

Envoy tops Boston's booming Seaport scene



ROCHELLE LASH

It's practical, progressive and posh in a next-generation style.

The Envoy Hotel opened to a string of ovations, including being named the Best New Hotel in Boston by Forbes.com, Yankee Magazine and USA Today's Readers' Choice. That is lofty praise, but in a town with several openings a year, it is over the top.

An Autograph Collection Hotel, which is part of the Marriott group, The Envoy is a boutique-style establishment that is strong on lifestyle: It's all about stylish decor, food, drinks and fitness in the on-trend Seaport location.

The wow factors include striking modern design, the Lookout Rooftop and Bar, and the exciting cuisine of executive chef Tatiana Rosana at Outlook Kitchen and Bar.

"The Envoy is youthful and innovative, a fresh face with broad appeal," general manager Joe Mellia said.

"Our clients are millennials, boomers and gen X-ers, many doing business in the innovation and financial districts."

He knows his markets. At one time, Mellia was second-in-command of the five-star Boston Harbor, and in 2017 he was named general manager of the year by the Massachusetts Lodging Association for his handiwork at The Envoy.

Design: The Envoy is a gallery of spectacular design elements.

The supersized lobby chandelier is wrapped in maritime ropes and chains.

A vintage billiards table has been refitted with a video screen, so you can play pool digitally.

The design materials reflect the old and new of Boston. The interiors are sleek and open, with a clever mix of such textures as reclaimed wood, polished steel,

industrial piping and track lighting.

Technology: Tech features abound. At the reception, an iPad is embedded in the wall so you can research tourism information. The rooms are fitted with charging outlets and power-saving sensors that activate air-conditioning and heat when a guest checks in. The EcoSmart televisions stream Netflix, Hulu, YouTube, Pandora and Crackle.

Rooms: The 136 guest rooms, including two suites, are decorated in soothing neutrals with colour pops and lustrous pearlized textured walls. There are whimsical touches including TV stands made from bicycle frames and mini-bar snacks displayed on ladders.

On the comfort front, deluxe amenities include Serta pillow-top mattresses and organic cotton bathrobes in sweatshirt grey.

The toiletries are by Fresh, which uses natural ingredients infused with aromatic grapefruit and berry.

Food: Executive chef Tatiana Rosana, a 30-year-old new sensation, describes her cuisine as "progressive American," incorporating influences from her Cordon Bleu French training, her Korean wife and her Cuban ancestry, as well as Boston's roots.

Here are some tantalizing thoughts: a breakfast of lobster benedict; for brunch, the Autumn Buddha Bowl or baked potato flatbread with thyme and sour cream; for lunch, the Outlook burger made with River Rock Farm's dry-aged beef, avocado and "bacon jam."

Rosana's dinner menu — exciting innovative cuisine — features grilled octopus, outstanding beef tartare and tuna poké, scallops floating atop fennel foam, steaks with a difference, or halibut with bok choy and Szechuan mushroom broth.

Desserts crafted by Kim Darisse are intensely rich and delish comfort sweets such as the Campfire Torte of dark chocolate ganache and marshmallow; 24-karat Whoopie Pies with caramel; and the warm Apple Skillet with Chantilly cream and

custom-blended brandy-cinnamon gelato.

Drinks: Outlook's off-the-lobby bar is a happening scene, but it is The Envoy's Lookout Rooftop and Bar that has crushed Boston's in-crowd for its social

status, great harbour views and sophisticated drinks.

Craft beer comes from Harpoon Brewery and fine spirits from Bully Boy Distillery, and there are creative drinks like the Mission Statement, with

fig/pecan-infused bourbon and whiskey; or the Rose Fitz, with rosemary-infused vodka, cranberry and Cava rosé.

Neighbourhood: The Seaport, a new-for-the-2000s waterfront development, is growing exponentially with hotels, gourmet restaurants, trendy shopping and tourist attractions.

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IF YOU GO

The Envoy Hotel: 617-338-3030, theenvoyhotel.com; 70 Sleeper St., Boston

Marriott Rewards apply.

Price: Rates fluctuate and are approximate. Rooms, US\$169-\$499, Nov.-April, and about US\$299-\$699, May-Oct.; suites cost more; including Wi-Fi, fitness centre with Precor/Peloton machines, computers, morning coffee, umbrella/tote for guest

use. Extra: valet parking, US\$48; pet-friendly, one-time charge per pet, US\$100, includes doggie amenities and hypoallergenic cleaning.

Outlook Kitchen & Bar:

outlookkitchenandbar.com; dinner/bar menu, Mon.-Sun.; breakfast/lunch, Mon.-Fri.; brunch, Sat.-Sun. Lookout Rooftop and Bar, winter hours: Wed.-Sat, from 4 p.m.

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