

The Key to Your Greener Home

Away from Home: Green Key Rated Hotels

Room at the Hôtel du Vieux-Québec

When your family hits the road for some adventure, you don't have to leave your eco values at home! The Green Key Eco-Rating Program has been evaluating, certifying and supporting greener hotels with educational resources since 1997. What began as an initiative of the Hotel Association of Canada with roughly 150 members, has grown to an impressive internationally recognized certification program with over 3 100 members around the world.

Director of Program Development for Green Key Global, Andrea Myers, explains how the rating system works: "... hotels are awarded a Green Key Rating based on how they answer the questions within the assessment. Each question within the Green Key Eco-Rating Program has been assigned a specific point value based on the environmental and social impacts a particular action has and its associated impact on guests, employees, management, and the local community. ... Upon completion of the assessment, a Green Key Rating of 1 through 5 (5 is the highest) is awarded based on their overall score. Rated Green Key Members are inspected by independent third-party auditors every 2 – 3 years in order to ensure their assessed rating is an accurate reflection of their actual initiatives."

All rated Green Key hotels are listed for you at www.greenkeyglobal.com

"5 Green Key Rated" EcoParent Picks

Hôtel du Vieux-Québec: 1190 rue Saint-Jean, Québec City.

Your Hosts: Owner and Manager, Justin Keating and Family.
High-season price range for a family of 4 (2 adults & 2 kids) & what's included: \$158 -\$228, this includes our continental breakfast basket, a guided walking tour of Old-Quebec, Wi-Fi, local phone calls, and movies with popcorn.

This year we were awarded the 'Green Leadership Award' by Hotelier magazine in recognition of initiatives we have taken to protect our environment.

Q What makes your hotel particularly family-friendly?
A Knowing the joys and difficulties of travelling with young children (my wife Angela and I have two - 8 months and 6 years old) has made us very sympathetic to the needs of family travellers. As an independently owned hotel we have the liberty to focus on what is important to us as a family. Of course, we have worked very hard to be as ecologically friendly as possible as this is of major importance for us. However, the comfort and approval of our guests are really the first priorities.

If you read the reviews of Hôtel du Vieux-Québec by people traveling with their families, there are a few things that are frequently mentioned: the friendly, relaxed atmosphere at the hotel; the exceptional, personal service from our staff; our complimentary breakfast, which is delivered to the room in a picnic basket; our location, which is often described as being "perfect" for exploring old-Quebec; and the hotel salon which is very popular as a space to hang out, relax and play games.

Q Unique features that set your hotel apart?

A We are rated as the 1# family hotel in Quebec City on Trip Advisor.

A We have rooms with 3 beds which are great for families who would normally need to pay for 2 rooms. Having breakfast included for everyone also makes these rooms more attractive from a budget perspective.

I use the honey from our beehives to make ice cream flavored with seasonal organic berries. On hot days we give it out free. In the winter we offer hot chocolate to guests.



Rooftop garden at the Hôtel du Vieux-Québec

Q What would you say are the top 3 green accomplishments of your property?

A Siwash was the first property in British Columbia to achieve a Five Green Key rating.

Siwash was nominated in 2009 and 2010 for Tourism British Columbia's Environmental Tourism Award and was a global finalist in the 2010 Virgin Holidays Responsible Travel Award.

We created and implemented a \$590,000 environmental project in response to a call for applications from our government to promote renewable energy and reduce diesel-fueled communities in remote BC. ...Through implementation of this project, we have quadrupled our ability to harvest energy from the sun for electricity and for pre-heating hot water, which has decreased our green-house gas production by 95%. We installed an innovative clean energy system using state-of-the-art solar PV and solar thermal technologies. Additionally, we have retrofitted with energy efficient water pumps, irrigation, lighting, and waste management. As such, we have become a demonstration site and industry leader to help deploy clean energy technologies to rural BC.

Siwash Lake Ranch, 70 Mile House, B.C.

Your Hosts: Owner and Manager, Allyson Rogers and Family.
High-season price range for a family of 4 (2 adults & 2 kids) & what's included: Guest season runs June through September. Two Bedroom Suite, all-inclusive, \$2 780 per night with 3 night minimum. Includes all meals, snacks and beverages (yep - booze too), guided wilderness adventures, and activities for the whole family. Chauffeur service to & from Kamloops airport is also included.



Q What makes your hotel particularly family-friendly?

A The Free-Range Kids program. A stay at Siwash offers children a mixture of fascinating free play and educational content, which builds self-esteem and opens young minds in a journey that brings them close to nature. Typical activities include: horse care and riding; animal tracking; wilderness survival training and shelter building; orienteering; arts and crafts; scavenger hunts; nature walks; fort building; and outdoor games, depending on the weather, group dynamics, and the ages of the children involved.

Your hosts have two children—free-range teenage kids who really enjoy sharing the joys of ranch living with guest children.

Q Unique features that set your hotel apart?

A Siwash Lake Ranch is the product of creator, owner and manager Allyson's vision and is the culmination of her life's work. Sustainability, natural luxury and guest comfort have been considered in every detail. From gourmet meals made of local and ranch grown ingredients, like Siwash organic beef, to the fact that it exists entirely off-the-grid, promoting harmony with nature is paramount. The Siwash Synergy with Horses program is also unique, and confident, capable student riders are free to roam and explore the 80 000 acres of land alone or with a guide.

