HOTEL INTEL

## Raven Inn adds trendy touch to Whitehorse



ROCHELLE LASH

Visitors to Yukon are currently required to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival, but when restrictions ease, travellers can explore the wide open spaces and the fresh air of Canada's North.

"The biggest compliment that anyone can give us," said Sarah Stuecker, general manager of the new Raven Inn and Railwork Bar and Lounge in Whitehorse, Yukon, "is that we are totally different than almost anywhere else in Whitehorse.

"The Raven Inn is contemporary, and we think of it as hip the fashionable place to be," said Stuecker, who is a native of Switzerland.

The first new hotel in Whitehorse in a long time, the Raven Inn opened in 2020, introducing a trendy, urban style to the smalltown vibe. Railwork dishes up uncomplicated cuisine with a northern flavour and a modern twist. The bistro-bar has accessible prices, hearty meals and good wines and beer, and is in action all day and all evening.

**Around town:** Nearby must-sees include the MacBride Museum of Yukon History, which has a fine collection of artifacts and also presents events, music and storytelling; and the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre, which showcases First Nations tra-

ditions and art. First Nations people account for about 25 per cent of Yukon's 44,000 residents, and Whitehorse is in the heart of Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwäch'än territory.

In normal times, tourists visit from as far away as Asia and Australia for the No. 1 attraction, the northern lights (aurora borealis). The magical phenomenon, in which the sky lights up in bands of colours, is best seen from September to May. June to August is Midnight Sun season; it peaks June 21, when it is daylight for 24

Lodging: The Raven Inn is high on conveniences such as upto-date bathrooms, some with both baths and showers, plus mini-fridges, espresso machines and high-speed Wi-Fi.

The 34 rooms and deluxe king suites are minimalist modern, with a few rustic accents like gingham blankets and forest murals. The 19 one- and two-bedroom apartments and the eye-catching penthouse are the hotel's "wow" factors. The apartments, some with views of the Yukon River and surrounding mountains, are handsomely furnished and have private balconies and attractive kitchens that suit a family stay or executive visit.

Some of the Raven Inn's facilities are currently closed: a lobby convenience store for snacks, drinks and souvenirs; and the outdoor hot tub on an upper deck. **Cuisine:** Railwork chef Wesley Jacques has crafted a menu of what he calls "elevated comfort food that people understand." He has attracted a varied clientele -



The contemporary Raven Inn is a new boutique hotel in Whitehorse, offering guests a hip, contemporary vibe. PHOTOS: MARTIN KNOWLES



The Railwork Bar and Lounge serves upscale comfort food.

blue- and white-collar workers, a bar crowd and couples out for date-night dinners.

Ingredients are locally sourced when possible. Lunch features brisket panini and French onion soup with bison broth. Sunday brunch favourites include eggs Benedict, prime rib steak salad, and Jacques' irresistible sweet crêpes with custard, whipped

cream, chocolate and fruit. Sundays also sparkle with pomegranate mimosas and cranberry

Dinner is a modern take on casual classics: bison pot pie, steak salad, Arctic char, pulled pork poutine and portobello burgers, with sides like sweet

potato fries or mac and cheese,

IF YOU GO

Flight schedules change frequently. Air Canada, WestJet and Air North fly to Whitehorse from Calgary, Ottawa, Vancouver and other cities. Air North, Yukon's Airline, was named Tripadvisor's Travellers' Choice Best Airline in Canada 2020, and Travellers' Choice Specialty Airline in North America 2020

Raven Inn: 866-246-6620, 867-466-7777, raveninn.com; 150 Keish St. (at 2nd Ave.), Whitehorse, Yukon.

Price: Rooms start at \$245, May-Oct.; apartments start at \$305. Minimum three nights. Packages available with brunch, local attractions. Prices slightly lower Nov. April.

Yukon tourism: 800-661-0494, travelyukon.com.

green beans and pepperoni chips. For dessert, Jacques goes retro with sundaes, crème brûlée and his signature cheesecake. Backstory: Let's recap our Canadian geography. North of British Columbia, Yukon Territory is one of Canada's three northern regions, along with the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Whitehorse, with a population of

about 33,000, is the capital. Whitehorse had a big moment during the frantic Klondike Gold Rush of the 1890s. Now things are happening again. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (Prince William and Kate Middleton) visited in 2016, and new lodgings and attractions have opened since. This year marks the 125th anniversary of the discovery of gold in the Yukon, so there is a festive air in town.

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