balconies or terraces. Each bedroom has a flat-screen television and the living rooms have 55-inches. Of course, the hotel supplies bottled Saratoga spring water.

"People are leaving the big-brand hotels," said general manager Susanne Simpson. "The Pavilion has more personal service, and the suites feel more like homes than hotel rooms."

"Plus, the full kitchens really offer flexibility. Recently, a family stayed in for supper and on another night, a business group opted for a catered meal from Mingle downstairs."

The Pavilion Grand has an on-trend, appealing look designed by Valerie DeLaCruz of Saratoga. She used a sophisticated palette of shades of grey sharpened with black and white and brightened



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with striking colour pops on chairs and pillows — vivid aqua, juicy raspberry and cobalt blue — that represent the silks of the jockeys at the famous race track.

Food: A Korean accent

Mingle on the Avenue is a contemporary bistro that already has wowed locals and tourists with its lively bar scene, sidewalk section and open kitchen. The cuisine is partly American comfort, partly fine dining and partly Korean fusion, with gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian options.

On the classic front, the menu features wild salmon with coriander and citrus-fennel slaw; and N.Y. strip steak with herb-garlic butter. Korean-inspired specialties

include potato-shrimp pancakes and piquant noodle bowls with shrimp, beef or chicken.

Breakfast is exceptional, with such signature dishes as pastrami hash, grapefruit brûlé and the winner: delectable potato latkes topped with smoked salmon, poached egg, crème fraîche and basil purée.

Mingle's mixology is alive. The bartenders blend a special cocktail for each wedding so that when the couple returns for their anniversary, they will have the same drink, forever. The martinis with herbal infusions — strawberry-basil and rosemary-rhubarb — are most popular.

Spa life

all good things ... (the ital-

ics and the three dots signify a positive flow) is a boutique spa with four treatment rooms, a yoga studio, a juice bar and an impressive roster of treatments, including beauty services and massages with hot stones or herbal poultices. Two advanced features are anti-aging micro-current technology and infrared heat therapy.

"Our philosophy is twofold: to reduce inflammation in the body and to rebalance from the inside out," said spa manager Jenn Post. "Working on both body and spirit, we have group and private yoga sessions."

"Our juices are all natural and free of preservatives and artificial flavourings, plus our lotions are created from natural botanicals that nour-

IF YOU GO

Saratoga Springs is a three-hour drive (300 km) from Montreal via Highway 15 south to the U.S. border and N.Y. Highway 87 south to Exit 15 or 14.

Pavilion Grand Hotel: 518-583-2727, www.paviliongrandhotel.com; 30 Lake Ave., Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Price: studios cost \$309-\$399 U.S. per night for two or four people; one-bedroom suite \$499-\$599; prices after Labour Day, \$209-\$219 for studios; \$259-\$279 for one-bedroom suites. Two-bedroom suites for four to six people also available. Prices include Wi-Fi, fitness centre.

all good things ...: Boutique spa, juice bar, group yoga, \$13, Fri.-Sat.-Sun.; 518-583-2626, www.allgoodthingsnewyork.com.

Mingle on the Avenue: 518-583-6682, www.minglerestaurants.com; breakfast, lunch and dinner daily; children's menu available.

Saratoga: 518-584-3255, www.discoversaratoga.org or www.saratoga.org; Saratoga Race Course: 518-584-6200; www.nyra.com/Saratoga, until Sept. 1 except Tuesdays; Saratoga Performing Arts Center, 518-584-9330, www.spac.org; National Museum of Dance: 518-584-2225, www.dancemuseum.org, (closed Mon.).

ish the skin."

The tasty smoothies and juices are blended from such super-foods as kale, fruit, flax, hemp, ginger and almond butter. They're all ingredients meant to improve digestion and reduce inflammation and fatigue, but the benefits intensify when you add such boosters as wheat grass or spirulina.

Packages include: the Women's Day facial, massage, French manicure and spa cuisine (\$200); and the Couple's Retreat, a togetherness duet of massages, anti-aging eye treatments, facials and spa lunches (\$400). Brides and grooms can start planning months ahead with a personal consultant.

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The writer was a guest of the hotel, which did not approve or review this article.

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