

DON'T MISS

ANSWERS TO ALL YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT HOTEL CLASSIFICATION
page 2

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF CLASSIFICATION
page 2

HOTEL RATING TRENDS FROM 2004 TO 2016
page 3

SOME THOUGHTS BY CLASSIFIER SYLVAIN JOLY
page 4




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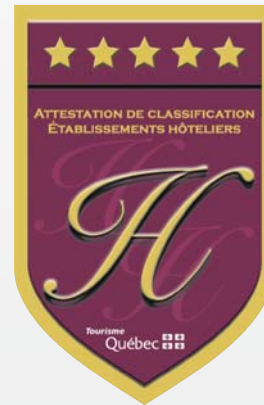
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HOTEL CLASSIFICATION

MYTHS and REALITIES



As a number of readers suggested, the next several issues of *infoCITQ* will be devoted to answering the most frequently asked questions about the official classification program. This will also be an opportunity to correct or confirm certain facts and fictions.

This issue looks at the classification of hotel establishments. In addition to clarifying various aspects of this classification process, it contains a table showing hotel rating trends from 2004 to 2016.

See inside for the rest of the article.

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**MESSAGE FROM
THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



Despite all of the CITOQ's communication efforts, it can be frustrating to hear or read some of what is said about the official tourist accommodation classification program that we administer on behalf of the Quebec Minister of Tourism.

That's why we decided to launch a column where we could answer the most common questions we get about the ins and outs of this program. The exercise will also allow us to clear up certain misconceptions we've observed when talking with operators, journalists and our industry partners.

The Quebec classification program is based on objectively measurable criteria, and has numerous benefits. First and foremost, it gives consumers clear information about the level of comfort and service offered by an establishment. After all, these classifications are done mainly for them.

Classification is also profitable for establishment operators, because it gives them benchmarks they can use to develop products adapted to their target markets and to see where they stand in comparison with the competition.

The same is true for tourism promoters, as it gives them access to exhaustive data on the accommodation available in their regions – vital information for planning promotional campaigns.

So I would invite you to read this issue carefully, as it will help you better understand how Quebec's official classification program works. You can also contact our Operator Relations department if you have any questions in this regard or about the classification of your establishment.

Hotel rating trends

In closing, let me say a few words about the table in this issue that shows hotel rating trends since 2004, when we completed our first classification tour. You will notice that the proportion of establishments rated 3, 4 and 5 stars went from 39% in 2004 to 44% in 2016. Irrefutable proof that Quebec operators are interested in improving their product!

Michel Rheault



HOTEL CLASS

IS CLASSIFICATION MANDATORY?



YES ▶ Classification certificates replace the operator's permits that operators formerly had to obtain. They represent a major advance because they are issued following a visit to each establishment once every two years.

ARE THE CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA DRAWN UP BY TOURISME QUÉBEC OFFICIALS?



NO ▶ Although they must be approved by the Minister of Tourism, the criteria are drawn up by the CITOQ in collaboration with the industry. Operator and consumer surveys, roundtables with operators, experts and consumers, studies of other classification systems and field testing are just some of the steps involved in preparing them.

MUST A HOTEL HAVE A 300-SEAT MEETING ROOM, OR A SPA, OR A FITNESS CENTRE TO RECEIVE A 4-STAR RATING?



NO ▶ There are some 4-star hotels in Quebec that don't have such facilities. Quebec's official classification system has no minimum requirements. Each rating is based on a weighted average of the score obtained in each section of the evaluation.



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MAGAZINE **D**

CLASSIFICATION: MYTHS and REALITIES

ARE SOME ELEMENTS MORE IMPORTANT IN A HOTEL ESTABLISHMENT'S RATING?



YES ▶ Rooms and bathrooms represent 60% of the final score. This proportion reflects the main customer experience. The same is true for certain criteria like beds and bedding, which weigh more heavily in the evaluation of the room.

DO SMALL ROOMS AND BATHROOMS MEAN A LOWER RATING?



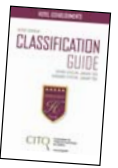
NO ▶ Some 4- or 5-star hotels in Quebec have small rooms and bathrooms.

ARE CLEANLINESS AND UPKEEP TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT?



YES ▶ Cleanliness and upkeep account for 30% of a hotel's overall rating. Some elements like bedbugs and mould can even result in a lower rating.

DOES THE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM TAKE ACCOUNT OF MARKET TRENDS?



YES ▶ Each of the eight CITQ classification guides is updated approximately every five years, following broad-based industry consultation that takes operators' and consumers' interests and concerns into account.

TRUE OR FALSE

Classification does not take account of service quality

TRUE Each of the eight CITQ classification guides is updated approximately every five years, following broad-based industry consultation that takes operators' and consumers' interests and concerns into account.

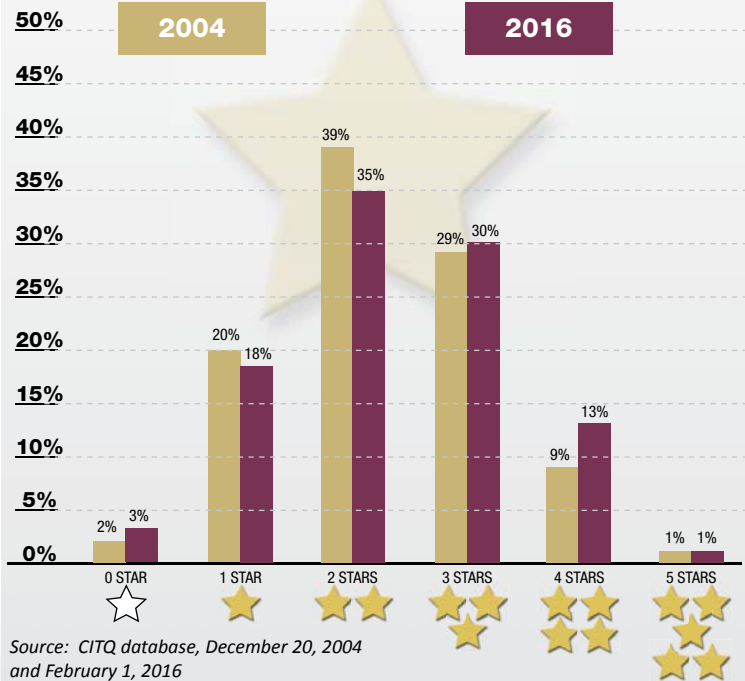
Hotel classification favours large urban hotels

FALSE A number of 4-star hotels have fewer than 30 rooms and are located in resort areas. Some criteria are found more in large urban hotels, and others more in resort areas.

An establishment without a restaurant cannot obtain a superior rating

FALSE There are many 4-star hotels that offer only breakfast.

2004-2016 HOTEL RATING TRENDS



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**IMPROVING OUR PROGRAM
 FOR TOURIST HOMES**

In recent weeks, we have made a number of changes to our "Tourist homes" insurance program. In addition to our "All Risk" coverage, we now offer coverage against theft and vandalism by guests. Remember that depending on the owner's situation, "owner occupier" insurance, with even broader coverage, is also available. The strong growth in our programs for tourist homes, bed & breakfast establishments, inns and motels, as well as for small hotels, shows that they are both competitive and suited to industry needs.



Make yourself a new friend on Facebook! Our clever client (*assuré fute*) will periodically offer insurance tips and advice for both individuals and businesses. He will always be on the lookout for news with an impact on insurance policies. For example:

Drones and insurance don't make smooth flying

They're clearly very popular, with businesses and just for fun and entertainment. But drones are subject to the rules set by Transport Canada, which considers them aircraft. See <http://www.tc.gc.ca/safetyfirst> for a detailed guide on whether or not you need a permit. In either case, you should know that home insurance and commercial policies do not cover damage to your drone or liability for damage it causes to others. It is quite complicated to insure these aircraft at the moment.

Jean-François Trudel
 Vice-President, Operations
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**SYLVAIN JOLY
 CLASSIFIER**

Sylvain Joly has over a decade of experience as a CITQ classifier. The two words that best describe his approach to the job are clearly "thorough" and "professional." After travelling the globe for five years, Sylvain started his hotel-industry career in Australia. When he returned to Montreal, he worked in tourism and restaurants, and held senior positions in the city's very first boutique hotels.



What does he like most about his job?

The variety is what Sylvain enjoys most. The variety of establishments, from summer camps for children with limited mobility to fancy urban hotels, bed and breakfasts, youth hostels and the many tourist homes in Quebec. Also the different approaches taken by operators, all of whom add their own unique style and rich local or international flavour, making for a great variety of original accommodation.

Sylvain Joly during a Nunavik classification tour in January 2014. Sylvain kept smiling, despite the frigid temperatures. He says that the warm welcome he received from locals and the know-how of the bush pilot who accompanied him went a long way toward making it a positive experience.

His most memorable experience?

His 2014 Nunavik classification tour was one of the highlights of Sylvain's career. Flying in a bush plane across a region covering thousands of square kilometres, to visit some twenty establishments in five days, is certainly an experience he will long remember. Although he already knew the region from having worked there in geology long ago, this jaunt north of the 55th parallel also gave him a new appreciation for the remarkable work done by operators facing the considerable constraints of distance and climate.



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