

SHERATON ST-HYACINTHE SHOWCASES DESIGN DAZZLE

Fresh, stylish new hotel offers a taste of the brand's global revitalization



ROCHELLE LASH

The name Sheraton is as iconic as any in the hotel biz. After 81 years on the scene, and with a portfolio of nearly 500 hotels in about 80 countries, Sheraton represents a global presence and reliability, but it's making a massive move to transform and update, adding modern features and design dazzle.

The Sheraton St-Hyacinthe opened this summer, showcasing the brand's ravishing new look, which has evolved since the recent merger of its parent company, Starwood, with Marriott International. If you think Sheratons are staid and traditional, you're in for a surprise. **The brand:** "The revitalization of the brand will focus on Sheraton's roots as full-service hotels and gathering spaces for both locals and visitors," said Arne Sorenson, president and CEO of Marriott International, one of the world's largest hotel corporations. We met for a chat at Sheraton St-Hyacinthe.

"We're reinstituting high standards across the brand, and our longtime clients will appreciate the upgrades and attention to detail. There is so much value in the familiarity of the Sheraton name globally.

"And our rewards programs and worldwide reservations systems are major incentives. Loyalty members are very comfortable that we know them, and that they'll get increased value."

Sheraton is the third largest of Marriott's 30 brands and the largest outside of North America, so the changes and design will be influential worldwide. Some hotels will have privacy booths off the lobby where guests can make phone calls. And some will expand their workspaces with "collaboration suites" for small meetings. With communal tables, conversation corners and coffee/drinks bars, the lobby will have a town square ambience.

All 19 Sheratons in Canada eventually will reflect the reimagining of the brand, including the very prominent Le Centre Sheraton Montréal, which will

HOTEL INTEL

Rochelle Lash's column has a new name — Hotel Intel — and a wider focus. She still will pen hotel reports, and occasionally will add news, notes and trends. Hotel Intel launches with an interview with Arne Sorenson, CEO of Marriott International.

overhaul its approximately 800 rooms, six restaurants and meeting rooms between 2018 -20.

"All Sheratons won't look identical," said Sorenson. "It's a global brand, but each is tailored to a local market."

Sheraton St-Hyacinthe: This new Sheraton is a lustrous big-city addition to a folksy town that has grown up around rich agricultural land. It reflects the enhanced brand — fresh and stylish, with open, airy spaces and chic furnishings. The lobby is a series of attractive conversation areas, with étagères displaying sophisticated objets d'art and a sleek gas fireplace framed in white marble.

"It's a powerful, clean look and very current," said Sorenson. "The hotel is upscale, but functional."

For the leisure market, Sheraton St-Hyacinthe is a great one-stop, family-friendly weekend escape — and it's virtually all weatherproof. It has an indoor pool, a sundeck, a spa for beauty and body treatments, a fitness room and (opening soon) a rooftop jogging track.

A passageway connects to Galeries St-Hyacinthe, a shopping centre with a cinema and 150 boutiques. Families can request connecting rooms and baby gear, and there is a shuttle to charming Vieux St-Hyacinthe and an inspirational market of local foods.

For business, the hotel has extensive meeting spaces and is connected to the brand new Centre de congrès de St-Hyacinthe.

"It's clearly a place where work gets done," Sorenson said. "The integration to the convention centre is central to this hotel, and the link to the retail space ties us



The Sheraton St-Hyacinthe is "upscale, but functional," offering extensive meeting spaces and connecting to the new Centre de congrès de St-Hyacinthe. SHERATON HOTELS AND RESORTS

to the community." The hotel has 223 deluxe classic-contemporary rooms and suites decorated in cool whites and neutrals, warmed by natural fabrics such as sisal, linen and leather. Guests have perks including smart TVs with Netflix, YouTube and MLB.TV (Major League Baseball streamed live), signature toiletries by Le Grand Bain, and the luxurious Sheraton Sleep Experience, which features top-of-the-line mattresses and cushy pillows.

The Sheraton covers all bases with pet-friendly rooms, hypoallergenic rooms, and junior and full suites, some with kitchenettes and a few with dining areas.

Food: Le Barsa Lounge is an all-day, all-evening lobby bar with Starbucks coffee and pastries, plus Sheraton's new Paired program of light fare matched with beverages. So, perhaps a cocktail-

IF YOU GO

Sheraton St-Hyacinthe Hotel: 450-250-5555, 833-250-8555, sheratonsainthyacinthe.com; 1315 Daniel-Johnson St. W., St-Hyacinthe. Starwood/Marriott rewards apply. **Price:** Rooms \$159-\$199 (suites cost more), including around-town shuttle, indoor heated pool, sun terrace, pets/doggie bed, guest computer, fitness room,

Wi-Fi, MLB.TV/Netflix, indoor/outdoor parking, in-room coffee/tea. Baby cribs and hypoallergenic pillows on request. Sheraton Club floor includes lounge access with breakfast and refreshments.

Éveil des sens Spa Urbain: 450-250-0113, eveildessens.ca. **Tourism:** 800-849-7276, tourismesainthyacinthe.qc.ca.

hour bite like poutine with duck confit and cabernet, tuna sashimi with Chablis or warm brie with craft beer.

Club Sheraton loyalty members and top-tier room guests can indulge in a select breakfast and afternoon hors d'oeuvres at the spectacular private penthouse lounge, which has panoramic views of Mont-St-Hilaire,

Mont-St-Grégoire and the cornfields and pastures around town.

Zibo, a lively resto-bar off the lobby, covers breakfast and just about everything for lunch and supper, including steak sandwiches, burgers, salmon tartare, veal scaloppine and mac and cheese.

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