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TRAVEL TALES

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE JEWISH TRAVELLER

By **MIKE COHEN**

TORONTO'S HOCKEY HALL OF FAME: There was only one thing missing when I made my first ever visit to the Hockey Hall of Fame (www.hhof.com) - a section of noted Jewish hockey players.

Located downtown in Brookfield Place, at the corner of Yonge and Front Streets, visitors are told to pretty much allocate several hours to explore Toronto's premier hockey attraction and I did just that. Montreal fans will enjoy experiencing a replica of the Canadiens dressing room at the old Forum, complete with sweaters of such greats as Ken Dryden and Guy Lafleur.

Guests can take shots at real-time goalies (I scored on one of five shots), stop the shots of legends Gretzky and Messier, call the play-by-play of some of hockey's greatest goals (I chose a Guy Lafleur goal to describe), view hockey flicks like Stanley's Game Seven, (hockey's first 3D film and 30 minutes of great entertainment) in one of two theatres, get up close and personal with the Stanley Cup and explore the largest collection of hockey memorabilia in the world. There is so much history to read and analyze, such as the space allocated for Hall of Fame inductees.

WHERE TO STAY: I like to stay downtown when visiting Toronto and for my family nothing beats a two bedroom suite at The Grand

Hotel and Suites (www.grandhoteltoronto.com), located at the corner of Jarvis and Dundas.

The Grand Hotel and Suites is only 14 years old and still looks spanking new. It features 177 extraordinary guest suites. For families, the junior two bedroom suites feature spacious living room/work areas separated from the two bedroom areas by sets of double French glass doors with vertical blinds. The bedroom areas contain king and queen size beds, LCD TVs and dual-line telephones with data port. A separate living area contains a double sofa bed, TV, DVD Player, CD Player and a work desk with a dual-line

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TRAVEL TALES

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telephone. We got one of the recently refurbished second floor rooms. You can slip into a plush bathrobe, use the iron and ironing board and enjoy the convenience of the laptop size in-room safe.

There is complimentary wireless internet access in each room. The fully equipped kitchenette is a definite bonus and something kosher guests in particular will find useful as they can prepare some of their own meals. A very large Metro supermarket is just a block and a half away.

All guests get to enjoy a splendid breakfast

buffet, free of charge, with an extensive array of items from which to choose. There is also a fitness centre, the two-storey neo-classical pool indoor pool (surrounded by exquisite hand painted murals) and two whirlpools on the rooftop garden, which provides a panoramic view of Toronto.

There is 24 hour room service, twice-daily maid service, valet and underground parking, a friendly concierge, a restaurant, 10,000 square feet of meeting space and a fully equipped business centre. Shuttle services are avail-

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THE CUMMINGS CENTRE'S HAS LAUNCHED ITS new spring/summer semester, its biggest season ever. Over 200 programs are offered for the 50+ ranging from bridge to global affairs, fine arts or crafts, languages, computers, film, fitness, performing arts and more. Along with the exciting program lineup, this spring the Centre is featuring some of Montreal's most engaging speakers including Political Cartoonist Aislin; CTV News Director Jed Kahane; Ethnomusicologist Craig Morrison and Neuroscientist Dr. Amir Raz. The Cummings Centre invites the community to join them for what will surely be a thought provoking season. Registration is now on by calling 514.342.1234 or visiting them at www.cummingscentre.org Pictured above Cummings Centre member Janice Lipas participates in a stone sculpture class.

**We Are Pleased to Join in Extending
Passover Holiday Greetings to Our
Jewish Friends and Customers throughout
MONTREAL AND AREA**

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May your Festival of Freedom celebration be a
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able to anywhere in the financial core.

DINNER: Finding a kosher restaurant in downtown Toronto is no easy task, so you will probably have to venture towards Highway 401. The Shore Club (www.theshoreclub.ca) on Wellington Street turned out to be a real treat. It is owned by noted Jewish restaurateur David Aisenstat, who was born and bred into the industry. He first learned his chops from his father Hy Aisenstat, founder of the famous Hy's Steakhouse chain. His ability to recognize and retain talented people, and his passion for art and design, combine for what have been consecutively successful ventures in the industry.

A vibrant restaurant and cocktail bar offering up

lively ambiance, The Shore Club (which also has an Ottawa locale) is memorable for its atmosphere, professional service and outstanding cuisine. Located in the new RBC Dexia Centre, the restaurant is situated in Toronto's bustling Entertainment District and is just steps away from prominent cultural venues such as Roy Thomson Hall, David Pecaut Square and TIFF Bell Lightbox, making it an ideal pre-performance dinner destination. It's also within walking distance of the financial district, Rogers Centre and the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Valet parking is available next door at the Ritz Carlton.

My family and I had dined at Joe Fortes last

TRAVEL TALES

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summer, so we knew we were in for an outstanding culinary experience. The menu includes numerous sumptuous choices such as fried calamari, steamed clams and dungeness crab cakes. There are a number of soups and salads. For main courses, you have a choice between seafood specialties such as salmon wellington, maple-glazed king salmon, smoked Alaskan black cod, herb-dusted sea bass and stuffed rainbow trout and steakhouse favorites like the New York strip, filet mignon, braised short ribs and double-cut lamb chops. As for sides and add-ons, there are no less than 21 selections. Yes, we saved just enough room for some of the spectacular home made desserts.

JEWISH CONNECTION: The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) has a vibrant, growing Jewish community of well over 180,000. At last count, there were some 118 synagogues. In the downtown area you will find the First Narayever Congregation (<http://www.narayever.com>) at 187 Brunswick Ave, just a few steps north of Harbord Street. This is a warm and welcoming traditional-egalitarian synagogue. The Annex Shul, based at the Wolfond Centre on Harbord Street, is another congregation serving the downtown area. Visitors can call them for more information on services.

Mike Cohen's email address is info@mikecohen.ca. Follow his travels at www.sandboxworld.com/travel and on Twitter @mikecohencl.

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