

CHECKING IN

Ogunquit's Cliff House adds new cuisine, sports



ROCHELLE LASH

You see the road signs everywhere: Bienvenue au Maine.

Canadians are a vibrant force in Southern Maine, and I was particularly pleased to see former Montrealer Gerard Kiladjian at the helm of Cliff House Resort & Spa near Ogunquit.

Kiladjian and I met when he ran a smart boutique hotel in Portland, Maine, and he also had been an executive in Montreal, at the fashionable Loews Hotel Vogue and the five-star Four Seasons (back when Montreal had a Four Seasons). But now he has been in lobster country, by the sea, for a while.

Cliff House's outstanding quality is its exceptional setting — yes, on a breathtaking cliff — overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, an ever-changing drama of waves, tides and colours crashing against the rocky coastline.

"Cliff House is a Maine landmark owned by the same family for 140-plus years," Kiladjian said. "We're expanding on that by enhancing the hotel, the food and the service, but we want to retain the history and tradition that make this resort special."

The resort multi-tasks, appealing to different tastes at different price points. The 166 accommodations, all with private balconies and ocean views, are in three buildings: Cliffscape is home to the reception, dining room and lounges, plus spacious, upscale rooms. Cliff Spa has deluxe, adults-only guest rooms with gas fireplaces, king and sofa beds and wet bars. To please families, the wing called Cliff Top features budget-conscious king and double-queen rooms.

For sports fans, Kiladjian has opened 10 tennis courts and added a fleet of bicycles, in addition to the hotel's golf link with Cape Neddick Country Club, just across the street.

There is more to come because Cliff House's new owners are planning an overhaul that will start in 2016.

With his background in both the foodie city of Portland and cuisine-centric Montreal, Kiladjian has ramped up the fare at the dining room, the Pool Bar and the



Cliff House Resort & Spa, a landmark hotel near Ogunquit, Maine, has dramatic views of the Atlantic Ocean.

PHOTOS: CLIFF HOUSE RESORT & SPA



Cliff House has the most comprehensive spa in Southern Maine, featuring treatments with sea-based products, a sauna and steam room, a meditation labyrinth, a fitness centre, and an indoor heated lap pool.

Ocean Terrace. There will be a preview at the season's first Wine Tasting Dinner on April 25.

The updated dinner menu features baked, grilled or poached fish (haddock, halibut, lemon sole, Atlantic salmon and sea scallops), as well as Angus steaks, raw bar delicacies and decadent

comfort desserts like chocolate bread pudding, brownie sundaes and divine blueberry pie (Maine is famous for blueberries).

The U.S. celebrates National Lobster Day in mid-June, but there always is a crustacean feast at Cliff House: steamed lobster, lobster rolls, lobster salad, lobster

bisque, lobster mac 'n' cheese, plus such Maine favourites as crab cakes and clam chowder.

Cliff Spa specializes in services using natural Maine ingredients like seashells, blueberries and lotions of white pine and sea salts.

The most comprehensive spa in Southern Maine, Cliff Spa has 10 treatment rooms, a sauna and steam room, a meditation labyrinth, a fitness centre, an indoor heated lap pool and a lounge, all with sweeping ocean views. Some of the signature treatments are the Atlantic anti-oxidant facial, the algae detox and the wild rose body wrap.

You can make a day of it, or a half-day, with such packages as the Gentleman's Day Away that includes a deep-tissue massage, a facial, a pedicure and a scalp massage. The Atlantic Well-Being Package features a scalp treatment, a full-body exfoliation with sea salts, a stone massage and a hydrating body wrap.

Here is a quick pick-me-up, and a great gift. The \$99 Spa Special Sampler includes mini-treatments plus a glass of wine and hors d'oeuvres (Sundays and Thursdays, 4-7 p.m.).

IF YOU GO

Ogunquit, Maine, is a 5.5-hour drive from Montreal via Vermont Highway 89 south to Interstate 93 south and Route 101 east to Interstate 95 north. **Cliff House Resort & Spa:** 207-361-1000, cliffhousemaine.com, Cape Neddick, Maine. Open April 22-Oct. 31. Pets, \$35 per day.

Price: Three buildings range from \$145-\$280 U.S. until June 4 and during Oct.; \$175-\$395 U.S., June 5-Sept. 30, including Wi-Fi, three indoor and outdoor swimming pools, hot tub, parking, local and long-distance phone calls (even to Canada), fitness centre. Children 12 and under stay for free except in Cliff Spa rooms, which are for 18 and over. **Packages:** Wine & Dine (with lobster), Romance & Pampering (with spa and Champagne), Tee-Time (with golf at Cape Neddick Country Club) and Spa Splurges.

Cliff Spa: 207-361-6275, 10 treatment rooms; sample 50-minute services: blueberry body wrap, \$110; seashell massage, \$100; signature facial including a blueberry smoothie mask, \$125; includes spa lounge, sauna, steam room, outdoor meditation labyrinth, lockers, bathrobes and slippers. Without a treatment, spa access costs \$12 a day.

Dining: Ocean Terrace and Pool Bar are outdoors. The dining room serves daily breakfast, lunch and dinner and Sunday brunch buffet.

Maine Tourism: 888-624-6345, visit-maine.com; Ogunquit: ogunquit.org; The Yorks: gatewaytomaine.org.

Cliff House has a secluded setting, but casual shopping and beautiful beach life are at hand. The colourful Shoreline Explorer Trolley ferries guests up and down the coast. It stops at the hotel, costs a dollar or two and runs in high season, June 27 to Labour Day.

The perennially entertaining Ogunquit Playhouse will stage five plays this season, including Sister Act (May 20-June 20), Victoria-Victoria (June 24-July 18), and Saturday Night Fever, Sept. 23-Oct. 25 (Ogunquitplayhouse.org).

History abounds in The Yorks (York, York Harbor and York Beach). Locals say that the Nubble Lighthouse is one of the most photographed in the world, and the Old Gaol, among the oldest buildings in America, is where prisoners were forced to eat lobster because it was so plentiful.

Rochelle@rochellelash.com
twitter.com/rochellelash

WHERE TO STAY

TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CALL
514-987-2279



NEW YORK



RIVERSIDE TOWER HOTEL

www.riversidetowerhotel.com
New York City, New York
Toll free 800-724-3136

Singles USD \$134. Doubles USD \$139. Suites USD \$149. - \$169. Lincoln Center area. Hudson River views, 18 floors, kitchenette, 5 minutes to midtown. Safe, quiet luxury area. Riverside Drive & 80th Street. For more info, call 800-724-3136 or visit www.riversidetowerhotel.com



AMERICA'S BEST VALUE INN

www.plattsburghbestvalueinn.com
19 Booth Drive, Plattsburgh, New York
& 518-563-0222 Toll free 1-800-358-2137

In wonderful Plattsburgh. Only \$140 for 2 nights. Canadian cash. Up to 2 people, additional pers. add \$10 more per night. Free continental breakfast. Located conveniently off exit 37 on I-87. Some holidays, wknds & spec. events do not apply. Up to 70% occ. daily. Based on availability.



VERMONT



DAYS INN

3229 Shelburne Road, Shelburne
802-985-3334

Spend two nights at the Days Inn Shelburne, 2 person occupancy for \$149.00. Offer good through April 30, 2015. Close to attractions, shopping and restaurants. Free continental breakfast and wifi. Call us directly if you would like a newly remodeled room or any special requests. Take 189 to exit 13 and make a left. We are 3 miles down on the left.



QUALITY INN

2572 Shelburne Rd, Shelburne
855-547-2524

Special Rate for 2 night hotel stay for \$149.99 USD or 1 night for \$79.99 plus Tax. Park & Fly rate which includes 1 night stay with round trip transportation to BTV airport and up to 21 days parking for \$139.00 plus Tax. Rates based on double occupancy. Additional charge \$10/person/night. Pet charge \$20/pet/night. These rates also include Full Hot Breakfast, Indoor Heated Pool, Hot Tub, Sauna, Fitness center, Free wireless Internet and a Business center. Directions: I-89, Exit-13. Rates based on availability. Not valid on busy weekends. This promotion is available till 4/30/2015. Call 802-985-8037 or Toll Free: 855-547-2524 for reservation.



TRAVELODGE

1016 Shelburne Road, South Burlington
1-802-862-6421

Close to downtown Burlington shopping malls and outlets. Enjoy a Free Full Hot Breakfast, High speed wireless internet and pets welcome. Special rates for 2 nights \$129.00 USD or 1 night for \$69.99 USD Plus Tax. Additional \$10 USD per person/night. Pet Charge \$10/pet/night. Rates based on availability and not valid on busy weekends. Call 802-862-6421 for reservations



SMART SUITES

www.smartsuitesburlington.com
1700 Shelburne Rd., So. Burlington, Vt.
Toll free 877-862-6800

Come and enjoy our hospitality in either a studio efficiency at US \$82.00 or a more spacious one bedroom suite at US \$92.00/night, including a deluxe continental breakfast and free WIFI. Mention the Gazette special. Not valid with other discounts and subject to availability. Effective December 1, 2014 to May 1, 2015. Take Exit 13 off I-89, left on rt. 7 for 1.5 miles, same entrance as Holiday Inn Express.



GREEN MOUNTAIN SUITES HOTEL

www.greenmountainsuites.com
401 Dorset Street, South Burlington, Vermont
Toll-free reservations 866-337-1616

Experience all the Charm of a Boutique Vermont Country Inn Escape to beautiful Burlington starting at \$119/night weekdays Luxurious One-Bedroom Suite Includes Vermont-style Hot Breakfast served each morning Includes Fireside Reception with Beer, Wine and Food (M-Th.) 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. Toll-free reservations 866.337.1616