

MUIR MAKES WAVES ON HALIFAX HARBOURFRONT



ROCHELLE LASH
Hotel Intel

The new Muir hotel in Halifax embodies Atlantic appeal, with an elevated experience of marine-inspired decor and coastal cuisine in a singular setting at a historic port.

Opening Dec. 10, Muir has already transformed the city’s waterfront architecturally and will add low-key luxury and lustre to Nova Scotia’s traditional hospitality sector.

Distinctive on many fronts, it overlooks Halifax Harbour, so most of its 109 guest rooms and suites have captivating water views of this protected inlet of the Atlantic Ocean. Muir is the centrepiece of the Queen’s Marque complex, which is home to galleries, shops, nightlife and eateries, as well as offices and upscale condos. The whole package is a game-changing new landmark.

“Muir signals that our city is a dynamic and desirable destination for tourism and business travel,” said Halifax Mayor Mike Savage. “The dramatic waterfront location, the thoughtful regional design and the warm East Coast welcome make it a compelling addition to our vibrant downtown.”

The neighbourhood has a particularly festive air this month, with the Evergreen Festival showcasing holiday-themed food, spirits, crafts and entertainment until Dec. 19.

Local luxe: Muir is part of Marriott’s Autograph Collection, which groups about 140 hotels worldwide. The common thread is that they are steeped in local character and cuisine.

Outdoors, Muir’s guests will be encouraged to embrace the waterfront environment of invigorating ocean breezes and bracing salt air. In season, guests will be offered the complimentary use of kayaks and paddleboards, as well as cruises with a captain on a 36-foot sailing yacht or a 24-foot motorboat. On land, options include a Range Rover for short drives and bicycles for exploring Halifax’s waterfront promenade.

Interiors are classic-contemporary, fashioned with the sturdy materials and detailed craftsmanship of Nova Scotia. It’s all brought to life by a dream team led by MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects; Studio Munge designers; developer Scott Armour McCrea, president and CEO of the Armour Group; and Eugénie Jason, Muir’s general manager, who brings know-how from Four Seasons hotels in Montreal, Bora Bora and the Beverly Wilshire in Beverly Hills.

Muir means sea in Scottish Gaelic, and the decor plays subtly on a nautical theme, with curved spaces, smooth walnut accents and circular mirrors, all channeling the staterooms of a luxury ocean liner. The decor uses muted colours of the coast — sand,



The Muir hotel is the centrepiece of a Halifax harbourfront development called Queen’s Marque. *MUIR*



Muir’s classic-contemporary decor uses muted colours of the coast. *BRANDON BARRE*

stone, driftwood, seafoam and soft whispers of cloud and fog.

The spa-style bathrooms, decked out with marble tubs, rain showers and teak stools, marry granite and glass for a clean, bold look. The Watch is a lavish VIP suite with an ocean panorama, a tasting room and space for entertaining.

You will never be far from the rugged beauty of Nova Scotia. Each guest room is graced with a landscape by a Nova Scotia artist, all part of a fine collection of regional paintings, photography, ceramics and sculptures. The hotel’s most prominent artwork is a show-stopping tapestry by Allison Pinsent Baker depicting

Atlantic waves crashing against a rocky shore.

Food and drink: “The cuisine at Drift also is a love letter to Nova Scotia and the Maritimes,” said executive chef Anthony Walsh, who at one time ran the top Toronto restaurant Canoe.

Drift, Muir’s restaurant, launched two weeks ago and already is a leader in Halifax’s culinary scene. Its specialties are updated regional classics, including hodge podge, a mélange of haddock, scallops and vegetables; Nova Scotia lamb; Yarmouth lobster pot pie; and roast chicken and rappie pie (chicken, onions and potatoes).

Standout breakfast dishes by

Muir’s executive pastry chef Cori Osborne include the vegan chia pudding cup with coconut, sea buckthorn and toasted seeds; brioche French toast with brown sugar anglaise and haskap berry preserve; and the Full Drift, with eggs, smoked bacon, black pudding and devilled tomato.

Muir’s guests will also have access to BKS, a private speak-easy-style lounge with a waterfront terrace. This insiders’ hangout will have cocktails and a bar menu inspired by Halifax’s notorious past as a rum-running city during Prohibition of the early 20th century.

Wellness: The Windward Wellness centre has a heated indoor

IF YOU GO

Muir, an Autograph Collection hotel: 902-407-6847, 833-888-1011, muirhotel.com; 1709 Lower Water St., Halifax. Marriott: 888-236-2427, marriott.com; Marriott Bonvoy program applies; Marriott’s app offers contactless check-in. Accessible facilities. **Price:** Rooms from approximately \$389; including courtesy car, watercraft, in-room Nespresso, indoor pool and spa baths, Wi-Fi, Netflix. Pet-friendly (size limit), including beds and run area. Parking: \$35 overnight. Spa treatments available at Interlude Spa. **Drift (drifthalifax.com):** Breakfast, lunch, dinner, in-room dining. **Halifax tourism:** 902-422-9334, discoverhalifaxns.com. Nova Scotia tourism: 800-565-0000, novascotia.com.

swimming pool, and spa features including a cold pool, halotherapy (a salt-air room to improve breathing), an infrared sauna and a eucalyptus steam room. Fitness options include the latest workout equipment and yoga and spin studios.

The Interlude Spa is next door in the Queen’s Marque complex, so guests can spruce up with beauty and body treatments and special-occasion services.



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