

## Because everyone needs a 36-hour vacation ...

07/19/2012

0 Comments



By a show of hands, how many of you need a break?

See, I don't even need to see your hands, and I still know that about 90% of you need to get away, another 9% need to finally admit to yourselves that you need to get away, and the rest of you – the 1% – well, you can get away at the drop of a \$1000-bill.

Now I've wanted to go on vacation for so long, but never really had the time, until, as a Sambassador for Samba Days, I was offered a [Gourmet Getaway](#). And so I cleared 36 hours from my schedule, because everyone needs a 36-hour vacation.

It was difficult to choose between all the B&Bs on the list, but ultimately, I knew that if I were to take an overnight in the Niagara Region, I'd be able to add another worthy B and make it a B&B&B retreat, with a shopping-day in Buffalo.

So, the boy and I chose [The Red Coat Bed & Breakfast](#) in Queenston, Ontario, just a wee drive to Niagara-on-the-Lake and Niagara Falls.

I could tell you that we chose the Red Coat because of all the positive reviews it has on [TripAdvisor](#) – which is great – but we really chose it because we love loft-attic spaces and it has one.

(And yes, we also like shiny objects too.)

Perhaps even better than the loft, was how quick Sandra – the owner – was in responding to my emails in setting up the stay.

It's called "customer service," and it really does still exist.



Included in our Samba Days package was a one-night stay, a country breakfast, a bottle of wine, some goodies, and a \$70 gift certificate for supper at one of three restaurants.

Added into our 36-hour vacation by me, was the trip to Buffalo where the itinerary included Target, a mall, The Cheesecake Factory (where my husband bemoaned having to share a 1400-calorie "slice" of fudge cake with me), our obligatory stop at a second Target, and our highlight event: Wegman's – a supermarket that's more



Nationwide column  
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The Red Coat B&B, built in 1901.

than grocery shopping; it's an experience.

So off we went on our 36-hour vacation ...

After an 80-minute drive to Queenston, we arrived much earlier than the check-in time, but by request we were kindly allowed an earlier one. With an entire day ahead of us, we took the gorgeously scenic 15-minute drive to Niagara-on-the-Lake. The Falls may be majestic, but NOTL is a small-town gem.

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We strolled through town, sipped some ice wine, tried on crazy hats – as one does in NOTL, and went to Kurtz Orchards, owned and operated by my family for many years. Okay, that's a little fib. We don't own Kurtz Orchards; we own Microsoft. His name used to be Bill Kurtz. He only changed it so as not to be confused with those Orchard owners who hijacked our name. But I digress ...

Still, I highly recommend going to Kurtz Orchards if you want a tonne of tasty free samples to keep you going until your gourmet supper. (Or you can order a grilled strawberry, banana, peanut butter sandwich like my husband did, if you're the type who can only be satisfied with things such as 1400-calorie slabs of cake post-2400-calorie meals.)

After a day in the sun, we went to relax back at The Red Coat for a bit. Sandra and her husband Keith were very gracious hosts, and apparently handy ones at that. They were actually the ones who restored and renovated their home, originally built in 1901. (Take that, shoddy present-day construction.)



Take that, Slash.



Our room: Sheaffe's Loft

Our room was of course my favourite. The loft had its own balcony, washroom, Jacuzzi tub, mini-fridge, cushy queen-size bed – a FULL-sized hairdryer, ladies – and a TV/DVD player, because who doesn't love to watch TV from bed? (That is a rhetorical question, anti-TV-in-the-bedroom people.)

But it was the special little touches that impressed me: The type of plush towels you'd expect celebrities' (assistants) to buy (them), the mini-library, the board games, the free winery tours, and even Sandra's turn-down service along with chocolates on the pillow.

And who knew you could wrap potato chips around sunflower seeds for an addictive taste sensation.

Once we stopped popping those puppies in our mouths, after constantly repeating "last one," we were off to take full advantage of our \$70 worth of deliciousness at [The Old Winery](#), where I – perhaps ironically – enjoyed a new Margarita.

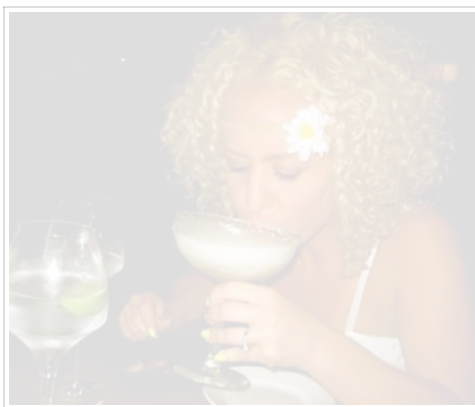
The ingredients were fresh. The portions were generous. My stomach was happy, over-filled, and ready for a candy apple in Niagara Falls.

With that, we took the short drive to the Falls, where we also took in the Sunday night fireworks. (Thank you, Keith, for that information.)

Nothing makes people from all walks of life stop, gather, oooh, ahhhh, and clap, like shiny, bright lights.

(See, my husband and I aren't the only ones who still like shiny things.)

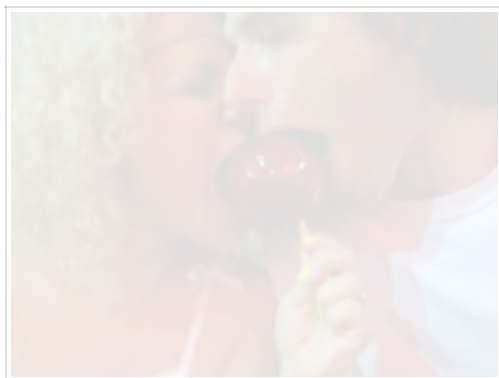
As much as I enjoyed the Falls, I couldn't wait to get back to our room to enjoy our balcony, and some good 'ole TV watching. Even boring programs are indubitably fun to watch from your hotel – or B&B – room.



At The Old Winery with my new Margarita.

In the morning, we awoke to the second B – a lovely breakfast. Fresh fruit, yogurt, raspberries-from-the-garden cake, and crepes filled with veggies, cheese and bacon. Since bacon once had a face attached to it, at my request, I got a vegetarian variation without the meat. (Thank you, Sandra.)

Healthy, local food, good conversation (with Sandra and a Virginian couple who joined us at breakfast), and it was time to get in the Buff!

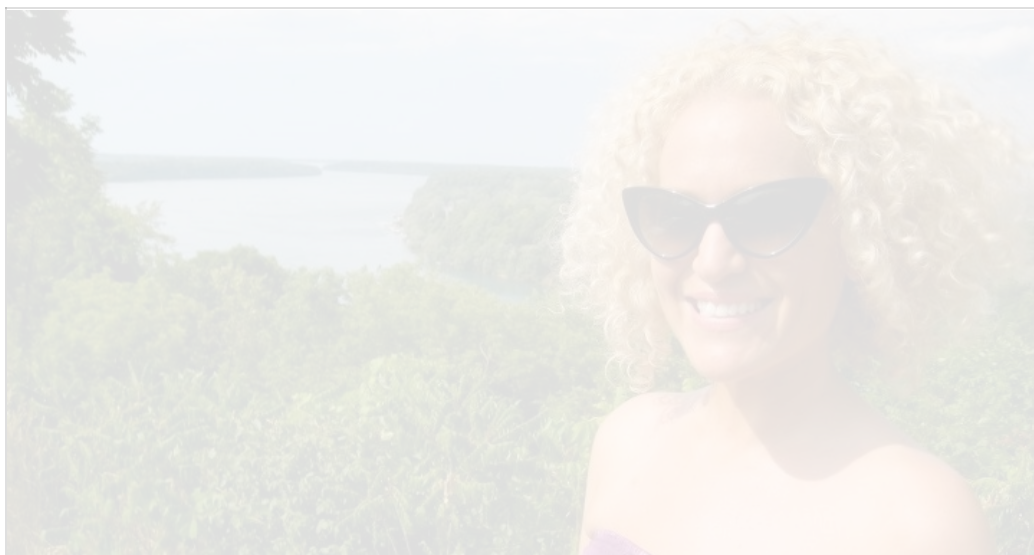


Lady & the Tramp do spaghetti; we do candy apples.

A half-hour later, we reached the third B – and the lower prices and greater selection than Toronto has to offer.

So there you have it. Now it's time for you to plan your 36-hour vacation, because if you made it through this entire post, you certainly deserve a little more time for that getaway.

*To check out more photos from our trip, just say "Abracadabra," then [click here](#) and they will magically appear.*



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*Need a voice? I write very loud.*

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