

The Hilton Lac-Leamy is a great place to stay in the Outaouais region

by *Mike Cohen*

The Hilton Lac-Leamy in Gatineau, Quebec, just across the river from Ottawa, is a one-of-a-kind destination. Surrounded by waterways, woodlands and recreational trails, it offers the atmosphere of an urban resort in an enchanting environment. Among all the hotels in the Hilton chain, this one is ranked first in Canada, by the chain, and among the top 10 across the Americas. In fact, it has an AAA five-star hotel with four diamonds rating since its opening in 2001.

We were very fortunate to spend the day there recently, and what a treat that was.

Upon entering the hotel lobby, I was dazzled by the work of world-famous artist

Dale Chihuly: four blown glass chandeliers and six islands of red flowers at the back of the reception area. In addition, a coil composed of small glass works surrounds the column of the grand staircase leading to the upper floor of the hotel.

Connected to the Lac-Leamy Casino, the hotel features a fitness centre, outdoor heated pool, indoor pool, spa and wellness center and a variety of dining options.

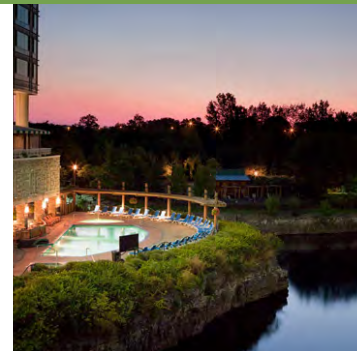
Unquestionably, the outdoor pool is a big draw here. We were seated poolside on comfortable lounge chairs, with a large umbrella to shade us from the sun. The pool itself was perfectly heated as I floated about relaxing, resting on the noodles

they provide to each guest. There are also two large hot tubs, just the tonic for some aching bones.

We took advantage of the room-service menu poolside, enjoying chicken quesadillas, a pizza and some chips and drinks. There is a nice shady eating area at the pool. We hope to go back someday and try some of the fine dining options.

The hotel has a first-class casino on site, a 1,000-seat theatre, and a 2,500-seat ballroom and conference hall.

Accessibility is omnipresent at this hotel at the business centre, concierge desk, restaurants, meeting rooms, on the elevators and in the guest rooms, whose



| The beautiful poolside area.

doors are 32-inches wide. There are valet and accessible parking services, a clear path to the entrance, ramps leading to the passageway to the casino and accessible routes to the fitness facilities and pools. The hotel says the alarms are audible and braille is available on the elevators and for room numbers. Service support animals are welcome. ■

A return to beautiful Nice, France

by *Alexandra Cohen*

The capital of the French Riviera, Nice is a perfect city for a relaxing getaway. This past summer, I returned to Nice for the first time in eight years and was able to enjoy a fantastic few days by the Mediterranean.

For those who have not yet visited, Nice is the fifth largest city in France, with 350,000 citizens and more than 1 million people living in the surrounding areas.

Where to Stay

During my trip, I stayed at the gorgeous Hyatt Regency Nice Palais de la Méditerranée in a spectacular king room with a full sea view. This historic and luxurious five-star hotel is located on the legendary Promenade des Anglais, directly across the street from the sea. There are 187 spacious guestrooms and suites, complimentary Wi-Fi, the option for mobile entry with your room key available through your smart phone, a beautiful indoor-outdoor pool, as well as a gym, sauna, and Turkish bath. The hotel restaurant, le 3e, includes a lovely terrace which overlooks the Mediterranean, as well as the outdoor pool, includes a large and delicious breakfast buffet, which I was able to enjoy every morning. The hotel also features a business and conference center on site. Dogs under 15 kilograms are permitted on the premises for an additional fee.

During my stay, I was very impressed with the hotel's customer service. Their concierge service is able to reserve seats for hotel guests at the nearby beach. They will give you a voucher and charge it to your room. Response to requests for room service and other needs was always swift.

In terms of accessibility, six rooms (including one suite) are adapted with walk-in showers (equipped with a seat on the wall

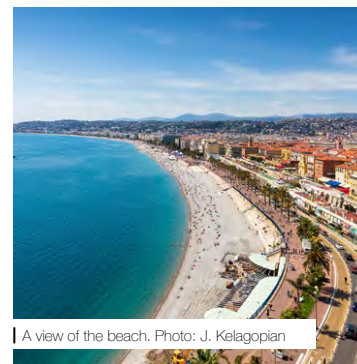
and a grab rail), a sink accessible for those in wheelchairs, height equipment (bed, mini bar, safe box, toilet) for wheelchair access, as well as a wardrobe with a telescopic rod.

You can e-mail nice.regency@hyatt.com or call +33 4 93 27 12 34 prior to your trip with any questions.

Dining out:

There are many fantastic dining options in Nice. During my previous trip in 2014, I dined at Le Grand Balcon (www.legrandbalcon.net), located at 10 rue St. François de Paule near the opera house. Having had such a great experience, I was looking forward to returning, and it did not disappoint. Since my last visit, their terrace seems to have more than doubled in size, and all of their tables were full. While their menu offers numerous options, I personally enjoyed their sea bream ceviche with pomelo, the scallops with truffles and homemade mashed potatoes, and the parmesan cheese risotto. For dessert, I had a tasty, restyled lemon meringue pie. Undoubtedly, should you choose to visit, you will enjoy their creative and delicious cuisine. Le Grand Balcon is wheelchair accessible.

Another excellent restaurant worth visiting is Bocca Nissa (www.boccanissa.com), a trendy restaurant and tapas bar located



| A view of the beach. Photo: J. Kelagopian

at 3 rue St. François de Paule. At first glance, the building resembles a beautiful Mediterranean town house. You will enter by walking down a hallway with walls lined entirely by greenery. Their rooftop terrace provides views of Vieux Nice and is also lined with plants and twinkle lights. Their menu contains a large array of tapas to share. I tried their tortilla dish, as well as their fried squid and sardines, sea bream ceviche, and beef ravioli. For dessert, their chocolate bombs were a real treat. For those less interested in tapas, their menu also boasts larger meals that one may choose to share, such as lamb chops and beef ribs. This property is also wheelchair accessible. ■