

TRAVEL TALES

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE JEWISH TRAVELLER

By MIKE COHEN

A LOOK AT OAKVILLE: A vibrant and impressive community within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Oakville (www.oakvilletourism.ca) is a beautiful lakeside town with a strong heritage, preserved and celebrated by residents and visitors alike. Founded in 1857, this thriving municipality of about 165,000 residents provides all the advantages of a well-serviced urban centre, while also maintaining its small-town ambiance. Along historical downtown streets, Oakville offers a mix of converted 19th century build-

ings which accommodate over 400 fine shops, services and restaurants. A 30-minute drive from downtown Toronto, and an hour's drive from the U.S. border, Oakville boasts an \$88 million tourism industry, with over 1.4 million visitors annually.

JEWISH COMMUNITY: The Jewish population of Oakville numbers around 1,280 people, out of a total population of 143,700 or just under one-percent. However, there has been an increase of 67 per cent, or about 500 people, in the Oakville Jewish community

since 1991. The Jewish population is spread out. Most Jews living in Oakville are either unaffiliated or attend one of a number of synagogues in Oakville, Mississauga, Hamilton, Brampton or Toronto. Many Oakville Jews are originally from Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg. Shaarei-Beth El Congregation (<http://www.sbe.ca>), located at 186 Morrison Road, is a reform congregation. B'nai Shalom of Halton Peel and Beth Jacob, both in Hamilton, are Conservative.

Temple Anshe Sholom- is Reform while Adas Israel is Orthodox

KOSHER FOOD: Sobeys on Maple Grove Drive added a kosher section last year as part of a partnership with the Shaarei-Beth El. This is the first supermarket in Halton to dedicate a special section to foods prepared in accordance with Jewish law. In the wake of a meeting with Rabbi Stephen Wise, the spiritual leader of Shaarei-Beth El Synagogue, and the

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congregation's vice president, Nolan Machan, store manager Mike Mannella realized the area's Jewish community had to drive all the way to Toronto to purchase numerous everyday items. "We want to be a supermarket that caters to everyone's distinct food tastes and requirements," said Mannella. And we're excited to provide a kosher section for everyone here in Oakville," he added. The kosher section is located in the ethnic food aisle towards the rear of the store and is home to dry goods while a kosher meats section is clearly labeled in the main meat section. The change makes the supermarket a one-stop shop for everyday dining, weekly Shabbat meals or holiday feasts.

WHERE TO STAY: On our recent trip to the

Niagara Falls area, we decided to stop over in Oakville for a day. We checked into the beautiful Staybridge Suites Extended Stay Hotel Oakville Burlington (www.staybridge.com/oakvilleon), located at the QEW and Bronte Road at 2511 Wycroft. This three year old property still looks spanking new. It is managed by the Westmont Hospitality Group (WHG), which I hold in high regard, having stayed at their locales in Ottawa, Toronto and Windsor.

The Staybridge Suites Oakville Burlington offers one and two bedroom suites, with all the conveniences of home to suit your extended stay or short term needs. The hotel offers apartment like suites featuring fully-equipped kitchens, cable TV, free

wired and wireless internet and direct dial phone number with personalized voicemail. There is a 24-hour business center with free internet, print/fax/copy capabilities, free laundry facilities, a fitness center, an indoor pool, a home theatre room with a 50 inch plasma TV, gas BBQ grills, a putting green, the Bridgemart "Suite" Shop, a free deluxe breakfast buffet, evening sundowner receptions (Monday through Thursdays) and signing privileges next door at the Marquis Bistro Restaurant and Grill, which is also under the WHG umbrella. You can help yourself to free soft drinks and juices in the lobby 24/7. This hotel is pet friendly so that of course includes service animals. It is fully wheelchair accessible, has one room with accessibility standards and handicapped parking at the front entrance.

Our one night there went too quickly and we will definitely be back. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience. For reservations call 1 877 660 8550, 905-847 2600 or email staybridgeoakville@whg.com.

DINING: When in Oakville I would recommend you make it a point to dine at the Marquis Bistro (www.marquisbistro.com), a

60 second walk from the Staybridge Suites lobby. It is open for breakfast, lunch and supper. We chose to have dinner there and were very pleased with the quality of selections. The menus are all online. We shared the lemon calamari and the pan seared scallops to start and give high marks for the spaghetti bolognese, the chicken parmesan and the delicious chocolate bundt cake for dessert. There are also a number soups and salads to choose from, other pasta dishes, steaks, rack of lamb and seafood. For reservations call 905-465-4480. This is a very pretty restaurant, with booths and tables. There is a large flat screen television and an attractive wine cabinet when you walk in.

WHAT TO DO: Residents and visitors enjoy theatre, dance, music and comedy performances at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts. They can visit the museum at Erchless Estate, located in the home of the Chisolms, Oakville's founding family. Other points of interest include galleries, historical societies and local architecture, especially in heritage neighbourhoods.

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