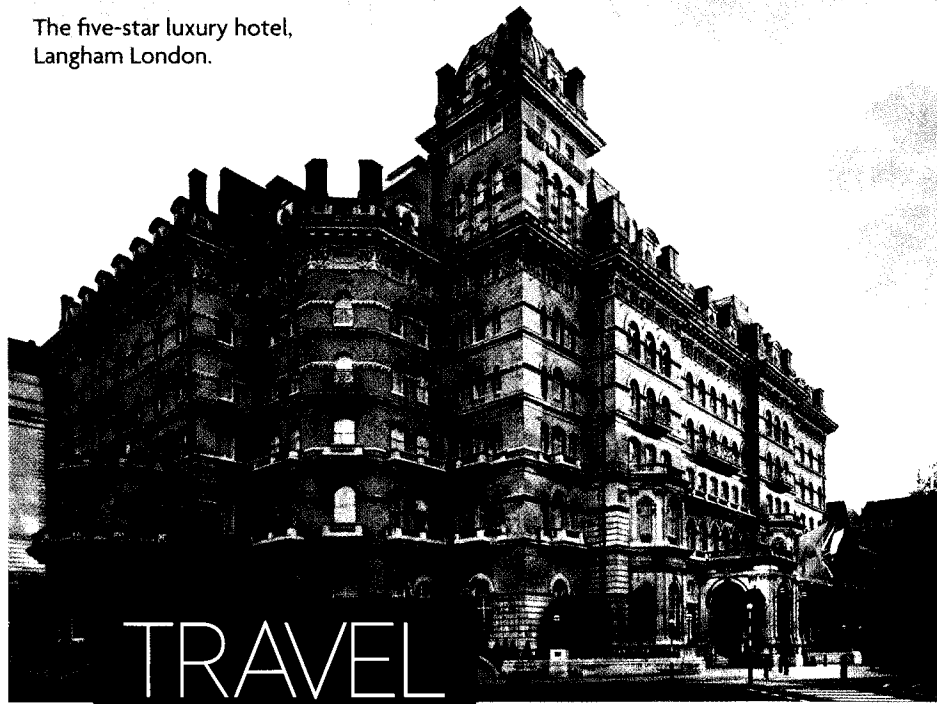


The five-star luxury hotel,
Langham London.



TRAVEL FLASH

ON OUR RADAR: FROM
DESTINATIONS TO DINING

QUEBEC'S HIDDEN GEM

RIVIÈRE-DU-LOUP

IT ALWAYS FEELS LIKE a privilege to step across the border into *la belle province*. Our nation's largest province, teeming with history that spans four centuries, should be a must-visit for any Canadian. Most (if not all), however, target Montreal and the capital, Quebec City, when visiting — and with good reason. Montreal offers a distinctive cosmopolis, while Quebec City, particularly within the fortified walls of the *vieux* town, entices visitors with an old-world, cross-the-Atlantic, *très Parisienne* experience.

But Quebec is more than these two cities. Two hours northeast of the capital, for example, Rivière-du-Loup stands on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, right where the Trans-Canada Highway dives south toward New Brunswick. The town of a little more than 30,000 inhabitants hugs the banks of the great river's powerful presence and provides a quaint contrast from the excitement of its two easterly big sisters.

Auberge de la Pointe, just minutes off the highway, uses Rivière-du-Loup's transcendent location to its advantage. Overlooking the St. Lawrence, the hotel and its surroundings seem serenely painted into the landscape. A small boardwalk brings you one step closer to

the shoreline and provides the perfect place to take in the area's stunning sunsets. Its onsite restaurant is a highlight of local cuisine and something the whole family will enjoy — there were at least three multi-gen gatherings, grandchildren to grandparents, all happily feasting, when we had a chance to visit. The range of ages underscores the array of activities Rivière-du-Loup offers. From biking paths and hiking trails to boat tours that explore surrounding islands and magnificent historic churches that date back 100 years

or more, there's something for everyone. And if a quieter day is in order, the narrow, winding streets — reminiscent of many small European towns — are easily navigable and peppered with the heritage, neo-classical architecture indicative of the region, as well as tiny shops and modern boutiques. **Café L'Innocent**, a joint café-art gallery, and **Bis la Boulange**, a wonderful little bakery that will make you throw out whatever diet you're struggling to maintain, are two we didn't regret visiting. Rivière-du-Loup is a worthwhile stop, and will give travellers a more rounded view of the province when combined with Quebec's big cities. *Bon voyage!* — Travis Persaud



Inside the Church of
Saint-François Xavier,
Rivière-du-Loup, Que.