



LIVING THE HIGH LIFE

○○○ By Nancy Lazarus ○○○

REDISCOVERING QUEBEC CITY

Centuries ago, Quebec City's stone wall was designed to keep intruders out, but now locals openly welcome visitors. On a recent long weekend, I took in the sights of this picturesque city on the St. Lawrence River.

My pied a terre was the Marriott Courtyard, just a few blocks from the convention center. Formerly a bank, the hotel features 111 rooms and full-service amenities.

Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac, a luxury hotel overlooking the port, is Quebec City's central landmark. Guided tours of its facilities encompass elegant restaurants, ballrooms, and an indoor pool and health club. My favorite spot was the glass-enclosed

veranda where I sipped drinks while enjoying a panoramic river view.

Quebec's cultural and military heritage is prominently on display throughout the city. The Musee de la Civilisation features a garden on its rooftop terrace and multimedia exhibits in its modern stone building in Lower Town, the oldest part of Old Quebec. At the star-shaped Citadelle fortress in an Upper Town park, I saw reminders of epic battles between French and British troops.

Riding Quebec's unique modes of transport became an adventure on the hilly, winding cobblestone streets. While the funicular has long taken visitors from the Chateau to the port below, I preferred a newer, green

option. Ecolobuses, compact electric-powered vehicles, now carry passengers from the maritime area to the military park for free.

Walking became strenuous exercise as I covered the steep terrain, especially the aptly-named Breakneck stairs that connect the prime shopping venues of Upper and Lower Towns.

Fortunately there are also several gourmet restaurants at which you can stop and relax. Pain Beni, a stylish cafe uptown, offers light fare while Le Cafe du Monde and L'Echaude bistros serve classic French dishes near the river. But it was Le Marie-Clarisse, with its bouillabaisse, where the cozy ambience, rustic stone setting, and fireplace tempted me to stay until winter. **SM**

Photo credit: Nancy Lazarus