



L'Hôtel Particulier Griffintown can host up to 16 guests in a flexible “modular system.” PHOTOS: L'HÔTEL PARTICULIER

IF YOU GO

L'Hôtel Particulier Griffintown: 438-402-5415, hpgmontreal.com; 1200 Ottawa St., near de la Montagne, Griffintown/Montreal.
Price: Rates fluctuate and are approximate. The hotel can be rented for \$1,200 a night, for up to 16 people; or \$800 for eight people. Individual rooms/suites start at \$125-\$150 for two, including Wi-Fi, breakfast and coffee. Limited parking available, \$15.
Tourism Montreal: 514-844-5500, mtl.org.

1865 ROW HOUSES REBORN AS UNIQUE GRIFFINTOWN B&B



ROCHELLE LASH
Checking In

The petite Hôtel Particulier Griffintown is a homespun getaway at the epicentre of Montreal's hip, progressive neighbourhood. This is history in the making. The lodging establishment is a series of interconnected brick row houses that date to 1865. And it's wedged between the historic Horse Palace and the new city-within-a-city of towering glass condos. L'Hôtel Particulier Griffintown operates as a B&B, but with an unusual formula. "It is micro-lodging," said Michael Marciano, who runs the place with his wife, Romy. "Mostly a home-away-from-home for small groups that take over the place or take several rooms at once. We could call it a 'maison-hôtel' or a 'home-hotel'." L'Hôtel Particulier has a maximum capacity of 16 people, so the Marcianos have been host to sports teams, wedding parties, families, corporate groups and girlfriend groups. Or, let's say you have out-of-towners coming to Montreal for a special family occasion and you don't have space for them at home. The

Marcianos will custom-fit lodging to suit them. On my visit, I met a theatre troupe from Ottawa that had travelled here to attend Centaur Theatre, and a group of technology wizards visiting for a conference at L'École de technologie supérieure (ÉTS), which is nearby. **The scene:** Formally, L'Hôtel Particulier Griffintown is a B&B. That means it has five lodging units, but the difference here is that each one is not simply a bedroom. Three of the units are apartments with kitchens/kitchenettes and two are double suites. All have a mix of twin and queen beds. That makes for various configurations, all linked by staircases and each with a private entrance. You have to do the math. "It's a modular system," said Marciano. "And we are flexible about putting the rooms together or separate. "When all the doors are open, we have one big house and we often rent it out as whole." The B & B is rated three suns out of a possible five, so it's well maintained, with an appealing "shabby-chic" elegance and a look of relaxed comfort. All the beds have white cotton duvets and most rooms have flat-screen TVs. To match the setting, there are vintage touches such as faded Kilim rugs, window shutters recycled as headboards and dark wood beams against white walls.

"We tried to keep the soul of the place, with 300-year-old fireplaces and bare brick walls," said Marciano. "Although we don't yet operate the fireplaces, they add to the decor and mood." In summer, l'Hôtel Particulier has a small patio with a barbecue, and a table and chairs so guests can cook and mingle, or simply have morning coffee. And perhaps there will be a calèche horse next door, munching hay. **Art:** Marciano is a passionate art aficionado, so the B & B embodies a cultural fix, too. L'Hôtel Particulier doubles as a gallery of constantly changing works, with a mix of modern and vintage "objets," paintings and prints. His exposition is called Galerie HPG. Some pieces came from a nearby shop, Vermeil Montréal, where Diane Colucci sells an eclectic collection of contemporary art and antique treasures such as crystal chandeliers, exotic rugs, Art Deco furniture, china by Richard Ginori or Copeland Spode, and glassware by Limoges and Baccarat (Facebook/Vermeil Montréal). L'Hôtel Particulier also has its own artist-in-residence — photographer Dani Hausman. These stark black and white images flash back to a gritty past, depicting the peeling underbelly of Montreal, after industrialization and before gentrification (danihausmann.com). **Breakfast:** A popular bakery, La Bête à Pain, supplies breakfast: juice, coffee and treats



Vintage touches reflect “the soul of the place.” The B&B also offers a cultural fix, doubling as an art gallery of constantly changing works.

such as almond croissants, avocado toast or French toast with ricotta mousse and caramel (labeteapain.com). Guests have a choice of having their morning meal at the B & B or at the bakery, about a block away. There are coffee machines in the rooms — French press or espresso pods — to get you started. **Neighbourhood:** Griffintown developed during the 1800s as an industrial and working-class neighbourhood and is having a renaissance. In the 2000s, it has become the darling of downtowners who enjoy the edgy new café-and-condo culture. Griffintown and St-Henri are

hopping with terrific restaurants and the Marcianos recommend a few, including Foiegwa, Le Richmond, Pizzeria Moretti or Vin Papillon. And what only a year or two ago was an urban no man's land has become a handy hub of services. The revitalized corner of Peel and Wellington Sts. is home to pharmacies, banks, Adonis, Winners, an SAQ outlet, Dollarama, and the gorgeous home decor complex MUST Société, which embraces Maison Corbeil, Prune Les Fleurs, Studio Fillion, La Bête à Pain and in summer, Jardin de Ville (mustmaison.com).

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