

HOTEL NEWS

Check-in at Niagara's latest revamped

Modern alternative 124 on Queen Hotel & Spa has reopened on the main street

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SPECIAL TO THE STAR

In Niagara-on-the-Lake's sea of traditional inns and overpriced B&Bs, there's a modern alternative right on the main drag. Blending into the heritage streetscape from the outside, 124 on Queen Hotel & Spa has just revealed its expansion to 72 guest rooms and suites (39 added through its new build).

Also encompassing a major spa revamp and indoor-outdoor event space, the luxury property is vying to be the city's all-season stopover. I checked in last month for an early peek.

What are the rooms like?

It's all about the main building's new Signature Collection rooms, which sport an airy and unfussy modernity, with a blue, grey, oatmeal and mushroom colour palette, gold accents and swirling patterned rugs. Cedar-lined closets are a nice finishing touch. Big bathrooms have double sinks, L'Occitane amenities and grey, marble-lined rainfall showers with (fancy!) push-button control. The one-bedroom suites resemble little condos, complete with a full kitchen — fridge-freezer, Blanco sink, cooktop, cookware and dishes — as well as giant TV screens and an electric fireplace.

What's on the menu?

Opened in 2006, and now integrated with the hotel, the 32-seat (plus patio) Treadwell Cuisine is helmed by chef Stephen Treadwell and his son, head sommelier and manager James Treadwell. The rustic menu favours earthy flavours, leaning on the meats and seasonal produce from surrounding Niagara farms.



The wine cellar here has the largest number of Ontario wines in the world. Tuck into the lobster club or duck confit at lunch, and good luck trying to decide what to have from the superb four-course dinner menu, which changes regularly. Don't leave without trying the pistachio tart.

A small cocktail bar in the hotel's main building pulls in the after-theatre crowd, and the more casual Gate House bistro fronts a separate event/wedding space in a heritage building next door.

What sort of spa pampering can we expect?

The elegant, 11,950-square-foot spa offers a full menu of facials, manicures and body treatments, including a refreshing cold-stone massage. But the showstopper is the skylit and beautifully tiled hydrotherapy circuit, which you can enjoy by itself or add to a treatment: Slip into the hot and warm pools,



sensory showers, large sauna and steam rooms — there's even a snow room. An outdoor yoga/meditation area, complete with cabanas and reflecting ponds, is forthcoming.

What else is there to do?

Adjacent shops to hit include the awesome Budapest Bakeshop (famous for its sweet and savoury chimney cakes), Maple Leaf Fudge, OLIV Tasting Room, Maison Apothecare and Ghost Walks.

Queen Street is also lined with taste-testing opportunities.

If you're looking to sample area vineyards, the Winery Guys will spin you around the countryside on an informative tour. There is as well, the Shaw Festival — with 13 plays on three stages — if you're in the mood for a show.

ACCOMMODATION WAS PROVIDED TO WRITER DOUG WALLACE BY 124 ON QUEEN HOTEL & SPA, WHICH DID NOT REVIEW OR APPROVE THIS ARTICLE.