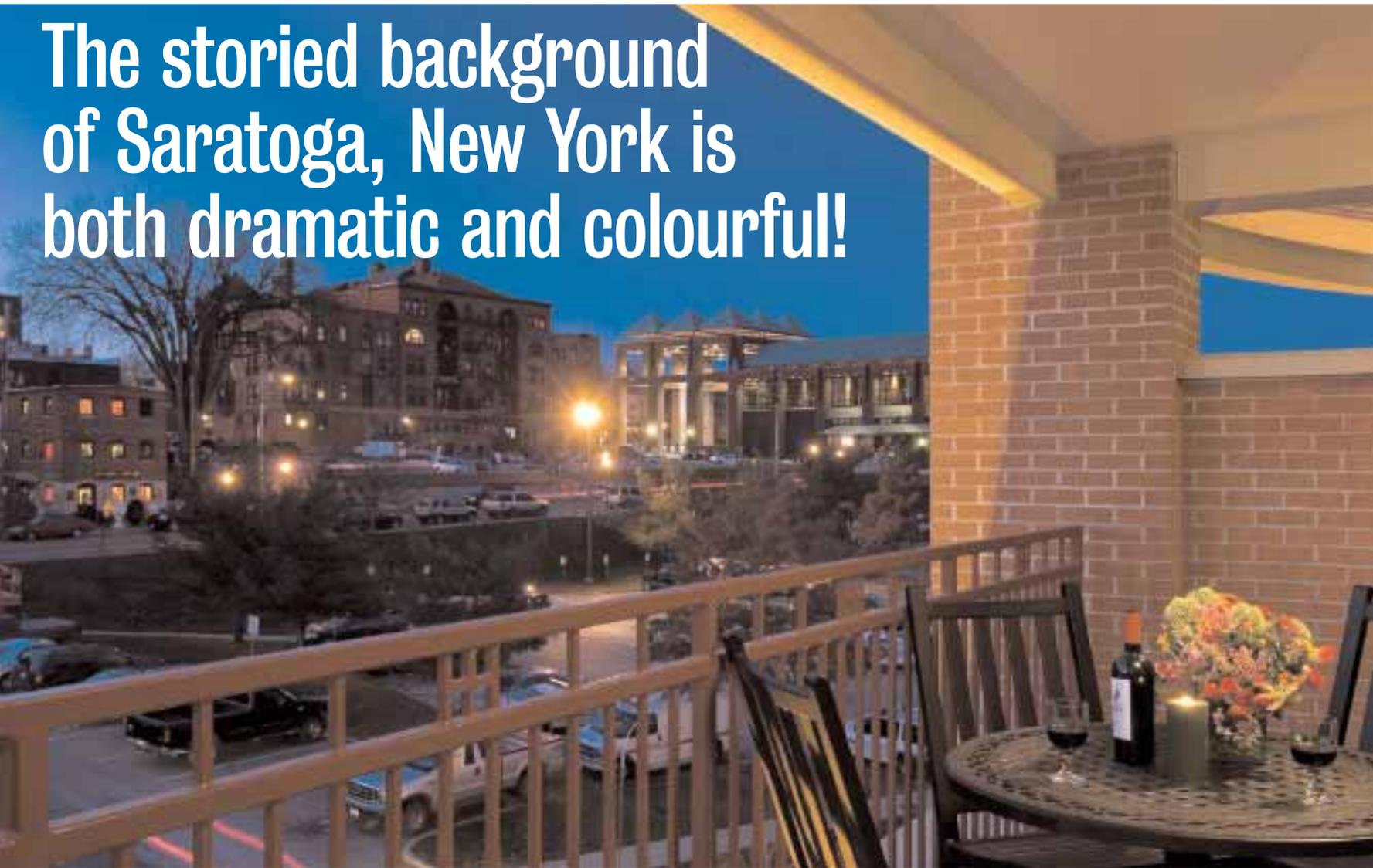


The storied background of Saratoga, New York is both dramatic and colourful!



Some of the rooms at the Hampton Inn and Suites have beautiful balconies.

By Mike Cohen
The Suburban

Saratoga County (www.discoversaratoga.org) is home to exciting nightlife, chic boutiques, great events and much more! Of course, the Saratoga Race Course is a big draw each summer. Nestled in Upstate New York, just about three hours from Boston, New York City, Philadelphia and Montreal and just off Interstate 87, Saratoga is centrally located between the Adirondack Park just to the north, and the bustling Albany New York Capital District to the south.

The storied background of Saratoga is both dramatic and colorful! From the early lore of native Indians and healing waters, to the history-changing Battle of Saratoga during the Revolutionary War, to the captains of industry and moving picture stars that frequented Saratoga in the early days, there is plenty to explore here in the renowned Spa City! Meeting and convention visitors love to tour the battle grounds, browse area museums, and take a walking tour of the historic healing Saratoga mineral springs!

Horses and thoroughbred horse racing in Saratoga are a spectacular draw for meeting and convention goers. Saratoga Racetrack itself is a historic venue, offering excitement, thrills, and the charm of a bygone era. Saratoga Polo is a dynamic and unique event for the experienced and uninitiated alike. Visitors can take a horse and carriage ride,

experience video gaming extraordinaire, and browse the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame! Saratoga meeting planners will find that there is something for everyone visiting for business or pleasure!

There are signature Saratoga events, ranging from the spring Farmer's Market, arts and jazz, to the ever-popular mid-winter



The historic Saratoga Race Track is a popular spot.

ChowderFest, to the legendary excitement of the Saratoga racing season.

For after-hours distraction and appreciation, Saratoga continues to be a center for the arts and culture as it has for generations. This eclectic city has been home to some amazing residents, visitors and cultural icons.

Taking a break from your busy convention or meeting schedule presents countless opportunities for exploring the historic sites and museums of this great little city. The

National Museum of Dance is located here, as is the renowned Tang Museum at Skidmore College. The Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC) hosts a number of distinguished music and dance venues along with pop culture concerts. You'll want to be sure and bring home a bit of the Saratoga art scene with you once you visit the newly energized Beekman St. art district. SaratogaArtsFest is a four-day annual celebration of the arts scheduled in early June, which delivers the brilliance and energy of art in its many forms--music, dance, visual art, film, theatre, and literary art.

We stayed at the Hampton Inn and Suites (www.saratogaspringssuites.hamptoninn.com), a brand I am always comfortable to choose. This one is located at 25 Lake Avenue.

The Hampton Inn & Suites Saratoga Springs Downtown is probably one of the nicest properties from this brand that I have come across, having opened just over five years ago. It is part of the Turf Hotels group. The first thing you will notice is the majestic entrance. Upon checking in your room key grants you entrance to free covered parking on a multi-level garage. There are 123 guest rooms and suites featuring king- or queen-sized beds. Some suites have spacious balconies and separate living rooms with sofa beds. We booked the latter and were pleasantly surprised by how extraordinarily large the unit was. I particularly liked

the ultra-comfortable chairs in front of the two TVs.

You can connect to free high-speed internet access to surf the web, get some work done at the desk or set up your laptop on the convenient lap desk to work from the comfort of the clean and fresh Hampton bed. Amenities such as a mini-refrigerator, microwave and 32-inch HDTV with premium cable television make you feel at home. You can also take advantage of a free hot breakfast.

This is not only a great place to stay when visiting Saratoga or looking for a one night stay, but as a base to travel to and from Lake George or Albany as you as smack in the middle of both. The hotel is in fact 30 minutes from Albany International Airport and minutes away from attractions. The Adirondack Mountains offer diverse outdoor recreation. You can go white-water rafting, boating and fishing at Lake George, explore a cave, drive along the historic Mohican Trail or ride a train through the winter landscape, enjoy family fun at Great Escape & Splashwater Kingdom Six Flags. Also check out see the battlefield, the restored Schuyler House, and the Saratoga Monument.

The Wilton Mall (www.wiltonmall.com) is definitely worth stopping by. It has a number of anchor stores like JC Penny and Bon Ton, some great shoe stores and a Ruby Tuesday restaurant.