



Girlfriend Getaway: Blackstone Mountain Lodge in Canmore Alberta

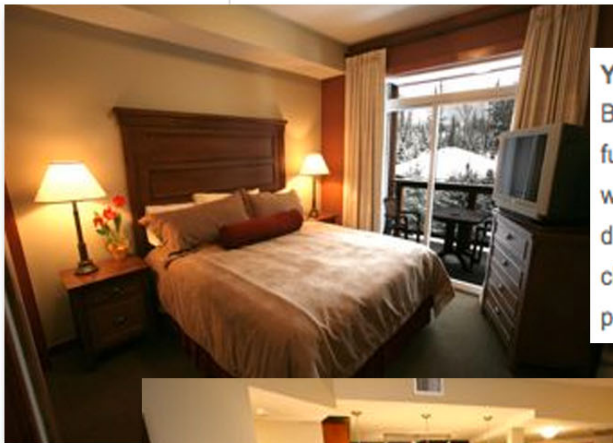
I love being a mom but it's easy to let that role take over your life. Sometimes mom needs to escape family responsibilities and reconnect with friends, girlfriends. We (Michelle and I) had the chance to do that recently, escaping into the mountains.

Blackstone Mountain Lodge, one of **Bellstar Resorts** condominium-style resorts located in the picturesque town of Canmore, Alberta, provides the ideal setting for a girlfriend getaway.

Suites to Accommodate Your Size

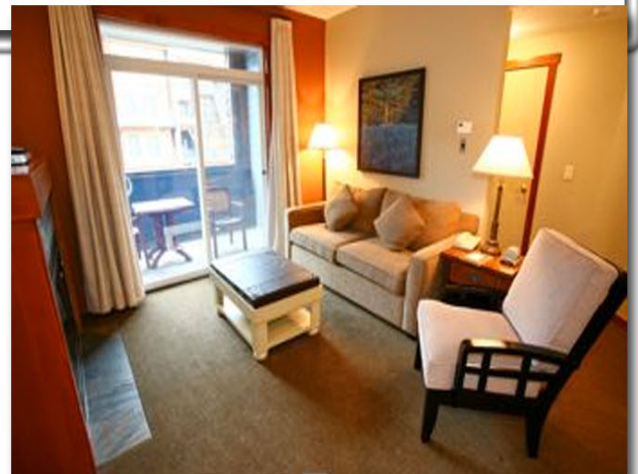
The two-bedroom suite we stayed in offered plenty of room for the two of us, giving each of us our own room with queen-sized bed and LCD flat screen TV. Although we were both usually too tired to watch TV by the time we retired to our rooms, the option to escape into your own space and watch whatever you wanted, if you wanted to, was a really nice option.

With a queen-sized bed in each of the two rooms and a pull out sofa bed in the living room, you could accommodate up to 6 people but you would have to be pretty close friends; it would feel a little snug though ideal when I think about my family of five. One and three-bedroom suites are also available.



Your Home Away from Home

Blackstone Mountain Lodge suites are designed to be your home away from home. The full sized kitchen is fitted with everything you would need for a weekend or even a weeklong getaway, including dishes, cutlery, glassware, pots and pans, and more. Coffee drinkers will love the full sized coffee pot and I loved the blender, though I didn't get a chance to use it. The suite even provides plastic glasses for taking drinks down by the pool or hot tub, which we did.



Seating for meals can be accommodated by the compact dining table for four plus the breakfast bar area in the open concept kitchen. And after dinner you can enjoy hanging out in the living room, having a glass of wine in front of the gas fireplace, or out on the spacious deck, enjoying the view. Our room, which over looked the pool area, still provided a beautiful view of the mountains. Many of the other rooms have small decks but our deck could easily accommodate all 6 guests if desired.

We only stayed at Blackstone Mountain Lodge for a weekend, but the large pantry area and built-in washer and dryer made these suites ideal for an extended vacation.

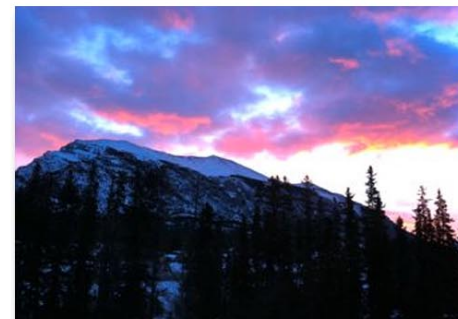
Although the main bedroom has an attached 4-piece bathroom, with both a soaker tub and separate shower stall, there is a second 3-piece bathroom, with a stand-alone shower, off the main living area. This means two people can get ready in the morning without waiting. I love stand-alone shower stalls but the best part of the bathrooms at Blackstone Mountain Lodge is the Aveda bath products provided. **Aveda's Rosemary Mint** shampoo and conditioner was delicious to use in the morning. Then slip into the man-sized robe provided (2 in each room); a nice way to end your shower.

Spa Time

Blackstone Mountain Lodge doesn't have an on-site spa, though its sister site **Solara Resort and Spa** will be adding a holistic health spa this year. Blackstone Mountain Lodge does offer select treatments from **Verde Day Spa** in designated on-site treatment rooms. We didn't get a chance to try these rooms out but we did enjoy the two hot tubs and heated swimming pool.



Blackstone was a great girlfriend escape, offering accommodations to suite our needs (and size) and a beautiful surrounding to enjoy them in. These suites would also be ideal for a family looking to get away for a week in the mountains, close to Banff and Jasper but without the crowds and cost.



Since Blackstone is a condominium resort versus a standard hotel, only light housekeeping is done daily, such as refreshing your coffee and tea station and collecting garbage. Making arrangements to clean your suite, change the linen and refresh the towels can be done for a fee. Also, the supplies in your suite, like shampoo, soap, tissues, toilet paper and paper towels, are provided to get you started. You'll have to bring or purchase additional supplies when you stock-up for your vacation. You also won't find an onsite restaurant but the nearby town of Canmore offers a number of dining options with a stunning view to match.

Clean the World

Ever been to a hotel and wonder what they do with those unused soaps and shampoo bottles? Well, the ones you don't take home with you that is. I have. The folks at Bellstar Resort have given it some thought too. We know how important washing with soap and water can be in cutting down on germs and illness. This is even more important in third world countries where some illness kill kids, especially those under the age of five. Bellstar Resorts are partners in the **Clean World** program where unfished soaps and shampoos are recycled and delivered to third world countries. Sort of makes me want to leave my shampoo bottle behind (accept it was from Aveda).

The secure underground parking is a nice feature too, meaning we could park close and avoid walking through snow, puddles, and slush. They even offer a self-serve car wash station in the garage to get that winter gunk off your car. And the free wifi in the room means you can still keep in touch with family and friends while away.