

TRAVEL TALES

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE JEWISH TRAVELLER

By MIKE COHEN

TAMPA'S ICONIC JEWISH OWNED RESTAURANT: While my family and I stayed in beautiful St. Petersburg on our most recent trip to Florida's Gulf Coast, we did make the 30 minute drive into Tampa a few times.

Prior to our trip I began to hear many excellent stories about Bern's Steak House (www.bernsteakhouse.com) in Tampa. This is the spot known for perfectly aged steaks, one of the largest wine collections in the world and an internationally famous dessert room. These elements have combined since 1956 to provide guests with a unique culinary experience.

I must say I cannot recall a dining experience quite like this. The prime steaks are cut to order, vegetables are grown locally on the Bern's farm and sourced from the finest purveyors, and the menu includes 21 choices of caviar. Bern's Jewish founder, Bern Laxer, was born to a Romanian mother and Polish father on the Lower East Side of New York in 1923, and grew up in the Bronx. After serving in World War II, he returned to New York where he pursued a degree in advertising from New York University. He met his wife Gert in a copy-righting class and they married in 1950. To support them, Bern operated a one-man advertising agency in the city.

Following a number of ventures, Bern and Gert ended up in Tampa where Bern's Steak House was born. They grew from one to eight dining rooms and from 40 to 350 guest seats. Sadly, Bern passed away in 2002. Gert, now retired, visits occasionally while their son, David, carries on the tradition of running Bern's Steak House and Bern's Fine Wines and Spirits.

Bern's waiters train for approximately one year, working at every station in the restaurant. Our server reviewed the extensive menu for us and made some recommendations. We had some delicious appetizers and a 22 ounce cut of Chateaubriand as the main course. All entrees

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TRAVEL TALES

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include French onion soup restaurant's famous au gratin with garlic and kitchen and wine cellar spelt toasts, steak house tour. Then it was time to salad, baked potato, steak step inside the world house crispy fried onion famous Harry Waugh rings and a vegetable tast- Dessert Room, built in 1985 ing of the evening. After using redwood wine casks, dinner, we went on the to create 48 private rooms

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where guests to this day enjoy nearly 50 desserts, wines, ports, sherries, and madeiras. This represents a separate sitting. All desserts – ice creams, sherbets, pies, pastries, hot fudge, whipped cream, breads and crackers – are made by Bern's with the freshest and best ingredients available. What a truly amazing dining experience! If you are in the area of 1208 S. Howard Street then make a reservation by calling 813-251-2421. You can valet park for \$5.

SMALLEST NOISE MACHINE: Whenever my family travels, we make sure to have a white noise machine in each room. It is the only way we can guarantee a good night's sleep by cutting out any outside disturbances, such as noise from passing cars or people in the hallways. I just discovered the world's smallest noise machine, produced by Sound Oasis. The

machine fits into the palm of your hand and can be used anywhere – on planes or cars, in hotels, even at home. I took it with me on a recent business trip to Bromont and I was beyond impressed. Studies show that travellers can lose nearly eight hours of sleep by the time they return home from a trip – that's one full night's sleep. White noise is a natural, clinically proven sound that helps people sleep and concentrate. With today's airplanes more packed than ever, this tiny invention can be the solace you need from that noisy passenger across the aisle. Or when you get to your hotel room and that "quiet room" isn't quite as quiet as promised, this white noise miracle can save your trip. There are 10 different continuous tones with no loops, a built-in rechargeable battery with USB cable for up to 25 hours of

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Mike Cohen can be reached at info@mikecohen.ca. Follow his travels at www.sandboxworld.com/travel and on Twitter and Instagram @mikecohencsl.

EYE ON MONTREAL

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the indoor tennis courts that capacity can be doubled. Full catering is available on site. Some functions with kosher catering have already been booked.

You can play golf at the property's Platinum rated 18-hole public course, take a swim in the lake or go canoeing, row boating, pedal boating, kayaking, hiking and fishing (permit required). There is also an indoor heated pool and a spa centre offering massages and a sauna

and hot tub. The Sports Centre offers racket sports like tennis or squash and a gym.

During the winter there are 4.5 kms of cross-country ski trails, snowshoeing and snowmobiling. There are also a number of other activities one can enjoy in close proximity to the hotel such as horseback or carriage rides, paintball, airplane tours and a wildlife park within 30 minutes. The newly completed Highway 50 allows

easier access to and from the Montreal-Ottawa corridor.

The Lac Carling Hotel is located at 2255 Route 327 Nord, Grenville-sur-la-Rouge. For more information log on to <http://hotellaccarling.com> or call 450-533-5468 or 1-844-922-7546.

HECHT SCHOLARSHIPS: The Riva and Thomas O. Hecht Scholarship Program, Teaching of the Holocaust for Educators endeavours to promote Holocaust education for educators in Quebec. This scholarship program is designed to offer (Please turn to following page)

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