

## The Other Side of the Falls: Niagara Falls, New York

by Michelle Kosloff, PassPorter Guest Contributor

(Check out Michelle's article on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls in our [August 30, 2007](#) issue.)

Whenever I think of Niagara Falls, I think of the Canadian side with its noise, glaring lights, and in-your-face tourist grabs. Don't get me wrong, I like it. It's sort of like Las Vegas - Canadian style. There is something to see around every corner. However I recently discovered something a little quieter and somewhat different -- Niagara Falls, New York.

There are not nearly as many hotels on the New York side of the Falls as there are on the Canadian side. Choose wisely and remember that for the most part you get what you pay for. At the top of the price range is the [Seneca-Niagara Casino](#), for the fully pampered experience. It was a little out of our price range but someday we'd like to try it. And from there you can go all the way down to a little motel. Be careful though, the area where the motels are located is not the nicest and some of the motels looked a little dodgy.

We used [Priceline.com](#) to bid on our hotel because we didn't really care where we stayed (within reason) and in the 3-star range we were bidding in there were only 2 hotels and either would have been fine. We won our bid at the [Sheraton Four Points](#).

I had read mixed reviews of this hotel and in truth they were warranted. The staff was fabulous, the rooms were fine. The lobby and restaurant were very nice. The pool was nice and big but the pool deck needed painting and had a shabby appearance. The elevators could have used a good cleaning. The views are not nearly as nice as the hotels on the Canadian side. If I had paid full price in the summer, I am sure I would have been disappointed, but after paying a rock bottom price, we were ok with it. On the plus side, on our second night there we told the desk clerk it was our anniversary and she upgraded us to a Jacuzzi suite! The view was a smidge better in our original room (view of the Canadian skyline) but it was still quite nice. The room was much bigger and of course it had a Jacuzzi -- ahhhh, what heaven after a day of shopping!

The best part about our hotel was that we were able to walk to the falls in minutes. The route we took led us along the river leading up to the falls themselves. The power of the river was awesome. My husband thought it would be fun to white water canoe along it -- I thought he

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must have a screw loose!

The falls and the land surrounding them is all a [State Park](#). There is a free trolley throughout the park (which includes Goat Island), a 40 minutes IMAX movie about the history of the falls and several different tours (Cave of Winds, Gorge tour -- different prices) as well as the classic Maid of the Mist boat ride right up to the falls. You can get a package to do several of the options -- movie, Cave of Winds, etc. -- for a discounted price. (For information and pricing, check out the [Niagara Falls State Park web site](#).) However, one thing to keep in mind - if you go during the off season like we did, some of the attractions may be closed or have shortened hours. On the plus side, it was not difficult to enjoy a perfect view with nobody around!

Probably our biggest draw to this side of the falls was shopping. We did the short drive to Buffalo to go to the [Walden Galleria](#) (and ate at the [Cheesecake Factory](#) -- Yum!) and also shopped at the [Boulevard Mall](#) (not as big but nicer). The [Fashion Outlets](#) in Niagara Falls was also one of our destinations and it did not disappoint with bargains. We made several trips back to the car with our "deals." We also visited the Summit Mall in Niagara Falls for a trip to the Steve & Barry's there (one of my new favorite stores). We bought a ton of clothes there and in truth, this store there was nicer than the one in Walden Galleria! We probably didn't even have to make the trip to Buffalo because almost everything we were looking for (except the Cheesecake Factory) was right there in Niagara Falls.

Finally, our last destination on this side of the falls was the [Casino](#). We are new to gambling, but we wanted a nighttime diversion and this seemed like a good idea. It was a nice casino -- not my favorite but not bad. On the plus side, the restaurants are outside the casino areas so if you did have kids you could still eat there with them. The casino area was bright and there were lots of different options. On the minus side (because I am a non-smoker), smoking was allowed pretty much everywhere. I am used to Ontario where smoking is not allowed indoors. (I guess this would be a plus if you were a smoker!)

Had it been my first visit to either side of Niagara Falls, I might have been disappointed. However as a seasoned Falls visitor, our trip to the other side was refreshing and seemed like a whole new adventure.

*About The Author:* Michelle previously contributed an article on [Prince Edward Island](#) to PassPorter News. She is a Computer Programmer from Woodstock, Ontario, Canada and is married with two children.

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