

# A heavenly stay in a new monastery hotel in Quebec City

The 400-year-old Monastère des Augustines is now a wellness hotel exuding peace and calm

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**G**rowing up in Montreal I only knew Quebec City from a school history trip but, decades later, I'm back for the 400-year-old Monastère des Augustines' new incarnation as a not-for-profit wellness hotel. The monastery opened to the public this summer after a renovation that took several years and cost more than £20m - and the new design mixes the building's heritage with slick contemporary architecture.

Originally founded by an order of nuns sent from France by Louis XIII, some of the present-day sisters actually still live on the premises, in a separate wing - yet somehow I felt their low-key presence as I wandered the quiet, low-lit corridors. Thirty-three of the 65 rooms are monastic in style, former "cells" simply furnished with hand-embroidered quilts and antique wood desks - the only "hardship" is the short walk to the shared bathroom.

The sisters were once healers and medical herbalists who opened 12 hospitals across Quebec, including the Hotel Dieu, the oldest in Canada or the US, which adjoins the monastery and still operates as a hospital. A museum on-site is filled with artefacts including the brass pestle and mortar first used to make medicines.

Breakfasts are eaten in silence, a ritual in accordance with the site's vocation, and the food is organic, local and delicious. Some of the dishes are adapted from recipes found in the sisters' archives. Peace reigns here - I felt the stress ebb out of me before I'd even tried the gentle meditation, yoga and complimentary therapies on offer.

● *Rooms from £36 a night, [monastere.ca](http://monastere.ca)*

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