

VANCOUVERSCAPE

A WEEKEND ESCAPE IN THE CITY AT OPUS HOTEL VANCOUVER

By Ariane Colenbrander

May 4, 2016



OPUS Hotel knows a few great ways to indulge your inner weekend. With an advance online check-in system, we were taken care of via text messages on our smart phone long before we arrived at the boutique Yaletown hotel.



We arranged to experience the **Weekend Escape** package that includes a one-night stay, welcome half bottle of BC wine with snacks and breakfast the following morning at the Opus Bar (*you can also opt for valet parking in place of breakfast).

This property is a Vancouver showpiece: a gift voucher for a stay here has often found its way inside Academy Awards presenter goodie bags! It's no wonder Vancouver sees its fair share of celebrities. Once Hollywood gets an eyeful of this charming property, **word gets around**.



Our Room

For a space-challenged neighbourhood, we're impressed with the way the OPUS design team make the rooms work. An entrance nook is turned into a cozy sitting area with local artwork and accent lighting.

The walls in **Mike** (the *name* of our room) are painted a deep rose with dark wood furnishings and pink and orange-upholstered couches. A large colour-drenched, framed painting of Vancouver's Eastside (*Cordova Street Cha Cha*) hangs on one side, a full-length balcony with floor-to-ceiling windows on the other. A deep red faux snakeskin headboard frames our king bed.



[Our Yaletown view]

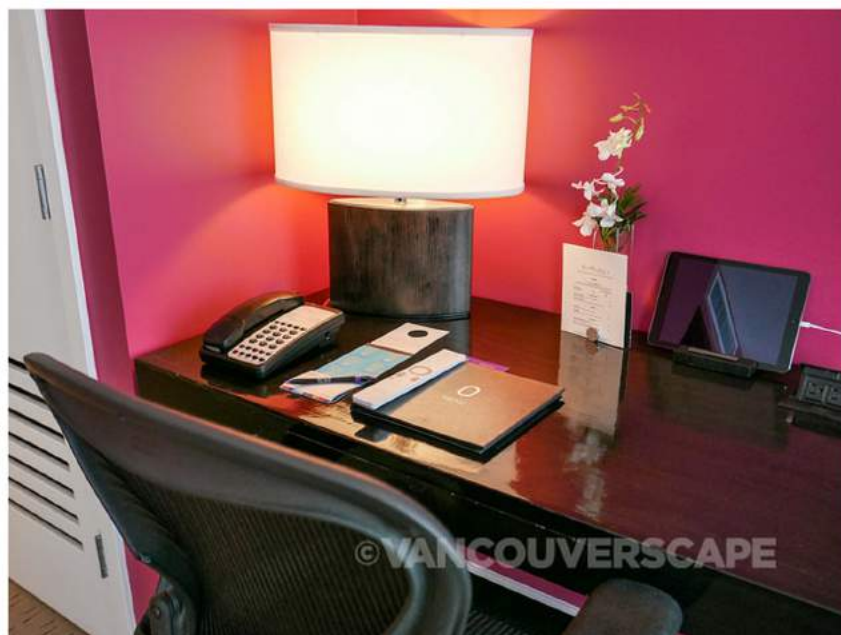


And then there's the bathroom—a jumbo white-tiled room with floor heating, beautiful walk-in rain shower and separate soaker tub. Everything's modern, sleek and well-designed to match the style of our room.

Each of the 96 rooms (including eight suites) has its own iPad mobile concierge, charged up and ready to enjoy for planning your Vancouver sightseeing. We also noticed a bunch of game apps (tucked into their own folder). Wifi is reliable and fast.

Another tech touch: a set of charging cables attached to the bedside clock radio, including that Apple Lightning cable missing from so many hotel clocks after the 30-pin charger became obsolete, making life miserable for hoteliers around the globe (who've since been playing catch-up to outfit rooms with the newer smaller-sized cable).

If you're packing a laptop, the in-room safe in the closet is large enough to stow it out of view.



The desk is situated right in the corner, with a lamp, ergonomic chair, phone and enough space to spread out and get to work. The wet bar contains a Nespresso machine, small fridge underneath and mini bar treats above (plus a variety of cold bevvy's in the fridge).



[Malin + Goetz toiletries]

If you're a fan of NYC-based natural apothecary **Malin + Goetz**, you'll be happy to know that they supply OPUS with a range of bathroom amenities.



Sleep

If you like sleeping with an open window, just slide open the balcony door, as long as you understand that weekends in Yaletown are a lively affair and you'll likely hear street noise below as diners fill the many restaurants and bars along Hamilton and Mainland Streets. If that becomes a concern, there's also a relatively quiet airco and heating system for in-room comfort.

Bedding is of the down-filled kind. The cozy duvet and puffy pillows gave us both a sound sleep.

Location

The location can't be beat: you're right in the heart of Yaletown's boutiques, cafes, restaurants and salons. Canada Line station is just at the corner (less than a half hour ride from YVR International).

This hotel is great for business — it's close to both convention centres and offices in the downtown core. Couples and families will enjoy the close proximity to the Yaletown Marina (a scoop of Bella Gelateria, anyone?), museums, shops, Queen Elizabeth Theatre, BC Place and Rogers Arena, making it a convenient overnight following a play, game or concert.

If you need to, a complimentary luxury car service can whisk you off to any part of downtown. On a gorgeous day though, you'll want to free up some time to enjoy a bike ride around the Stanley Park seawall using one of the hotel's mountain bikes or cruisers (free on loan).

There's also a 24-hour fitness center with state-of-the-art cardio equipment and free weights to keep you fit while on the road.



Dining at La Pentola

Right next door to the OPUS Hotel, adjacent to the OPUS Bar is **La Pentola**. This year's silver medalist in *Vancouver Magazine's* Best Yaletown restaurant (not to be taken lightly as there's a ton of good eateries in this hood) offers a seasonal menu with *alla famiglia* style dining for foodies who like putting chef **Travis McCord** and team through their creative paces. You can choose from five- or seven-course menus with or without wine pairing.

We've selected a few dishes off La Pentola's regular menu (sectioned off into *antipasti*, *primi*, *secondi* and *contorni*).



[Asparagus salad, house made ricotta, pine nuts, watercress]

A bright, pleasant asparagus salad is tossed with house-made ricotta, pine nuts and watercress, while the Kettle Ridge beef carpaccio is colourfully presented with AAA tenderloin, quail's egg baby turnip, pickled cauliflower and pecorino.



[Kettle Ridge beef carpaccio: AAA tenderloin, quail's egg, baby turnip, pickled cauliflower, pecorino]

The potato gnocchi is lovingly seasoned with arugula pesto along with peas, artichoke hearts and pecorino for textural contrast.



[Branzino filet, spätzle, salsa verde, house made pancetta]

I order the featured branzino filet served with spätzle, salsa verde and house made pancetta, such a wonderful combination of ingredients further complimented by a side dish of glazed carrots with brown butter almonds and fried sage.



[Glazed carrots, brown butter almonds, fried sage]

Everything works so nicely together especially when combined with a glass of La Stella *Stellina Rosato* from the Okanagan Valley.

Shaw Farms pork belly comes with seared BC scallops, celeriac, apple, calypso beans, fennel and pork jus. My husband found the dish a tasteful, beautifully presented Italian take on surf 'n' turf.



[Shaw Farms pork belly, seared BC scallops, celeriac, apple, calypso beans, fennel, pork jus]

The entire meal never felt rushed (we were in there for two hours allowing for plenty of conversation between courses).

La Pentola's divided up amongst a few rooms, containing a unique assortment of lamps, dishes lining a white wall and many other unique, yet classic elements. The bar holds center court near the entrance to both restaurant and OPUS bar.

Lounge and funk music played over the sound system as couples and groups filled the room on a very busy Saturday evening.

If you're an Italian wine fan, you'll enjoy the extensive wine list here with a regional map included in the menu to help guide your taste buds towards a suitable choice of wines by the glass or bottle.

Cocktails range from classic to crafted, there's an excellent range of spirits plus two Red Truck beers on tap and bottled beer to round out the beverages.

If There's One Thing We Could Change

Cute and comfortable as the room is, the pull-down blinds with drape combo leave a little break in between so the room is never completely dark. We were up at daybreak, which may or may not suit your travel plans.

Find OPUS Hotel, OPUS Bar and La Pentola Restaurant at 322 Davie Street in Vancouver's pedestrian-friendly Yaletown district.

Our OPUS Hotel stay and weekend escape package was courtesy of the hotel. Opinions, as always, are our own.