

ROMANTICS STILL HAVE TIME



ROCHELLE LASH
Checking In

It's less than 24 hours to V-Day — just enough time to book a romantic getaway. But even if you don't get away on Feb. 14, Hôtel Le Bonne Entente is offering its Valentine's special until the end of the month.

Enchanting Quebec City is ideal for an intimate winter tryst, and Le Bonne Entente is in the suburbs, eight kilometres from the historic charm of Old Town. It has an impeccable reputation among business travellers, but it also is great for cocooning.

The hotel's service is first-rate, so guests feel valued, and the word has spread. Le Bonne Entente was named the most romantic hotel in the Americas in a guest survey by the organization World Luxury Hotels, a global group of top-drawer establishments.

The crush of Carnaval de Québec ends Sunday, so rates will be relatively moderate and hotel rooms plentiful.

Given a five-star rating by Tourism Quebec and four diamonds by AAA, Le Bonne Entente is a low-rise contemporary resort that struts its stuff with several exceptional valentine-worthy elements, including:

- ♥ Gourmet dining and fine wines.
 - ♥ A variety of room styles with traditional canopy beds or Zen-inspired modern decor, and steam showers or claw-foot tubs.
 - ♥ Free child care on weekends from 6 p.m., so parents can enjoy romantic dinners à deux. (Also available daily during holidays and spring break.)
 - ♥ Breakfast in bed — perhaps brioche French toast or eggs Benedict.
 - ♥ A couple's massage or a "passion pedicure" at Amerispa.
 - ♥ A fancy gift shop with his-and-her elite treats, including golf goodies, cosy car blankets and wine accessories.
- Sleep, many ways:** All accommodations are well equipped with Nespresso coffee machines, work desks and fine cotton bedding from Italy. You can customize with such features as elaborate sound systems, fireplaces and spa-inspired bathrooms with chromotherapy baths, saunas or jet showers.



Hôtel Le Bonne Entente is a resort with lots of romantic potential. PHOTOS: HÔTEL LE BONNE ENTENTE



The MC Lounge offers casual-chic dining and good wines.

If your valentine likes the high life, spacious Urbania lofts and suites include Living Rouge, a private lounge for continental breakfast, a 5 à 7 of delectable canapés and an open bar, plus late-night Moët & Chandon Champagne. Privacy is an added feature, since Urbania has its own entrance.

The sleek Terzo room section recently launched a wine-tasting

experience. You can work your way through a \$20 card, sampling several of the sommelier's favourites in glasses of one, 2½ or five ounces, for \$4 to \$28.

Dining and drinks: MC Lounge has two personalities — a buzzy space for cocktails and casual-chic dining, and a more formal dining room.

The big deals for dinner are steaks and prime rib, but execu-

tive chef Jean-François Bélair also works up such delicacies as Cornish hen, suckling pig and Atlantic cod, plus such informal fare as Angus beef burgers and lobster mac 'n' cheese. There also are a few traditional French and Quebec dishes, including onion soup, bone marrow and blood pudding (boudin noir).

Watch for \$12 tartares on Wednesdays and wine flights on Saturdays and Sundays. Fridays are downright aphrodisiac: oysters cost \$1 and Champagne is half-price, so a bottle of Veuve Clicquot costs \$85 instead of \$170. If the way to your lover's heart is through a fine Bordeaux or Burgundy, MC Lounge's wine cellar has been recognized by Wine Spectator magazine.

For a romantic rendezvous, Bélair suggests a six- or seven-course gastronomic feast (about \$89 p.p.), which might showcase marinated octopus, foie gras, gravlax, grilled wild shrimp, venison or duck, followed by a frothy raspberry cake with rich white chocolate.

MC Lounge serves lunch, and also opens at 2 p.m. for casual bites — wagyu meatballs, calamari and lobster rolls — with perky cocktails including the Japanese yuzu sour or the pear martini with rosemary.

In summer, Le Bonne Entente's outdoor Napa Grill specializes in a sea- and farm-fresh choice of ceviche, scallops, lobster and Bélair's sumptuous cuts of beef.

IF YOU GO

Hôtel Le Bonne Entente, 800-463-4390, lebonneentente.com; 3400 Chemin Ste-Foy, Quebec City. Pet friendly, \$35 per visit. Parking \$15. Price: Third or fourth night free at certain times; 30-day advance bookings have 15-per-cent discounts. Rates start at \$159 in Business; \$179 in Terzo; \$229 in Urbania. Amerispa Détente: one night with breakfast, a \$100 dinner credit and 90 minutes of spa treatments for each guest, starts at \$509 for two. Spring Break (Feb. 26 to March 6): 50 per cent off the third night, kids under 12 eat free, activities and a chance to win tickets for Disney on Ice. Valentine's Special, until Feb. 29, starts at \$199 and includes bubbly, breakfast in bed, a \$25 MC Lounge credit and late checkout on Sundays.

All rates include Wi-Fi, outdoor hot tub, pool (three seasons), fitness room, children's Fun Club, shuttle to Old Quebec (schedule varies). The Exclusively BE loyalty program is free for guests who stay four nights or more during one year. BE perks include \$7 parking, a \$10 bar credit, upgrades, preferred rates and private gatherings, on occasion. Amerispa: 866-AMERI-SPA/866-263-7477, 418-650-4575, amerispa.ca. Quebec City tourism: 877-783-1608, quebecregion.com.

Spa and golf: Spa days start in Le Bonne Entente's outdoor hot tub and segue into the sanctuary of Amerispa, which offers a comprehensive roster of beauty and body treatments in 22 private rooms.

The Elixir Ice Cider exfoliation and other body treatments use nature-based Quebec products. And many of the elaborate anti-aging treatments feature luxurious imported products from Institut Sothys of France and Valmont of Switzerland.

For men, Amerispa offers massages, pedicures and detoxifying facials.

In summer, Le Bonne Entente is known for its international-calibre Golf La Tempête, a championship course in Lévis (a 15-minute drive) that was the locale for the 2014 Quebec PGA Champions Tour.

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