



Brookstreet Hotel, centre, is a conference and resort hotel on the outskirts of Ottawa. *BROOKSTREET HOTEL*

CHECKING IN

Ottawa's Brookstreet resort a double delight



ROCHELLE LASH

One establishment. Two facets. Brookstreet Hotel in the Ottawa suburb of Kanata, a 25-minute drive west of Parliament Hill, has a distinctly dual personality.

During the week, Brookstreet is a highly successful conference hotel. On weekends, it is a resort getaway. Either way, guests enjoy a relaxed style with golf, saltwater swimming pools, a jazz bar, a full-service spa, fine cuisine and lots of kids stuff.

Brookstreet is an 18-storey tower with airy, contemporary spaces and lots of outdoor appeal. It overlooks The Marshes Golf Club, so the views are fresh and green. With gorgeous gardens, fountains and a large pond, the resort is so photo-worthy that it handles an average of one wedding every week.

The complex is owned by tech billionaire Terry Matthews, chairman of Mitel Corporation

and No. 42 on Canadian Business Magazine's list of the country's richest people. Matthews lives nearby and he pays close attention to the hotel, dining there often, so standards are high. He is a jazz aficionado and the resort reflects his passion, featuring live music every night.

With about half of its clientele coming for conferences, Brookstreet has top-notch facilities, including a business centre, 18 meeting rooms and an outdoor pavilion, plus such tech features as webcasting, video conferencing and support for multimedia presentations.

The 276 guest rooms and suites are spacious, matter-of-fact and modern, with honey-coloured furniture, ergo-desks, good bedding and pod coffee machines. The rounded bow windows — thankfully, they open to let in fresh air — offer varying views: the golf course or the low-rise buildings of nearby companies in a business park, and in the distance, the Gatineau Hills and the Ottawa River.

FOOD AND DRINK

Brookstreet aims to keep its guests well fed, with choices that range

from the B Café for quick snacks and Starbucks coffee, to in-room dining with movie night treats, bubbly, club sandwiches and Haagen-Dazs ice cream.

Perspectives restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner in the modern, stylish dining room or outside on the canopied patio. The al fresco tables are so popular that they were booked solid when I arrived on a recent sunny Friday noon.

Lunch highlights include a terrific steak salad, baby back ribs, fish and chips, flatbread, a lobster and crab sandwich, salads, cured salmon, burgers and wild mushroom penne. Dinnertime signature dishes include sushi, lobster linguine, black cod, prawn chowder, dry aged beef and confit pork belly. And some of the irresistible desserts are pot au crème, gluten-free brownies, lemon tarts and cherry cheesecake.

Here is a special touch: Perspectives invites you to bring your own wine on Mondays through Wednesdays, so you can tailor your drinks with a budget bottle or a fine vintage.

Options Jazz Lounge adds valuable nightlife. Live combos

play nightly, and the July lineup will showcase the MDA Latin Jazz Quartet, Terence Wright, Kimberley Dunn, Roxy Swan and the duo of Pierre Monfils and Anouk-Michelle Grégoire.

Terry's Lager, named for the owner, is the signature beer on tap, and the bar menu features chicken wings, tofu, salads, sushi, steak and kids' choices.

WHAT TO DO

Golf is a top draw. The main attraction is The Marshes, a championship 18-hole course designed by Robert Trent Jones II with professional lessons and a driving range.

For quick outings, Marchwood is a nine-hole, PGA-approved short course. And to practise your short game, there is Blackbird Falls, an 18-hole, par-42 putting course dotted with bunkers and water hazards.

The outdoor pool would be my choice on a hot summer day. The hot tub is new this year, and you can fashion a spa day at the Flex Fitness room and men's and women's saunas and indoor whirlpools.

The Jazz Garden is a child-friendly outdoor salon with Freenotes Harmony Park musical instruments such as pagoda bells and the yantzee, a percussion-style affair.

Au Naturel Spa is a beauty centre with a sophisticated roster of massages and body treatments for singles or couples, plus manicedis, a Vichy rain shower, facials and advanced skin-care services for stimulating collagen, reducing age spots and smoothing skin.

The hotel lends bicycles and the front desk will map out a picturesque path along the golf

IF YOU GO

Brookstreet Hotel: 888-826-2220, 613-271-1800, brookstreethotel.com; 525 Legget Dr., Ottawa. Price: rooms start at \$169 on weekends and \$199 on weekdays, including indoor and outdoor saltwater swimming pools, fitness centre with saunas, whirlpools, Wi-Fi, daily electronic PressReader with 2,000 periodicals, Zone 525 games room, kids' activities (weekends), Blackbird Falls golf putting course, bicycles, wintertime outdoor skating pond. CAA discount applies. Breakfast is included on certain Friday and Saturday visits. Children under 18 stay for free. Pets are an extra \$25 per night. Extra: 24-hour business centre, indoor self-parking (\$12.95), Marshes 18-hole golf course, MarchWood nine hole-course, driving range, in-room dining. Packages available with kids treats, meals, spa. Perspectives: Bring your own wine Monday to Wednesday (a \$10 corkage fee applies). Breakfast buffet, lunch, dinner and kids' menu served daily, and brunch is available Sundays. Options Jazz Lounge: drinks and casual menu daily 11 a.m. to midnight on Monday to Thursday, or until 1 a.m., on Friday and Saturday. Sushi menu: Tuesday to Saturday, 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.; live music nightly. Ottawa Tourism: 800-363-4465, ottawaturism.ca; National Capital Commission: 800-465-1867, canadascapital.gc.ca

course, down Terry Fox Drive and connecting to Ottawa's extensive cycling network.

Zone 525 is Brookstreet's games room, equipped with an EyeClick interactive floor game, an arcade, Xbox, Wii and a mini-movie theatre. Youngsters also like the supervised weekend program of arts and crafts, science experiments, treasure hunts and colouring — and many parents get a kids-free break, although children under 12 have to have an adult accompanying them.

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