

TRAVEL TIPS

By MIKE COHEN

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A STOP IN TORONTO: On our way back from a recent winter trip to Niagara Falls, we had no intention of just passing by Toronto on the way home. We always enjoy spending time in Canada's largest city and look no further than right off Highway 401 and the Radisson Toronto East (www.radisson.com/torontoca_east). We stayed at this property three years ago and enjoyed it. For Montrealers invited

to Jewish simchas, it is a great choice for accommodations given its location. Ditto if you have to go downtown, for it is one exit away from the Don Valley Parkway – a quick 20 minute route to the theatre district and Eaton Centre.

The Radisson is managed by the Westmont Hospitality Group, which also oversees Les Suites in Ottawa, the Hilton in Windsor and the Staybridge Suites in Oakville (places

I have stayed at). Nestled in a corporate hub, surrounded by malls and major attractions, the hotel is precisely located at the 401 and Victoria Park. All rooms have Sleep Number Beds, where the firmness of the mattress can be adjusted for your ideal sleeping comfort. Complimentary high-speed internet is available in each room as well. You can unwind in the bar lounge, take a splash in the indoor swimming pool or tone yourself in the fitness center. Other convenient amenities include a complimentary shuttle service to local businesses within the vicinity. There is a full service restaurant, Le Café, and room service to take care of your taste buds.

While I usually seek out a suite for my family when travelling, the Radisson Toronto East is excellent for the adjoining rooms option. We had two rooms, one with two double beds and another with a king. Upon request, we got a fridge and microwave. With a large grocery store only two blocks away we were able to stock up on our own foods to make breakfast and lunch. The rooms have comfortable desks, perfect for working on a laptop, chairs, ample cupboard and drawer space and two telephones. At the front desk, staff are very attentive to all of your needs.

General Manager Chad Hope notes that the Radisson is the perfect spot for Jewish families to stay when attending a bar/bat mitzvah or wedding. The hotel is a close drive from the main Jewish district and many of the synagogues.

We have used this hotel for that very reason in the past and I would strongly recommend it to readers. The room rates are far more affordable than some of the other hotels a little closer to the synagogues and that is important when budgeting. Hope says the hotel is booked for many corporate functions and meetings. The exact address is 55 Hallcrown Place. You can make reservations by calling 1-800-395-7046 or email rhi_toe@radisson.com

SHOPPING AND DINNER: There is plenty of shopping in the area. Near the hotel you will find the Fairview Shopping Centre and the Yorkdale Mall. In terms of dinner and entertainment, Toronto is home to one of the phenomenal Dave and Busters(www.daveandbusters.com)

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daveandbusters.com) franchises at 120 Interchange Way in Vaughan. This is a gigantic facility where you can "eat, drink and play." The menu is extensive and the choice of terrific games pretty endless. You won't want to leave. If you have kids under 19, keep in

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Ontario liquor laws will force you to depart by 10 p.m. The Yorkdale Mall has the popular Pickle Barrel Restaurant, part of a Toronto chain with nice Jewish flavor.

JEWISH COMMUNITY: The Jewish community of the Greater Toronto area now numbers over 180,000. Some 60,000 live in York Region. Seventy

per cent of the Greater Toronto Area's (GTA) Jews live within eight kilometres of Bathurst Street and more than 200 Jewish schools, synagogues, shops and community centres are within walking distance of Bathurst Street. The GTA is a place with a wide spectrum of Jewish life. You can log on to www.jewishtoronto.com for more details. At

last count, there were some 118 synagogues.

ATTRACTIONS:

Toronto has a lot of fun options year-round. Just log on to www.sectorontonow.com to see what you can look forward to. Of course Toronto is now kind of famous for its huge musical theatre offerings. We saw the second to last showing of *Rock of Ages* at the Royal Alexandra Theatre. Just go to www.mirvish.com to see what is playing when you are in town. Also consider checking out the CN Tower, The Ontario Science Centre, Canada's Wonderland, The Toronto Zoo, The Hockey Hall of Fame and Ontario Place.

Mike Cohen's e-mail address is info@mikecohen.ca. Log on to "www.sandboxworld/travel" for his online travel advice.