

NEW MARRIOTT A QUEBEC CITY TREAT



ROCHELLE LASH
Checking In

The freshly minted Marriott Courtyard Québec is full of surprises. It breaks the mould of the cookie-cutter chain hotel, with its sleek design, dramatic floor-to-ceiling windows and minimalist contemporary décor.

This six-week-young hotel is built around convenience and value, with free Netflix on TV, an indoor pool, sofa beds in most of the rooms and free parking right outside the door, both outdoors and in an open-air covered area.

The food at the in-house Commissariat is delectable. Chef Patrice Massicotte has worked in Japan and Spain (at the renowned El Bulli) and has been the private chef of Cirque du Soleil tycoon Guy Laliberté.

And yes, there is life outside the venerable walls and vintage charm of Old Quebec. The Courtyard is one block from Highway 40, about nine kilometres north of Place Royale, and a short hop from Île d'Orléans, Montmorency Falls and Mont-Ste-Anne.

Modern design: The lobby gleams with white marble floors and a glass-and-granite staircase, and the open spaces flow from front desk to bar to lounging areas.

The private media pods in the lobby are a first for me. Each has its own sofa and TV, so guests can gather in their own little groups.

"Millennials and Gen Xers want to socialize outside of their rooms," said general manager Yves Pouliot. "You can sink into a media pod, watch TV and have a drink. The kids sit together and take selfies."

The Marriott Courtyard brand is few-frills, so this hotel does not have a concierge, a bellman or a car valet. It's a bit of a do-it-yourself visit, but you can borrow a luggage cart, and the latest bells and whistles help. Marriott Rewards members can get a Marriott iPhone app in advance and get their room keys at the front desk without paperwork. And the Go Board! interactive large screen in the lobby is a virtual tourist guide.

Special touches in all 160 guest rooms include: faucets placed near the shower entrance so you can adjust the temperature before getting wet; excellent



The lobby gleams with white marble floors and a glass-and-granite staircase, and open spaces flow from the front desk to the bar and lounging areas. PHOTOS: MARRIOTT COURTYARD QUÉBEC

bedside lighting; plentiful mobile device charging outlets; desks with ergonomic work chairs; and blackout drapes that overlap so they are 110-per-cent dark.

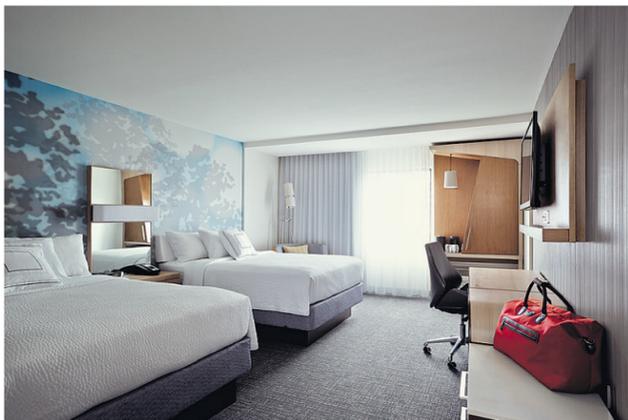
Location, the upside: The Marriott Courtyard's location in the busy suburb of Lebourgneuf has more advantages than I expected.

"It's central," said Bill May, who drove a van loaded with gear from Windsor, Ont., with his wife Tara and his two sons, 15 and 17. "We spent a day in Old Quebec, but we also toured Île d'Orléans and went hiking in the mountains."

Skiers and boarders can zoom to Stoneham Mountain Resort in 20 minutes and to Mont-Ste-Anne in 40 minutes. And the hotel is five kilometres from Centre Vidéotron, where the Boston Bruins will play the Montreal Canadiens in a pre-season game Oct. 4.

For cyclists, the Marriott Courtyard is located directly on the car-free Corridor des Cheminots that runs south to the Old Port, about 10 kilometres north to Wendake and also connects with another 100 or so kilometres of trails west to Portneuf and east to Mont-Ste-Anne.

For business travellers, the hotel is at an industrial-technological-financial nexus of major companies including HP, SNC-Lavalin, Fujitsu, GlaxoSmith-Kline and Promutuel Insurance.



All 160 guest rooms come with a microwave, mini-fridge and coffee maker. You can prep light frozen meals or cereal from The Market, off the lobby.

For families: If you are on the road with young children, the Marriott Courtyard has your back. Every room is equipped with a microwave, a mini-fridge and coffee maker, and you can prep light meals from The Market, a handy dispensary off the lobby that stocks frozen meals, just-add-water noodle bowls, beverages and cereal.

The Méga Parc des Galeries de la Capitale is a weatherproof entertainment paradise for kids, about two kilometres from the hotel. It's an indoor amusement park with a merry-go-round and Ferris wheel, as well as a year-round indoor skating rink and IMAX screen. If you make a day

of it, you can rent strollers and have lunch at the food court.

Dining in: Commissariat, the in-house bar and bistro, is independent of the Marriott Courtyard, so it's not restricted by formula hotel recipes. Chef Massicotte calls it bistro-chic, and it likely will evolve into the go-to for local residents and businesspeople.

Highlights at breakfast include thin crepes with strawberries and whipped cream, eggs Benedict and grilled brioches with ham and cheese. Lunch is a three-course repast of pasta, salad, beef or fish.

Massicotte's favourite dinner plates at Commissariat are: lobster and shrimp salad, foie

IF YOU GO

Marriott Courtyard Québec: 418-380-2700, 888-236 2427, marriott.com/yqbcq; 900 des Rocailles, Quebec City.

Price: Rates fluctuate. Rooms start at approximately \$179 until Oct. 15 (suites cost more), including Wi-Fi, fitness centre, indoor pool, parking, in-room kitchenettes and coffee. Marriott Rewards members get benefits. All guests get lowest rates when they book directly. CAA and senior discounts apply, when available.

Commissariat: 418-380-2700; breakfast, lunch, dinner, bar; children's menu available.

Quebec City Tourism: 877-783-1608, quebecregion.com

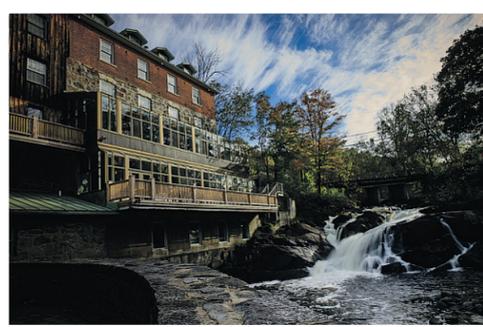
gras, salmon tatakis with jalapeños, boudin with spicy mango salsa, braised octopus, pork belly marinated in miso, canard confit, hangar steak, seafood risotto and roast cod with arugula pesto and caramelized cauliflower purée.
rochelle@rochellelash.com
twitter.com/rochellelash

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