

For every taste:
history and food,
shops and strolls

By Neece Regis
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

QUEBEC CITY — I was in bread heaven in La Boîte à Pain, surrounded by browned-to-bursting and yeast-scented rounds, ovals, and spears of crisped, baked goodness.

“We have the best bread in town,” said Annick Davignon. Who was I to argue with someone who refers to herself as “the happiest bread seller”?

I practiced my high school French by pronouncing names out loud: “baguette blanche,” “campagnard,” “carre blanc,” “sarrazin et miel.”

“You have to grin more when you speak,” said Libby, my pal and traveling companion. Her French language skills mirror mine, so I wasn’t sure if she was putting me on.

We had come here for a getaway weekend. The plan was to walk, explore, shop, and, to be honest, eat. We wanted to taste as much cheese, charcuterie, foie gras, wine, beer, maple butter, croissants, baguettes, and chocolate as possible.

Quebec City was founded in 1608 by French explorer Samuel de Champlain, and 95 percent of its residents speak French. (Many also speak English, especially in the tourist areas.) The name Quebec comes from an Amerindian term meaning “the place where waters narrow.” That water is the scenic St. Lawrence River, which curves past the ramparts of Vieux-Quebec, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The city’s history reflects its French, British, and Amerindian roots. The past is present everywhere: in the restored architecture, the cobblestone paths, the names of streets, the fortified walls, the public squares and parks, and and culinary traditions.

Our history lesson started as we checked into our hotel, Auberge Saint-Antoine, in the Old Port district. Hundreds of artifacts from the French and British regimes were discovered during the excavation to build this hotel. The restored objects, some dating to the 17th century, are enclosed in illuminated glass cases set into the interior walls. We wandered the halls as if in a museum, stopping to admire sculpted clay pipes, wrought-iron fishhooks, brass taps, glass vials,

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PHOTOS BY NEECE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

From top: La Boîte à Pain; peppers at Le Marche du Vieux-Port; Jasmin Desharnais in Camellia Sinensis, a tea shop; a bakery on Rue Saint-Joseph; cheeses that Samuel Collard, bottom, sells at L’Artisan et Son Pays.

INSIDE



In our travels abroad or to a beach, it was our **mothers** who got us packing. **M6**

EXPLORE NEW ENGLAND



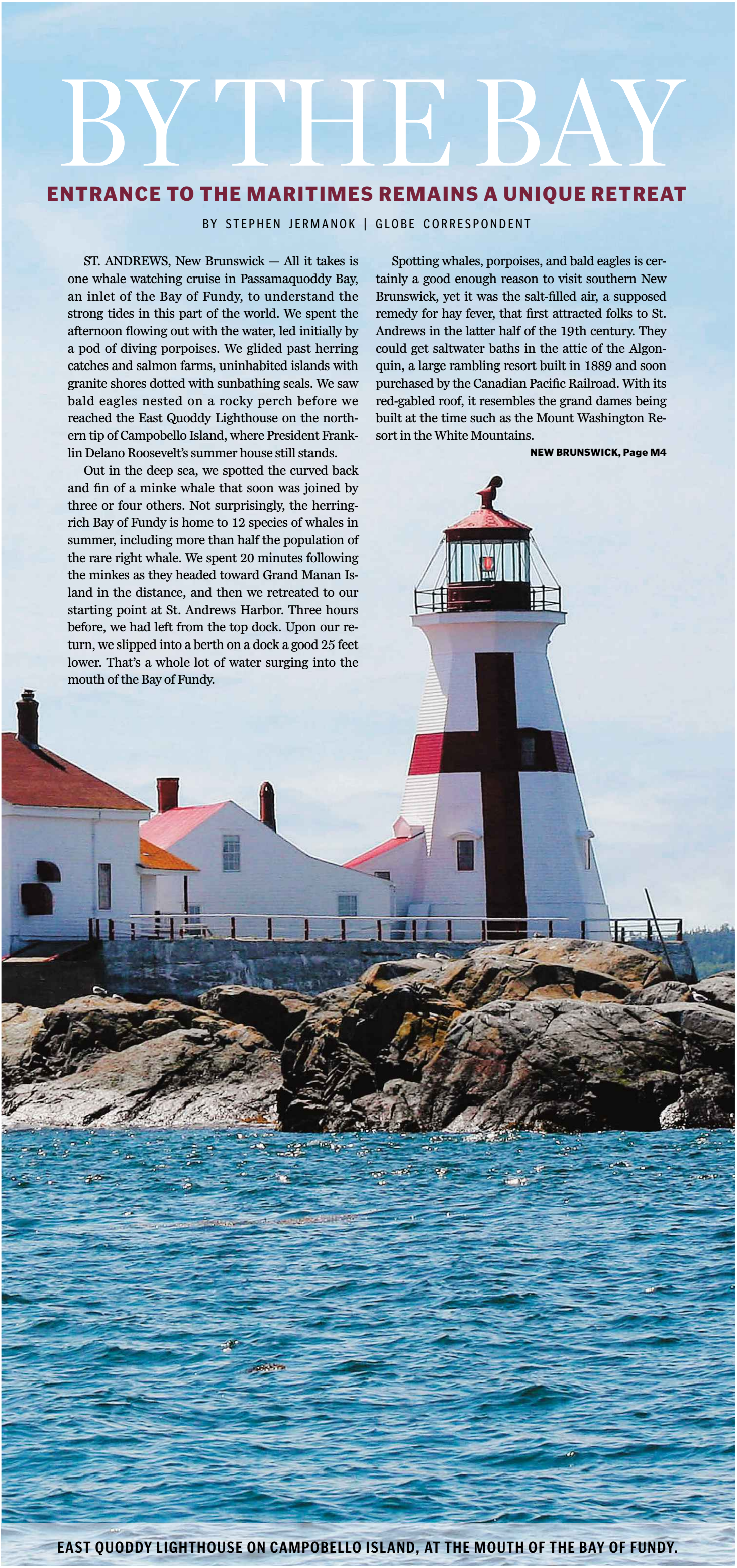
CHRISTINE CHITNIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Imaginations are in bloom as **artisans** open their doors for the season. **M7**



BILL REGAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Farms and rural charms, from the Connecticut River Valley to the Berkshires. **M7**



EAST QUODDY LIGHTHOUSE ON CAMPOBELLO ISLAND, AT THE MOUTH OF THE BAY OF FUNDY.

LISA LEAVITT FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

BY THE BAY

ENTRANCE TO THE MARITIMES REMAINS A UNIQUE RETREAT

BY STEPHEN JERMANOK | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

ST. ANDREWS, New Brunswick — All it takes is one whale watching cruise in Passamaquoddy Bay, an inlet of the Bay of Fundy, to understand the strong tides in this part of the world. We spent the afternoon flowing out with the water, led initially by a pod of diving porpoises. We glided past herring catches and salmon farms, uninhabited islands with granite shores dotted with sunbathing seals. We saw bald eagles nested on a rocky perch before we reached the East Quoddy Lighthouse on the northern tip of Campobello Island, where President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s summer house still stands.

Out in the deep sea, we spotted the curved back and fin of a minke whale that soon was joined by three or four others. Not surprisingly, the herring-rich Bay of Fundy is home to 12 species of whales in summer, including more than half the population of the rare right whale. We spent 20 minutes following the minkes as they headed toward Grand Manan Island in the distance, and then we retreated to our starting point at St. Andrews Harbor. Three hours before, we had left from the top dock. Upon our return, we slipped into a berth on a dock a good 25 feet lower. That’s a whole lot of water surging into the mouth of the Bay of Fundy.

Spotting whales, porpoises, and bald eagles is certainly a good enough reason to visit southern New Brunswick, yet it was the salt-filled air, a supposed remedy for hay fever, that first attracted folks to St. Andrews in the latter half of the 19th century. They could get saltwater baths in the attic of the Algonquin, a large rambling resort built in 1889 and soon purchased by the Canadian Pacific Railroad. With its red-gabled roof, it resembles the grand dames being built at the time such as the Mount Washington Resort in the White Mountains.

NEW BRUNSWICK, Page M4

A walkable, bilingual, historic, culinary city

► QUEBEC CITY

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and earthenware pottery fragments.

Of course, history can be static and stuffy, or active and vibrant. Quebec City's falls in the latter category. It's a metropolis of many small, distinct, and lively neighborhoods, which make walking around so much fun.

Our first evening, maps in hand, we set out for the nearby Quartier Petit-Champlain, a preserved, colonial-style portside village. Except for people in modern garb chatting on cellphones, we could have entered another century. The narrow pedestrian streets are lined with art galleries and boutiques displaying paintings, sculpture, crafts, jewelry, ceramics, leather, woodworking, clothing, and cosmetics. Cozy, European-style restaurants beckoned.

"Mmmm. Fudge?" said Libby.

"Mais, oui," I replied.

We opened the door to La Fudgerie Boutique, a confectionary wonderland. Shelves and tabletops were piled with 80 types of fudge. There was fudge in boxes, fudge on sticks, the weirdly appealing chocolate-covered fudge, even hanging sausages of fudge. We restrained ourselves, tasting only a spicy chili variety, then set off to find a place to dine.

In the morning, we toured Marche du Vieux-Port, an indoor farmers' market near the river, and ogled the local fruits, vegetables, specialty food products, and crafts. The challenge was to find things small enough, and not too heavy, to squeeze in the suitcase to take home. A bottle of ice wine and pear-brie tart? Sadly, no. A tin of mushroom pate and jar of onion confit? "Certainement."

We grabbed a cab to the Saint-Roch district just outside the fortified town walls. We had heard this was the area where young entrepreneurs were opening hip boutiques, galleries, and shops selling local artisanal foods.

We meandered along Rue Saint-Joseph and decided the hype was right. Saint-Roch is an artsy part of town. Within a few



PHOTOS BY NECEE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

The boutique La Fudgerie, in Quartier Petit-Champlain, Quebec City's colonial-style neighborhood. On a bluff looking the St. Lawrence River, the Fairmont Le Château Frontenac.

blocks we passed an upscale kitchen supply store, thrift shop, concert hall, hotel, bookstore, toy store, kids' clothing shop, jewelry boutique, art gallery, and a cafe with so many baked tarts, cakes, and chocolates on display that I thought my blood sugar would rise just looking in the window.

A wall of silver metal urns drew us into Camellia Sinensis. The containers are filled with teas from around the world that you can sample at a table in the rear, or purchase to take home.

"More and more people like tea," said Jasmin Desharnais. "We have lots of different styles and ages of customers — students, businessmen — they all want to taste and compare."

Farther down the street, we found a Shangri-la of cheese at L'Artisan et Son Pays. "Everyone who buys here is interested in handcrafted products," said salesman Samuel Collard.

An impressive array of cheeses filled a case that ran the length of the store. L'Artisan works with about 40 Québécois cheesemakers, and an additional 80 suppliers of specialty products such as nuts, jams, oils, dried mushrooms, and foie gras.

"It's a shop with values," said Collard, who is also a musician. "If I weren't paid for doing this — buying local and looking at ingredients — I'd be doing it anyway."

HUNGRY? FOR WHAT?

Quebec City can please many appetites from fun to fromage. Have a taste at www.boston.com/travel.

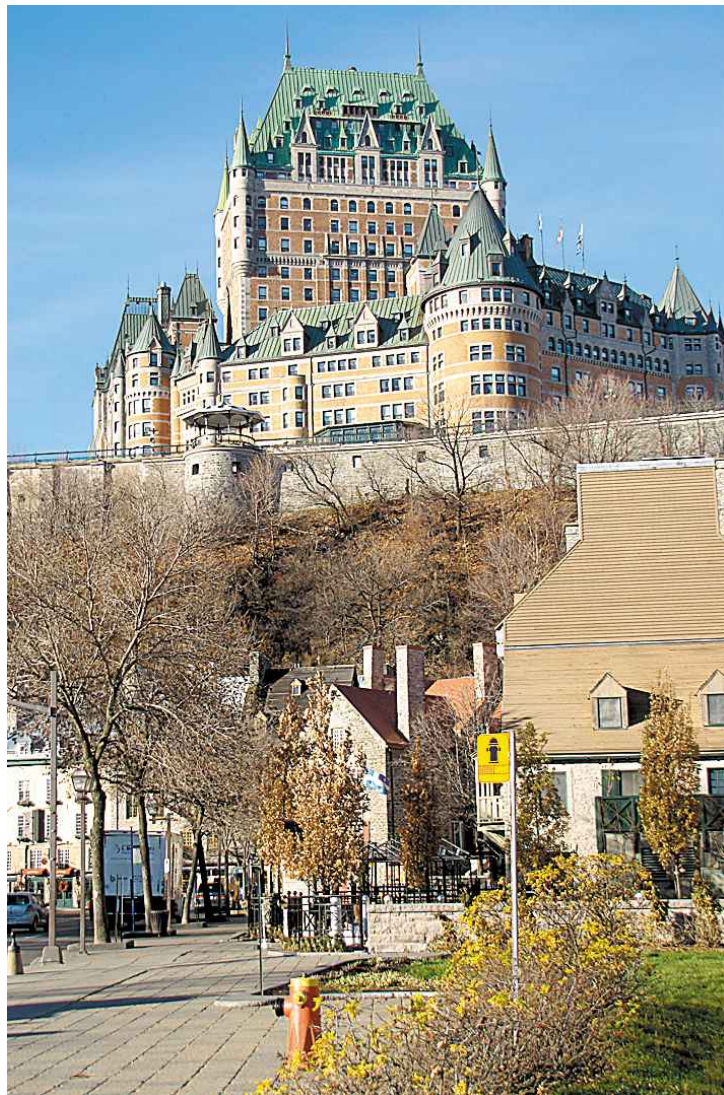
We stopped for a pick-me-up at Le Nektar Espresso Bar where I tasted my best cup of coffee in the city. "We're the only place in Quebec doing business with these roasters," said Vincent Hamel, one of the owners.

Bags of coffee listed the country of origin, the altitude it was grown, and roasting date. "I like to express the terroir of coffee," said Hamel. "This is my niche. It's a new and young concept in Quebec."

A half-block off the main thoroughfare we discovered Korrigane, a brew pub and beer garden opened last summer by Jean Foster and his daughter, Catherine Dionne-Foster.

A master brewer for 20 years, Foster crafts 500-liter batches at a time, all by hand. Most of the 15 recipes he uses produce English-style beers. Some are produced seasonally, like those flavored with pumpkin or blueberry, while others stay on the menu year round. Since Korrigane isn't a microbrewery, meaning it can't bottle or sell beer off premises, this is the only place in town to taste his creations.

Dionne-Foster, who lives near-



by, describes the pub as "an extension of our living room," and wants the pub to be "a cultural meeting place, a window for local artists and musicians. We try to be really involved in the neighborhood."

From here, it was a 20-minute stroll from the Saint-Roch district to another avenue of great eating, Rue Saint-Jean. We perused J.A. Moisan, an epicurean grocer dating to 1871, and tasted Gaulois, a soft raw cow's milk cheese. We entered another tea and coffee emporium, kitchen gadget shop, bakery, and discovered a chocolate museum within a chocolate shop.

Passing through an arched stone gate into the heart of Vieux-Quebec, we found another so-called museum within a store,

the Maple Museum, and learned about harvesting sap.

We paused where buskers performed on clarinet, guitar, and harmonica, offering a rousing, French-accented rendition of "When the Saints Go Marching In."

A brisk wind from the river was a chilly reminder that evening was fast approaching. Our next destination was the bar at the famed Fairmont Le Château Frontenac, a late-19th-century hotel on a bluff overlooking the St. Lawrence River.

We tossed some money in the open guitar case, and marched like saints down the street in the waning light.

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If you go . . .

Where to stay

Auberge Saint-Antoine
8 Saint-Antoine St.
888-692-2211
www.saint-antoine.com
Boutique Relais & Châteaux hotel with 95 rooms and suites. Fine dining, gym; doubles from \$149.

Where to eat

Matto
71 Saint-Pierre St.
1-418-266-9444
www.ilmatto.ca
Italian comfort food in upscale setting. Entrees \$15-\$32.

Le Graffiti
1191 Avenue Cartier
1-418-529-4949
Romantic neighborhood bistro. Classic French and Italian fare. Signature dish: sweetbreads in filo. Entrees \$16-\$34.

Le Cochon Dingue
46 boulevard Champlain
1-418-692-2013
www.cochondingue.com
Casual French bistro: steaks, frites, mussels, pate and onion soup. Entrees \$16-\$23.

Korrigane
380 Dorchester St.
1-418-614-0932
www.korrigane.ca
Brew pub serving artisan beers and light bar menu in casual setting. Pints \$6.

What to do

Le Marche du Vieux-Port

160 Quai St-Andre
418-692-2517
www.marchevieuxport.com
Farmers' market daily, year round.

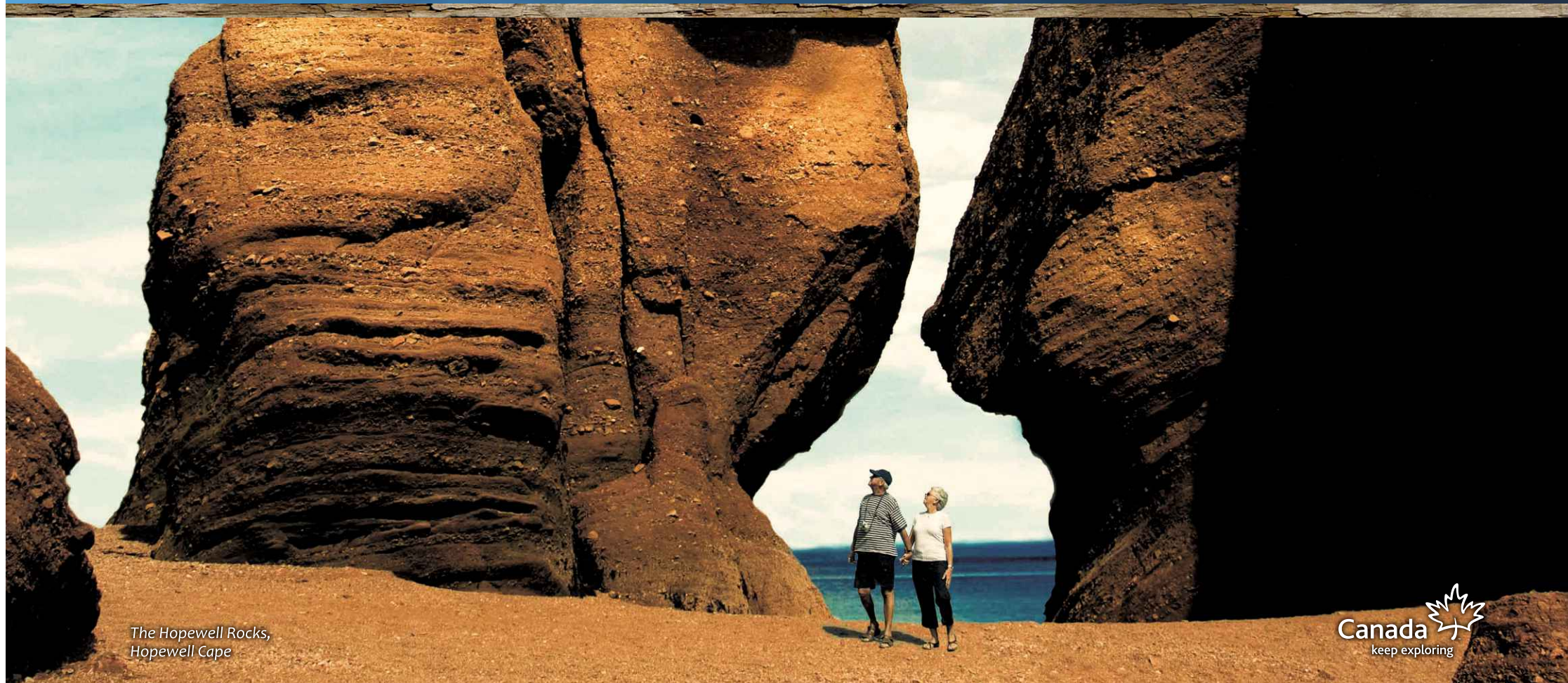
Viva Cite Trail

www.vivacitetrail.com
Explore five neighborhoods: Parliament Hill and Old Quebec, Faubourg Saint-Jean, Saint-Roch District, Old Port District and Place-Royale, Quartier Petit Champlain. Pedestrian route with markers embedded in sidewalks.

Information

www.quebecregion.com

100 Billion Tons of Fundy



The Hopewell Rocks,
Hopewell Cape



If you're searching for new and interesting experiences, take a turn off the beaten path.

Start with the Bay of Fundy as your phenomenal backdrop. You'll quickly discover why it's one of only two North American finalists in the New7Wonders of Nature, in good company with the Grand Canyon. Walk on the ocean floor where four-story tides have carved intriguing 350 million year old rock formations.

Explore the Fundy Isles where Franklin D. Roosevelt spent his summers and James Audubon charted some of his rarest bird sightings. A destination for 11 cruise companies, and less than a 6 hour drive from Boston, this natural wonder is a quick hop up the coast.

Intriguing, inviting, it's a place where you can immerse yourself. Fact is, New Brunswick is full of unexpected finds.



Delve into more activities, events and local recommendations.
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