



CATCH SOME ACTION AT

BUFFALO'S CURTISS HOTEL

By Ray Collins
Photographs by Ray Collins

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

It's an interesting concept—to return to your hometown as a tourist, stay in a hotel and explore the area with a fresh set of eyes.

I haven't lived in Buffalo for over 20 years, but a family wedding brought us back recently. Erin had never seen much of downtown, and it had been a while for me, so we got some touristy mini-maps, some comfortable sneakers and set out to learn.

I began by Googling high-end hotels in the downtown core—and all roads led to a name I had never heard before: Curtiss Hotel. It's built inside a renovated historic landmark called the Harlow C. Curtiss building on Franklin Street.

I saw a review on Trip Advisor that called it “the most exquisite and breathtaking brand-new luxury boutique hotel to open in Buffalo in the past 50 years.”

Wow. Sign me up.

The hotel includes two restaurants—'Chez Ami' off the lobby and VUE Rooftop Lounge which has a panoramic view of the downtown area. We arrived late and had a nightcap up top. A firepit in the middle of the outdoor area kept us snug.

That lobby restaurant has a revolving bar and seating for 200+ including on an adjacent patio.

★★

The best way to describe our room is "elegant." The bedroom is clearly high-end—and the marble bathroom is decadent. Not only is there a remote-control bidet, but there are also six heads in the shower and a separate bathtub with jets.

There is a high-tech tablet on the bedside table that—among other things—controls the temperature of the room.

So far so good!

I was concerned about the potential noise since we were downtown and a few floors below a popular rooftop bar, but it was a completely peaceful night of sleep.

★★

We went downstairs in the morning to a continental breakfast featuring egg sandwiches, oversized muffins and cereal.

Afterwards, I went to find an ice machine to chill our yogurt we smuggled upstairs for later—until a staff person told me to check both closets, and sure enough I found a fully-stocked refrigerator. Perfect. (www.curtisshotel.com)

★★

I've been reading about all Buffalo has done to jump-start the waterfront. The city's forefathers chose to build federal housing and a thruway where other cities—Tampa, San Antonio, Baltimore—have taken advantage easy access to the water.

We tried to rent bikes, but the app wasn't user-friendly, so we cut our losses and found something even better: A Historic Buffalo River Cruise!





A friend of mine and his wife joined us for a 90-minute narrated tour of Buffalo's history as the largest grain port in the world. One of the remaining grain elevators has been painted to resemble oversized beer cans. (www.buffaloharborcruises.com)

After the tour, we returned to that area for some smaller beer cans—and to explore a new waterfront entertainment district called RiverWorks. Concerts, restaurants, ice hockey, amusement rides and fun—in an area that was completely overlooked for decades.

We had a great lunch in a bar area, all in sight of the water and the downtown skyline. This is an option that simply didn't exist when I lived here years ago.

I had a salad, appropriately called 'The Silo,' featuring chopped romaine & mixed greens, onions, carrots, shredded cheese and chicken. (www.buffaloriverworks.com)

★★

It was easy to walk back to our hotel. Curtiss is in the middle of it all. We were able to stroll to the nearby wedding destination, return at night, and feel safe. Better yet, the wedding brunch the next morning was held on our rooftop!

The hotel also features a fitness center, spa and business center with internet access. (I wish I realized it has free airport transportation before I spent \$24 on an Uber.)

So glad we discovered Curtiss Hotel. It was a perfect place to base for our weekend back home. weekend.

Ray Collins is a former award-winning TV newscaster—including in Buffalo—who now sells Florida real estate. Ray has written about 65 resorts and hotels for Family Beautiful. www.raycollinsmedia.com/articles

