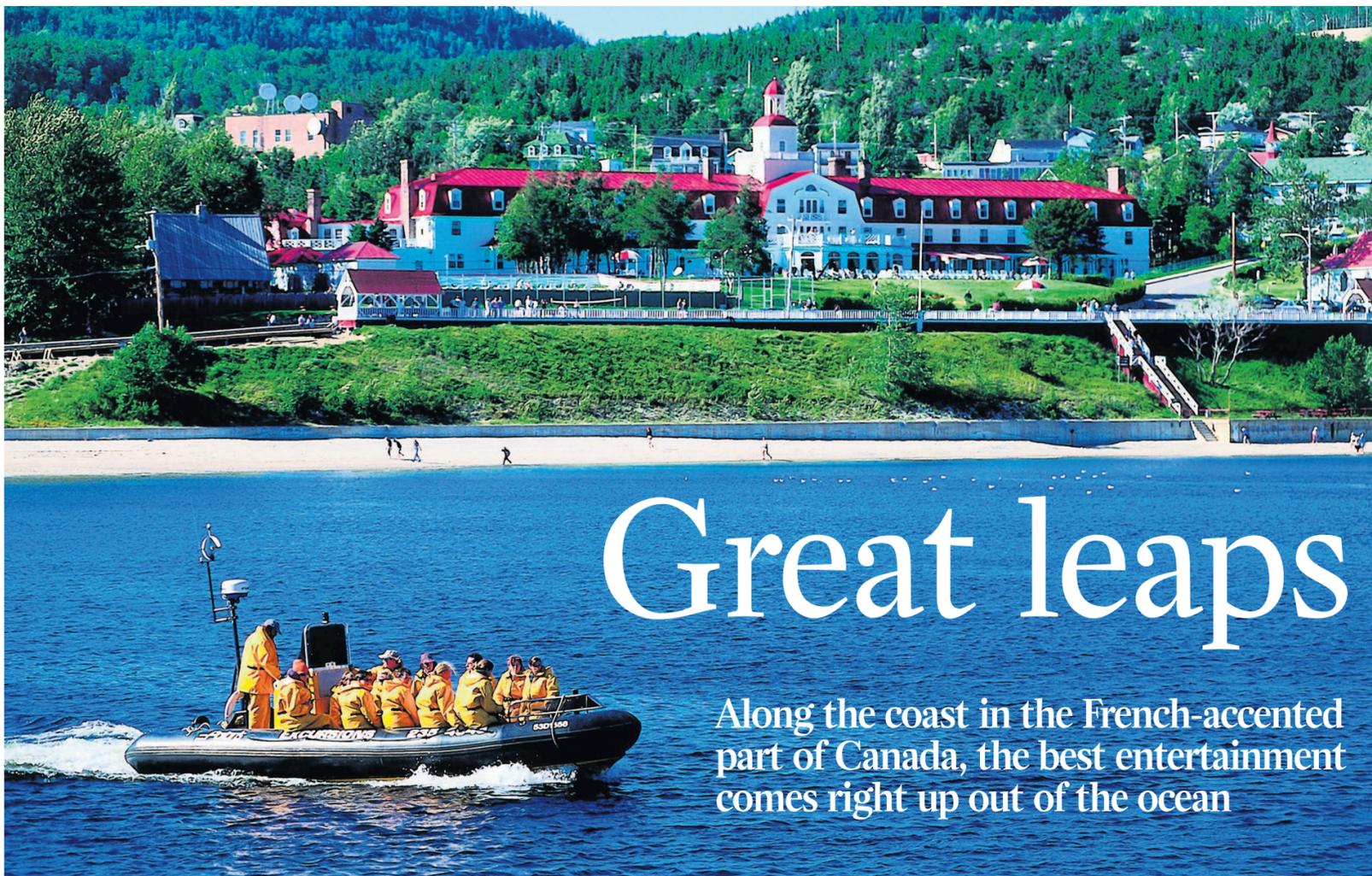


Travel

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Quebec's Maritime region



Great leaps

Along the coast in the French-accented part of Canada, the best entertainment comes right up out of the ocean

Whale-watchers head out to sea from Tadoussac Bay. Prime viewing season is June through early September.

Le Québec maritime/Alain Miville-Deschenes

By Irene Middleman Thomas
Special to the Star-Telegram

Less than four hours by air from Fort Worth, you'll find a world of "Oui, madame's" and "Non, monsieur's," warm croissants, misty green forests, and the haunting songs of the largest creatures on Earth.

In the Quebec Maritime region, French-Canadian culture and cuisine reign. This is the Whale Route, considered one of the best regions on the planet to see 13 species of whales, particularly those rather fetching white belugas (about 1,100 in the area) and

four migratory types — fin, minke, blue and humpback.

Here, it's possible to hear a many-tons whale's mesmerizing cries and watch it rise many feet into the air before crashing down into the cold Atlantic waves. You just might even be lucky enough to see a three-school-bus-long, 100-ton blue whale — the area has 200 or so of the highly endangered creatures, the largest on Earth.

The Maritime region of the French-speaking province is where the fresh water from the St. Lawrence River mixes with the cold water of the North Atlantic to form nutri-

ent-rich, food-filled waters (a banquet for those whales and seals).

Le Québec maritime is the easternmost tourism zone in the province of Quebec. It's dotted with small New England-like villages, like the pretty town of Tadoussac, filled with small, well-kept wooden homes topped with sloping red tile roofs, fabulous French bistros and tiny, rustic, sublime seafood cafes. There's a pleasant absence of chain stores and restaurants, and a decidedly French feel. Yes, you can definitely brush up on your high school French

More on WHALES, 14E



Thirteen species of whales are found in the region.

Le Québec maritime/Ursula Tschertner



Executive chef Jonathan Romans gives a twist to familiar dishes at Corner Social in Harlem. Bloomberg/Richard Vines

Newest Harlem renaissance puts dining on front burner

☛ Chef-driven eateries and soul-food bastions are attracting hungry crowds.

By Richard Vines
Bloomberg News

NEW YORK — Attractive old buildings, many of them home to cafes, bars and restaurants, line broad avenues. Where can I be? Oh yes, Harlem.

These days the Manhattan neighborhood offers welcoming establishments for exotic dishes and cocktails, along with soul food and home cooking. Here are a few places I tried on a recent visit.

Corner Social: The friendly bar and restaurant serves an alarming-sounding concoction: deep-fried macaroni-and-cheese croquettes with truffle mayonnaise (\$12).

Executive chef Jonathan Romans, formerly of Tribeca Grill, seeks to take familiar dishes and give them a twist, so don't be too surprised by cheeseburger spring rolls or the meatloaf sandwich with Grafton Vermont cheddar.

Or you could just settle in at the bar and hand control to affable cocktail mixer Carmen Operetta. (On Twitter, Carmen is libationdiaries.)

A 321 pineapple (Skyy pineapple vodka,

pineapple juice, fresh lemon juice, creme de cassis, simple syrup) and a peach and almonds (Ciroc Peach, Amaretto di Saronno, orange juice, fresh lemon juice) helped while away an afternoon. The cocktails are \$12. The check for one was \$65.33, plus tip.

Corner Social is at 321 Lenox Ave.; 212-510-8552, cornersocialnyc.com.

Red Rooster: Opened in 2010, it's become the top place to experience the cultural diversity of Harlem. Chef Marcus Samuelsson was born in Ethiopia and raised in Sweden. He studied cooking in Gothenburg, where he grew up. He then worked in restaurants in France and moved to New York in 1994, with an apprenticeship at Aquavit.

I started with an Obama-tini, featuring Wodka vodka, crushed pepper flakes, pineapple, lime, grapefruit bitters and angostura bitters (\$13). Or how about some wine on tap for \$10? I had a glass of Paumanok New York rosé. It was fine.

The menu is best described as eclectic. I skipped chop suey and Helga's meatballs in favor of two starters: fried green tomatoes with iceberg lettuce, bacon and buttermilk dressing (\$13) and dirty rice &

More on HARLEM, 15E

The itinerary

Compiled by Sandy Guerra-Cline, scline@star-telegram.com

Celebrating a movie classic in Ohio

If you are already thinking about what to do on Labor Day weekend, consider a movie celebration. The prison drama *The Shawshank Redemption*, based on a Stephen King story and starring Morgan Freeman and Tim Robbins, will mark 20 years since its theatrical premiere next year, but the folks in Mansfield, Ashland and Upper Sandusky, Ohio, are celebrating its filming in the area with a series of events beginning Aug. 30. You can find a detailed rundown at www.shawshank-trail.com, which will take you to the site of the Mansfield/Richland County Convention and Visitors Bureau. For example, you can take self-guided tours of the Ohio State Reformatory, which served as Shawshank State Prison in the movie, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Aug. 30 and Sept. 1. You can even get a jump on the events by following the "Shawshank Trail" driving tour of movie locations.

— The Associated Press



The Ohio State Reformatory in Mansfield served as backdrop to the prison-break film *The Shawshank Redemption*. AP/Daniel Melograna

A cool deal for holiday travel planners

Dreaming of cold weather and holiday destinations? Book a holiday cruise with Royal Caribbean by Wednesday and receive up to \$200 in shipboard credits. Earn \$100 in credits per inside or outside stateroom and \$200 per balcony or suite. The deal is valid on cruises lasting at least five nights and departing Dec. 18-31. Prices vary. For example, an interior cabin on the five-night Western Caribbean Holiday Cruise, which leaves Fort Lauderdale, Fla., on Dec. 21, starts at \$699 per person double, plus \$98 taxes. The Liberty of the Seas ship sails to Belize City and Cozumel. Use promo code SOW2 for the \$100 credit and SOW3 for the \$200 credit. 866-562-7625; www.royalcaribbean.com.

— The Washington Post

Go big to take in the sights in Atlanta

Atlanta has a new attraction: a 200-foot-tall (that's 20 stories high) Ferris wheel that opened this month. SkyView Atlanta will offer riders a bird's-eye view of the city during its 15-minute trips near Centennial Olympic Park. According to the attraction's website, rides will cost \$14.45, \$13 for seniors and members of the military, and \$9.10 for children. Those prices include tax. It is required that each gondola have an adult riding along with the children. The wheel was previously in Paris and in Pensacola, Fla. www.skyviewatlanta.com.

— The Associated Press

Fun fact

The short line wins

If you've been to New York, you've likely bought same-day theater tickets at the discount TKTS booth in Times Square. TKTS just launched a seven-day Fast Pass. Buy show tickets at the booth, then, within seven days of your play, come back with the stubs and you get into a special window with a short line to buy tickets for your next play. More good news: The South Street Seaport TKTS booth, damaged by Hurricane Sandy, is being repaired and should reopen very soon. Even though this booth requires a subway ride (Fulton Street stop), the lines there are often far shorter than at the Times Square booth.

— Helen Anders, MCT



Minke whales can be seen by Zodiac boat, kayak or even from the shore in the Tadoussac area.

Le Québec maritime/Marc Loisel

Whales

Continued from 13E

here, although you'll also be just fine with English.

All ranges of accommodations are available, from camping or "glamping" in treehouse cabins, to cozy

inns, to rental condos, to full-service hotels.

Natural entertainment

Folks from the area say visitors are practically guaranteed to see whales during their visit but are advised to stay for at least three days to better the odds. The warmest and best weather conditions

are June through early September, and that's also the best whale-watching time — although belugas live here year-round. The all-white whales would be difficult to see in the winter, however. This region is known for enormous snowfalls and excellent cold-weather sports such as snowshoeing and cross-

country skiing.

To see the whales, you can opt for a thrills-and-chills Zodiac inflatable boat, typically with a 12-passenger limit. On a cool, drizzly day in June, I welcomed the yellow flannel-lined slicker, rubber pants and rubber galoshes the folks at Croisières Essipit (www.essipit.com) had riders wear.

I also was bundled in my oh-so-French striped scarf, hat and gloves — and I was glad to have them while being sprayed from the *Perfect Storm*-like waves that tossed us. Up and down we went on our ocean roller coaster, with many whoas and wows and various words of more serious impact, along with French epithets yelled out by two couples from Paris.

Suddenly, our captain called out to us in heavily accented English: "Look, 2 o'clock, a minke whale!" Sure enough, with flashes of pink and white belly, a glimpse of a huge eye, and whipping wild splashes of water pouring from its flanks, a minke whale was right in front of us. It was



The town of Tadoussac has a quaint French feel, with neat wooden homes and no chain stores. Special to the Star-Telegram/Irene Thomas

fast and furious, but its performance was dramatic, mesmerizing and more than I had hoped for — well worth the wet cold and soggy feet.

Even our captain and crew seemed quite en-

thused. They assured us that it never gets old to see whales. A few moments later, we saw a group of gray seals swimming right by our boat, and other whales in the distance.

If you go

Where to stay

The little town of Tadoussac offers a wide range of accommodations. Splurge on the Hotel Tadoussac, with its extraordinary Quebec-style buffet breakfast and lavish landscaping. Rates from \$155. 1-800-561-0718; www.hoteltadoussac.com. A stretch of boutiques sells everything from high-end First Nations artisan art to hokey but fun whale pins and memorabilia.

For a truly superb, top-flight seafood dinner, try La Galouine Auberge & Restaurant. 1-418-235-4380; www.lagalouine.com.

Where to watch

Choices include a large cruise boat or a kayak tour (kids can go on them). Or even just take the free ferry from Tadoussac to Baie-Sainte-Catherine across the fjord. Some people just stay on shore — don't be surprised if the giant creatures approach at just a few yards away.

At Tadoussac's Marine Mammal Interpretation Centre, families can take a free class in making "whale music" with a balleinophone, observe enormous whale skeletons and models, and view a film on whales. Open May to October. \$12, free for children. www.quebecmaritime.ca/cimm.

For a list of off-shore observation and education sites, go to www.whales-online.net.

Other activities

A more sedate option is sea kayaking. We opted for Mer et Monde Ecotours, owned by a young couple who operate a campground on an exquisite piece of coastline. www.quebecmaritime.ca/mermonde.

Another kayaking operator is Ferme 5 Etoiles Family Vacation Site, which also features accommodations, a restaurant, a spa and an animal sanctuary on the premises with wolves, sled dogs, deer, owls, raccoons, a cougar, a moose and more. www.ferme5etoiles.com.

Nearby is the Cap-de-Bon-Désir Interpretation and Observation Centre, a well-designed facility with a pretty lighthouse and more whale observation sites and information. www.quebecmaritime.ca/capbondesir.

For a special treat, sleep in a treehouse of sorts at Canopée Lit, a forest enclave run by three young French cousins. These tiny homes are too small for teens, probably, but just fine for younger kids, although romantic couples will probably love this spot most of all. www.quebecmaritime.ca/canopeelit.



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Admission is free.

This exhibition is organized by the Smithsonian, the Romare Bearden Foundation and Estate and DC Moore Gallery, and supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. Local support is provided by Bates Container, the Garvey Texas Foundation, and AZZ incorporated.

Above: Romare Bearden (1911-1988), *Circe* (detail), 1977, collage, courtesy Estate of Nanette Bearden and DC Moore Gallery, New York, Art © Romare Bearden Foundation/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

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