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A unique experience in Quebec City

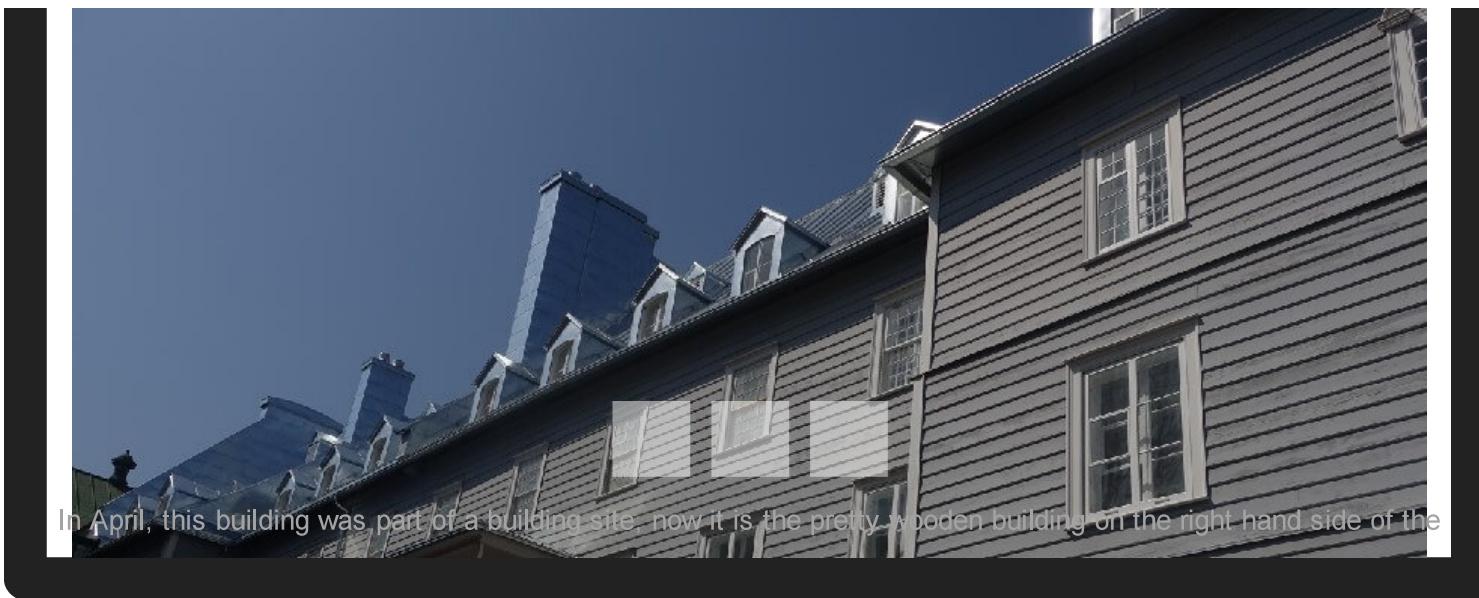
AUGUST 2, 2015 BY JO — 2 COMMENTS

Hi Frugalistas! When I was discussing my itinerary with Quebec Tourisme for my trip to Canada, I set them a task. I wanted to visit somewhere I wouldn't find in a guide book. You know how I love finding and highlighting those little pearls that no one else knows about. Well, they delivered. They found me a place so exclusive, that when I visited in April, it wasn't even open. In fact it was a building site that I could only experience from the outside. The St Augustine Monastery (*Le Monastere des Augustines*) was definitely a unique experience in Quebec City when I visited. It opens this weekend, so now it is a unique experience in Quebec City that anyone can visit and enjoy – even if it isn't in a guide book yet!



Starting my unique experience in Quebec City

Let's start at the beginning. 1639 to be precise. On 1 August 1639 three young nuns of the St Augustine order arrived in New France. Their mission? To establish a hospital to care for both the Aboriginal and settler population. Using their nursing and pharmacy skills they did just that until the early 1960s.



In April, this building was part of a building site, now it is the pretty wooden building on the right hand side of the

Fast forward to the 1990s. Like many orders, the St Augustine nuns in Quebec are declining in number and are ageing. Their hospitals live on, run by the Canadian government (including the Hotel Dieu on the St Augustine site in Quebec City). The remaining sisters decide they need to preserve their heritage, including over 1 400 artefacts and a kilometre of books. This includes the original document signed by Louis XIII granting the sisters the rights to their land and to establish the hospital. It also includes the original 17th century trunk they brought with them.

The rebirth of the Monastere des Augustines

The Monastere des Augustines is now re-opened as a wellness centre. Continuing the tradition of the St Augustine order, the heart of the project is a cloister dating back to 1695. While ten sisters still live in the Monastere, a 10 year, \$40million restoration project has seen the site transformed.



The Monastere re-born

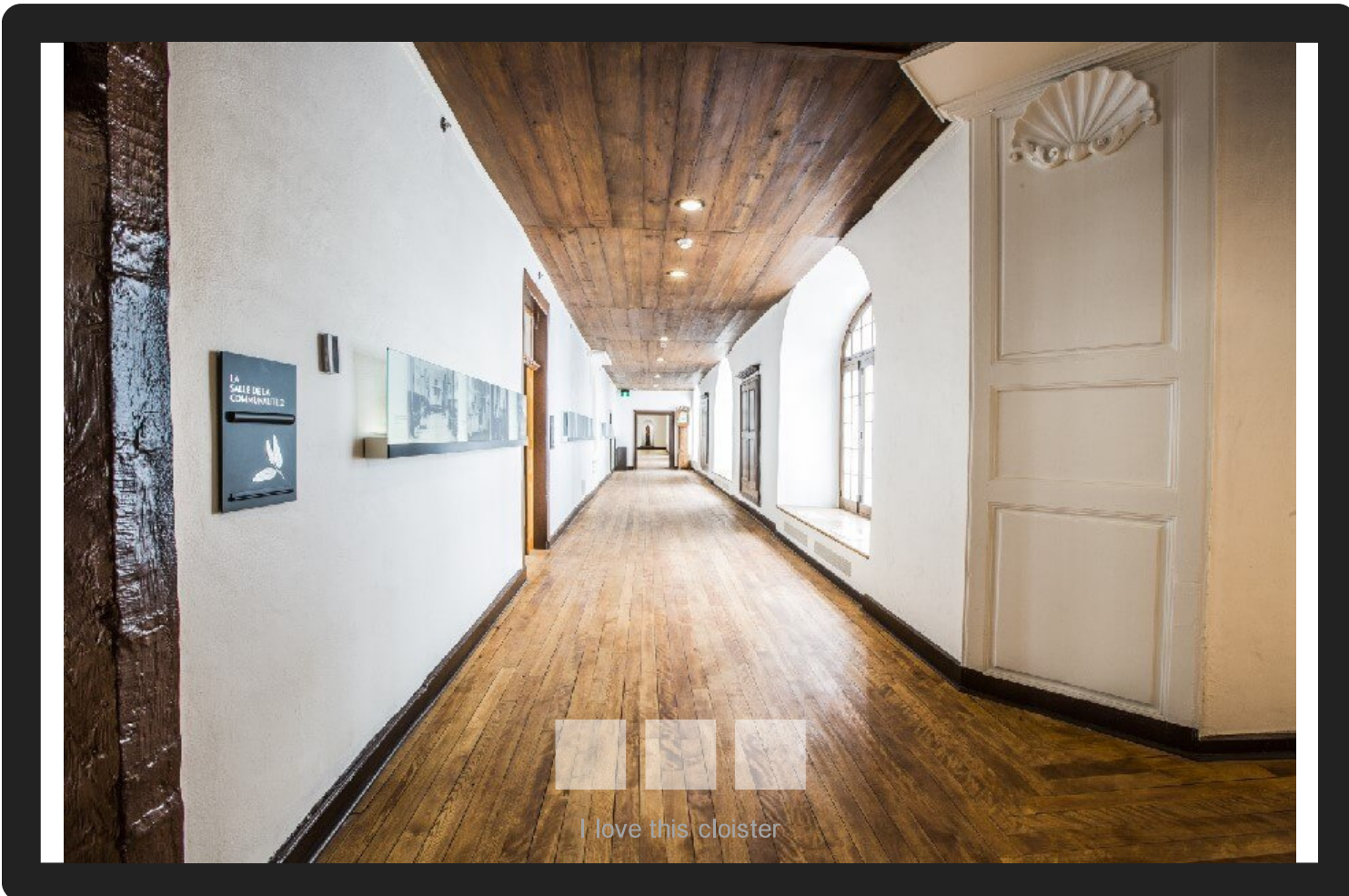
With your choice of either traditional (read low ceilings) or modern accommodation with double beds and en suites, offering over one hundred different activities and a museum of the sisters' treasures, the re-born Monastere des Augustines continues the history and mission of the St Augustine sisters in Quebec.

The Museum features many artefacts brought from France by the sisters, including their original mortar & pestle used to make their medicines. There is beautiful furniture, and for the more medically oriented, a display of suitably gruesome equipment.



The Museum shows the historic architecture off to its best

The philosophy of the Monastere is one of holistic health and hospitality. There is no particular spiritual, nutritional, activity style or philosophy. Simply, the mission of the organisation is that of the sisters: to heal people. And whatever needs healing. Whether that is physical, emotional, psychological or spiritual, complementary therapies and traditional medicine will work hand in hand. The restaurant will feature local produce – using the sisters’ recipes as inspiration.



On my tour of the building site, Marketing Manager, Sebastien Vezina described the Monastere des Augustines as

“ Not a place for rich people to show off

I love that philosophy and authenticity.

And you know what’s even better? All profits from *Le Monastere des Augustines* will be used to develop initiatives to support caregivers and healthcare/social services. Like the best things I

discovered in Quebec City, the Monastere is all about the local history, heritage and traditions upon which it is built.

The [Monastere des Augustines](#) opens in Quebec City on 1 August 2015 (to coincide with the date of their original arrival in New France.) With rooms starting at \$100/night and programs of 1-7 days the Monastere des Augustines is definitely frugal first class. I can't wait to return to Quebec City and experience the Monastere des Augustines – this time from the inside!

Author's note: While in Quebec City I was a guest of Quebec Tourisme. Photos in the first slideshow author's own, other photos courtesy of Le Monastere des Augustines.

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Comments



Els says

AUGUST 3, 2015 AT 3:45 AM

Good to see that the building has been preserved. I love it when they get a “second life” At the end of my street, a church has been converted into an upmarket restaurant and designer furniture shop! I love it that the income of the wellness centre will be used for charity: the history and the building live on! A really nice initiative!

Els recently posted... [There's so much more to Belfast than walls](#) 🍷

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**Kate says**

AUGUST 4, 2015 AT 11:03 PM

This is stunning and I love when a new breath of life is breathed into a place. It looks like it has been renovated very well and still keeps that history with the museum. I love these projects that preserve heritage. Thanks for sharing

Kate recently posted... [Perfect Relaxation at Széchenyi Baths and Spa in Budapest](#) ❤️

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WHO IS THE CHIEF FRUGALISTA?

Jo wasn't always the Chief Frugalista. On her first trip to Europe she travelled Coach with an enormous suitcase and at least four



pairs of shoes. By refining her packing, itinerary planning and ability to hunt down authentic experiences at a bargain price, Jo now pays less and travels more - in First Class. Don't you deserve the same?

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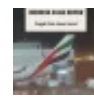
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