

Ottawa's Andaz reflects modern Canadiana



ROCHELLE LASH
Checking In

The Andaz Ottawa Byward Market opened officially this week, bringing a spirited lifestyle and a sexy slice of contemporary Canadiana to the nation's capital.

This is Canada's first Andaz, a progressive Hyatt brand whose name in Hindi suggests "personal expression" and whose image is upscale, stylish and contemporary.

And young. The 29-year-old executive chef, Stephen La Salle, is breaking ground with innovative Canadian cuisine at the restaurant feast + revel. And the striking rooftop lounge, Copper Spirits & Sights, will guarantee the hotel's cool factor.

With 200 rooms on 16 floors, the Andaz Ottawa is sizable, but it's boutique style, which means ultra-modern décor, lots of lounging and deluxe guest rooms.

It's pricey, too, but the hotel has a generous program of free perks. The Hyatt-Has-It list includes nearly 40 complimentary sundry items that guests can request, plus evening turn-down. And the hotel offers a welcome glass of wine, local phone calls, Wi-Fi and free mini-bar items like award-winning Hummingbird Chocolate and Harvey & Vern's ginger beer. On the other hand, there is a charge for bathrobes, hairdryers, device chargers and foam pillows.

Design, decor: The polished interiors, designed by Mason Studio of Toronto, channel Canada with bold modern lines, earth tones and materials such as sturdy stone and oak, plus burnished copper for warm, lustrous accents. Although there are lots of layered textures, the Andaz is a model of understatement.

The guest rooms are minimalist, bathed in soothing whites and pale neutrals, with floor-to-ceiling windows, blond wood furniture, 50-inch flat-screens, handy bedside lighting and walk-in closets. The bathrooms have rain showers and the suites add soaking tubs. The Presidential Suite has its own terrace, as well as a private service entrance for catering.

Food, drink: Cuisine is at the forefront at the Andaz. The restaurant feast + revel flows openly from the barista bar in the hotel entrance through to dining



The Andaz Ottawa Byward Market is a design dazzler with 200 rooms, contemporary Canadian cuisine and a striking rooftop lounge. PHOTOS: JOSH HOTZ

booths, a long communal table and kitchen-front counter seats.

The colours are earthy — moss, bark and slate — against a backdrop of white walls and large street-level windows. It's bright, upbeat and flexible enough for breakfast, lunch, dinner or bar bites, alone or in a group.

La Salle has created an exciting menu of farm-to-table fare and sustainable Canadian seafood at feast + revel.

"I call it New Canadian cuisine," La Salle said. "The dishes have both British and French influences."

"We prepare Arctic char, elk rib inspired by the Boreal forest, lamb poutine from Quebec and a full slate of Ottawa's regional products."

Feast + revel's localvore offerings include wild boar rillettes from Trillium Meadows Red Deer & Wild Boar Farm in Vankleek Hill; charcuterie from Seed to Sausage in Sharbot Lake; rib-eye steak from Enright Cattle in Tweed; and roast chicken raised "open sky" at Ferme Réveuse in Curran. The elk, from the Elk Ranch outside of Ottawa, is La Salle's favourite dish, which he cooks lovingly for three days.

The wine list spans France to New Zealand, but there are fine tastes from B.C.'s Okanagan Valley in Ontario's Niagara Region.

The gourmet bar menu features duck wings, burgers, oysters, fish 'n' chips made with La Salle's beer-lemonade batter and the Quebecano sandwich of duck



The rooms and suites are sleek and contemporary.

with maple mustard, gruyère and apple cider.

Even breakfast is a tour de force. Sure, there are eggs and bacon, but the creative choices include avocado and egg on country toast; chai-flavoured scones served with arugula brown butter; and the skillet of eggs with duck confit, pancetta, Brussels spouts, sweet potato, kale and cheese.

Copper Spirits & Sights is the Andaz' rooftop lounge. I visited the hotel before it opened, but I peeked and it promises to be a resplendent gathering place with dramatic views of Ottawa's landmarks as far as the Gatineau Hills. Music will rule at Copper, and guests can chill indoors around the avant-garde bar or outdoors on the lofty deck, on sofas set around fire pits.

La Salle is planning cheese, charcuterie and treats like Acadian sturgeon caviar to go with Canadian wines; cocktails such as the 1826 (Pluck tea from Toronto

infused with Canadian rye); and Ontario craft beer from Beau's, Muskoka and Beyond the Pale.

Global, local: Andaz operates in 13 cities including London, New York and Shanghai, as well as 2016 openings in Scottsdale, Ariz., and Delhi in India. Although a global brand, the individual properties focus intensely on local culture.

In Ottawa, the Andaz has planted roots in home grown Byward Market, near Parliament Hill, the Rideau Canal and the National Arts Centre.

The Canada Council Art Bank curated the Andaz' collection with an assist by the Ottawa School of Arts. Each floor of the hotel sports a subtle tribute to a different province with artworks.

The Andaz Salons will be entertaining, locally driven cultural ventures, all free for guests and visitors.

"The Andaz Salons will be our forums for Canadian and

IF YOU GO

Andaz Ottawa Byward Market: 613-321-1234, 800-233-1234, ottawa.andaz.hyatt.com; 325 Dalhousie St., Ottawa.

Price: Rates fluctuate. In Sept.-Oct., rooms cost approximately \$249 to \$459 (suites cost more), including Wi-Fi, local calls, soft beverages and snacks, newspapers, evening turn-down on request, 24-hour fitness centre. CAA discount applies. Hyatt Gold Passport earns free nights, late checkouts and upgrades. Pet friendly, \$100 per visit includes doggie perks. Valet parking, \$30.

Ottawa Tourism: 800-363-4465, ottawatourism.ca; National Capital Commission, 800-465-1867, ncc-ccn.gc.ca.

Ottawa experiences," said general manager Matt Graham. "These are quarterly events presenting music, artisan and art exhibitions and lectures, perhaps a wine tasting."

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