

# STUDENTS GET GOLD STAR AT QUEBEC HOTEL SCHOOL

With four-star lodging and two restaurants, Montreal's ITHQ offers ultimate staycation



**ROCHELLE LASH**  
Checking In

I have seen the future of hospitality and it is inspirational. It's also delicious.

L'Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec (ITHQ), one of Canada's top tourism schools, runs a four-star hotel, plus two fine restaurants, four banquet rooms and a bar, all staffed by a blended family of students, professors and professionals.

ITHQ is brimming with the spirit and talent of Quebec, and if you would like to celebrate Montreal's 375th anniversary with a staycation, I can't think of a more fitting destination, especially if you have epicurean tastes. You will dine superbly and sleep in modern comfort. And you can play tourist and add a visit to a top spa or a local landmark.

## THE SCHOOL

Marking its 50th year in 2018, the school and its public hospitality sectors are operated by the Quebec Ministry of Education.

The culinary workshops are so engaging that Prince William and Kate, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, made ITHQ's kitchen a royal stopover on their tour of 2011.

The school graduates about 1,300 domestic and international students a year, who will build careers throughout Quebec and around the world as sommeliers, chefs, pastry chefs, servers and hotel and tourism managers. Many ITHQ prodigies go on to intern or work at prestigious Michelin-starred establishments, Caribbean resorts and French vineyards, and the school also partners with such luxury groups as Relais & Châteaux, Fairmont and Sofitel.

It's no wonder these kids wind up in the big leagues. Apprentice chefs learn French-inspired Quebec cuisine in 16 state-of-the-art kitchens. Aspiring table servers master the art of flambé with cherries jubilee and crêpes Suzette. Fledgling sommeliers absorb bouquet and body in a high-tech sensory analysis laboratory. And pupils in Inter-

## IF YOU GO ...

### Hôtel de l'ITHQ:

800-361-5111, 514-282-5111, ithq.qc.ca; 3535 St-Denis St.

**Price:** starting at \$179/\$199 for rooms, or \$279/\$299 for suites, including full breakfast, Wi-Fi, in-room coffee. Prices are higher June-Oct. Some rooms have free local calls, newspapers. Children 12 and under stay for free.

Employees of Canadian and Quebec governments get discounts. Extra: indoor parking, \$19 a day; packages with Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium, Biodôme Montréal, Scandinave Les Bains Vieux-Montréal, Strom spa on Nuns' Island.

### Restaurant de l'ITHQ:

Breakfast daily; lunch Mon.-Fri., à la carte or two-course menu, \$20; dinner Tues.-Sat., à la carte or five-course menu, \$55, or \$90 with wine pairings.

**Restaurant-école La Relève gourmande:** Tues.-Fri. (Sept.-May), lunch and dinner.

national Hotel Management go full immersion, all the way to making beds with precise hospital corners worthy of a gold star. Graduates can earn accreditation at three levels — trade school, CEGEP or university.

L'Institut's alumni include some of Montreal's most prominent chefs and restaurateurs, including Christine Lamarche of Toqué!, Claude Pelletier of Club Chasse et Pêche and Le Filet, Emma Cardarelli of Nora Gray, Matthieu Cloutier of Kitchen Galerie, Helena Loureiro of Portus 360 and Helena, Martin Picard of Au Pied de Cochon and Jonathan Rassi of 400 Coups.

## THE HOTEL

Guests of l'ITHQ include savvy Montrealers as well as business, government and leisure travelers who know a good thing at a good price.

The hotel is on the border of the Quartier des Spectacles, facing historic Carré St-Louis



Students cook and serve creative, exquisitely presented cuisine at the elegant Restaurant de l'ITHQ. ITHQ

near Sherbrooke Street. Forty of the 42 rooms have balconies with views of Mount Royal or Le Plateau.

The accommodations, decorated in soothing earth tones, are comfortable, contemporary and fully equipped. All four categories have work desks, Nespresso machines, mini-fridges, extra bedside lighting and flat screens, and some have hypoallergenic wood floors and bedding.

## FOOD AND DRINK

The Restaurant de l'ITHQ is the formal culinary showcase where students work (during the school year) as chefs, servers and sommeliers. Professors and professionals hover in the background as maitre d's and supervising chefs.

Everything is just so at Le Restaurant. The service plates are custom-designed by Porcelaines Bousquet, the white linen

napkins are folded with care, and a choreographed team serves dinner with a flourish of silver domes.

The cuisine is creative, inviting and exquisitely presented. The ingredients are market-fresh and Quebec-centric. Oenophiles are in paradise. The sommelier career path is popular, so the wine list is rich with private imports as well as such regional choices as Cuvée Vidal from Vigneron Léon Courville in Lac Brome.

The dinner menu changes, but might feature an amuse-bouche of tartare, appetizers like wafer-thin shrimp ravioli or marinated salmon, and flavourful mains including seared scallops, pork belly, Arctic char, roast venison, guinea fowl and vegetables with quinoa and candied lemons.

Students work independently at the Lobby Bar, so every cocktail is an adventure. If you opt for specialty drinks like l'Ungava Gin

Sour or Le Minaki Kir Bleu, \$1 of your \$10 tab will support ITHQ scholarships.

Dining at ITHQ's second restaurant, La Relève gourmande, has dual benefits. One, patrons enjoy two-course menus of cuisine raffinée cooked with passion for \$12 to \$17. And two, the students gain valuable experience preparing impressive dishes like duck confit roll with fig compote, wild mushroom risotto, filet of pike with pecan butter or strip loin steak with shallot sauce.

## WORKSHOPS

You, too, can sharpen your skills. Amateur cooks can reserve ITHQ culinary workshops (about \$100-\$150 per person) in groups of 15 to 20 on everything from soups to sweets. Courses in wine and spirits, from Vins 101 to Bubbles or Scotch, are presented in partnership with the SAQ (about \$85-\$195 per person).

# WHERE TO STAY

TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CALL  
514-987-2279



## QUEBEC



### WAKEFIELD MILL HOTEL & SPA

www.wakefieldmill.com  
60 Mill Road, Wakefield, QC | Toll-free 888-567-1838

Enjoy your Spring getaway minutes from Ottawa in picturesque Wakefield. Our award winning, LEED® certified hotel is the perfect choice for you and someone special. Relax in our full service spa, outdoor hot tubs or sample the renowned cuisine of Muse Restaurant beside the cascading MacLaren Falls. Energizing Gatineau Park hiking trails are mere steps away. Our website lists a full range of romantic getaways, spa packages, fine dining menus, yoga classes, gift certificates and local activities.



## MAINE



### FREEPORT USA

23 Depot St. / PO Box 452  
Freeport, ME 04032 | 207-865-1212

Perfectly situated where Greater Portland meets Midcoast Maine, our beautiful coastal village is the perfect hub, bustling with shopping, dining and attractions for you and your family to enjoy. Whatever your style, budget or taste, you'll find a place to stay in Freeport that's just right.



## VERMONT



### 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 always subject to availability. Rates in effect until April 1st, 2017. Take Exit 13 off I-89, left on Rt 7 (Shelburne Rd) 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, Vermont starting at \$119/night weekdays and \$129/nt. weekends Luxurious One-Bedroom Suite includes Fireside Breakfast served each morning Includes Fireside Reception with Beer, Wine and Dinner weekdays 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. Contact hotel for more information. Toll-free reservations 866.337.1616



## NEW YORK



### 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. Special \$140 for 2 nights, taxes incl. 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.