

CLARENDON RECLAIMS ITS PLACE IN QUEBEC CITY'S HISTORY



ROCHELLE LASH
Hotel Intel

The renewed Hôtel Clarendon is part of Quebec City's living history, and is starting a new chapter to mark its 150th anniversary.

The Clarendon has operated since 1870, which makes it one of the oldest continuously running hotels in Canada. Oops — hold that thought: make that almost continuously. This establishment closed after a fire last year and reopened in January as an all-new vintage hotel with Brasserie Les Mordus, a Parisian-inspired Quebec bistro.

Hôtel Clarendon is beautifully located in a venerable Upper Town neighbourhood, overlooking the Hôtel de Ville (1896) and within a block or two of La Maison Simons (1870), the Fairmont Le Château Frontenac (1893) and the Funiculaire du Vieux-Québec (1879), the cable car that swoops down to the Old Port and Place Royale (1608). The historic stone gate Porte St-Louis (1878), about a half-kilometre away, leads to the splendid parkland of the Plains of Abraham and La Citadelle de Québec (1693), a fortress and home of the Royal 22nd Regiment, the famous Van Doos.

Renovations: Hôtel Clarendon has maintained the charm of many eras, with its Victorian lobby, art-nouveau front doors and art-deco façade.

After the fire and water damage, the hotel was totally redone — reception area, corridors, meeting spaces and accommodations. The lobby is a turn-of-the-century parlour, with original period pieces saved from the blaze — studded leather wing chairs, ornate sofas and a round citron velvet settee.

The 144 guest rooms, with views of Old Quebec or a courtyard, mirror that look.

The bathrooms are smartly outfitted in rich black-and-white marble, with glass showers, gilded mirrors, bathrobes, slippers and a welcome surprise: heated floors.

Bistro: Brasserie Les Mordus offers an exciting mix of bistro cuisine by executive chef Stéphane Racine and gorgeous décor by LemayMichaud. The restaurant has two marine-inspired sections: a bright fish market with nautical buoys and bold canopy stripes, and a chic



Hôtel Clarendon recently reopened its art-nouveau doors after a major fire. *HÔTEL CLARENDON*

seaside dining room bathed in ocean blue. It's a French look with Quebec ingredients, particularly seafood.

Racine dishes up platters of Atlantic bounty: oysters, Nordic shrimp, seared scallops, smoked sturgeon, grilled octopus, smoked eel and one of his favourites, cod and chips — and those french fries would make any best-of list.

You can make a meal of Racine's creamy St-Laurent chowder, onion soup and cheese and charcuterie platters.

Main fish courses include lobster-shrimp ravioli, bouillabaisse, grilled squid with squid ink gnocchi and Arctic char. The carnivore corner includes boudin noir, duck confit, a tomahawk pork chop with corn purée, and a beef sandwich with cheese and a hearty casserole of ham, cheese and chorizo.

Racine's team includes chefs Fred Stanton and Emmanuel Munoz D'Avila, and his local suppliers include Viandes Bio de Charlevoix, Fruits et Légumes Beauport, Canard Goulu, Fromagerie Maurice Dufour, and Ferme Turlo for pork and poultry.

New around town: The former Old Port farmer's market has been reinvented as Le Grand



The new Brasserie Les Mordus is a Quebec take on classic French seaside bistros. *ALEXANDRA PÉREZ*

Marché (legrandmarchede-quebec.com), with more than 100 food producers and artisans.

■ The National Assembly (assnat.qc.ca) offers guided tours and a new visitors' centre, with exhibits on Quebec history and government. Le Parlementaire, a prestigious and fascinating power-lunch spot, is expected to reopen this month after a makeover.

■ Le Diamant (lediamant.ca) in

Place D'Youville is a new arts venue and home of the multidisciplinary performance troupe Ex Machina.

■ Les Galeries de la Capitale has opened Galeries Gourmandes (galeriesgourmandes.com), a Euro-style market with 20 food merchants, cooking workshops and Madame Chose, a must-see bistro where eccentricity is part of the culinary experience.

■ Centre de Ski Le Relais in

Lac-Beauport is close to downtown and moderately priced. It's compact, well groomed and equipped with a cafeteria, rentals, boutique and a snow-sports school for all ages. The accessible Le Relais is perfect for a night ski, a half-day off work, a family outing, or adventurous freestyle riding and skiing at the acrobatic ski centre, newly named for Olympian Nicolas Fontaine. *rochelle@rochell lash.com*

IF YOU GO

Hôtel Clarendon: 888-554-6001, 418-692-2480, hotelclarendon.com; 57 Ste-Anne St., Quebec City.
Price: eight categories, Nov.-April from \$149, May-Oct. from \$289; discount for prepaid or for two nights or more; youths 17 and under stay for free; including in-room coffee, mini-fridge, premium cable TV, Wi-Fi, fitness room (soon). Valet parking \$28.
Brasserie Les Mordus: 418-692-3365, brasserielesmordus.com; breakfast; two-course lunch, \$16-\$19; bar menu; dinner; kids' menus.
Quebec City tourism: 877-783-1608, quebec-cite.com

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