

TRAVEL TAILS

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE JEWISH TRAVELLER

By MIKE COHEN

VANCOUVER'S OLYMPIC FEVER: Olympic fever has hit the city of Vancouver. And why not? The Winter Olympic Games will take place here and in Whistler February 12 to 28, 2010 followed by the Paralympic Winter Games for athletes with disabilities March 12 to 21, 2010. Vancouver is the largest city in the province of British Columbia. Check out www.tourismvancouver.com for more details.

JEWISH COMMUNITY: Vancouver is home to Canada's third largest Jewish community, some 25,000 strong. That is up from 19,375 in 1991 and

7,310 in 1961. There are some 15 Jewish congregations in the Greater Vancouver area representing all Jewish movements, with the Conservative congregations boasting the largest number of members. Reform congregations follow in the second place with the Orthodox and Chabad congregations attended by a dedicated minority. However, approximately half of the Jews living in the Vancouver metropolitan area are not affiliated with a religious congregation. Jewish Community affairs are coordinated by the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver (www.jgv.com).

The Jewish education system includes 10 pre-schools, three day schools - and a number of after schools and Sunday schools. Youth and student organizations include Vancouver B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, which serves Jewish students attending the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University, both in Vancouver, as well as other colleges in Greater Vancouver area. There are additional Jewish youth organizations active in Greater Vancouver area.

WHERE TO STAY: There are more than 24,000 rooms in Greater Vancouver and some 13,000 in the downtown core. While the average rate is just over \$120, rooms can go for as little as \$60 to more than \$1000. The best hotel deals are offered October through April. We were very fortunate to find the Rosedale on Robson. (www.rosedaleonrobson.com) Comfort, location, relaxation, entertainment, water and mountain views...the Rosedale on Robson has it all! As historic Yaletown's only all suite hotel, the Rosedale offers one and two bedroom suites for the price of a conventional hotel room. You can choose from an array of

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suites with two double beds or a queen. A 21st floor suite, complete with a gorgeous patio, is available. The suites offer the comforts of home with fully equipped galley kitchens. The business person can access high speed internet WiFi as well as ample workspace. If you need time to relax head to the indoor swimming pool or the second floor garden terrace. For the fitness minded, there is a second floor exercise area and equipment is at your disposal.

The hotel won the 2007 Globe and Mail Business for the Arts Award in the category of Best Arts/Entrepreneur Partnership in recognition of their outstanding leadership within the arts community. Nominated by Pacific Theatre in Vancouver, the hotel has supported their theatre programs as well as their International Writer's Workshop.

Last year the hotel teamed up with Vancouver's Norman Rothstein Theatre and served as the official hotel sponsor for the play Hana's Suitcase and the 2008 Chutzpah! Festival, which celebrates the performing arts through the presentation of an outstanding array of local, national and international artists showcasing music, dance, theatre and comedy. Through its continued involvement with the Norman Rothstein Theatre of the JCC, the hotel maintains its support of the Vancouver arts community with a focus on socially meaningful projects.

Former Montrealers James Miller and Jodi Gilletz Sprackman serve as general manager and director of community relations respectively for the hotel. I was floored when Sprackman told me that

her mom is Noreen Gilletz, the leading author of kosher cookbooks in Canada whose best-selling publications include *Healthy Helpings*, *MealLeaniYumm!*, *The Food Processor Bible*, *MicroWays*, and *Second Helpings Please*. Jodi graduated from McGill University with a BA in 1984 and moved to

Toronto, originally working as a teller for Bank Leumi. She attended the University of Windsor from 1988 to 1990 to get her B. Comm and moved on to work for Club Med as group sales coordinator and assistant sales manager in Toronto from 1990 to 1994. When

she moved to Vancouver she found work as a sales rep in the travel, courier and publishing industries. Five years ago the married mother of two joined the Rosedale on Robson

The hotel is situated on the corner of Hamilton and Robson Streets in Vancouver's turn-of-the-century Yaletown, a former warehouse district that has been converted into a hip and fresh destination. The Rosedale is perfect for the leisure traveller, being just steps away from the finest restaurants, shopping, galleries, live entertainment and sports Vancouver has to offer. The location is also convenient for those travelling on business, as it is just a few short blocks from the heart of the city's financial district.

This hotel is comprised of 219 spacious suites, each with voice mail, data ports, pay-per-view movies and Nintendo. High-speed internet is available in many of the deluxe, superior and premier suites, and all one and two-bedroom suites feature televisions in the bedrooms as well as in the living room. Handicap rooms are available, pets are welcome (pet-free floors are also avail-

able), and the hotel is completely non-smoking.

CLOSE BY: Unique to the Rosedale on Robson is their event desk, which offers popular sports, theatre and concert packages. Other features include secure underground parking with in/out privileges, valet parking, and safety deposit boxes. Just steps away from the symphony, opera and live theatre, nearby venues include the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver Playhouse, Centre For Performing Arts, and the Orpheum and Vogue Theatres. Sports enthusiasts can walk to GM Place, home of the Vancouver Canucks, and BC Place, home of the BC Lions. Close by are Granville Island, Chinatown, Kitsilano, English Bay, Stanley Park, Capilano Suspension Bridge, Grouse Mountain, Edgewater Casino, Vancouver Art Gallery, Telus World of Science, golf courses, and beautiful beaches.

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