

HYATT CENTRIC ADDS MODERN VIBE TO OLD MONTREAL



ROCHELLE LASH
Hotel Intel

The spanking new Hyatt Centric Ville-Marie Montréal is part of Place Gare Viger, an architectural sensation and construction triumph where avant-garde design meets the history of Old Montreal.

It's also a cool, dynamic hotel with 177 rooms and suites with attractive decor and worldly dining and drinking at Cartier Arms, operated by Burgundy Lion Group, the popular pub people.

By summer, there will be patio dining, a private landscaped courtyard with a café and — surely the next Old Montreal social hot spot — a 14th-floor rooftop restaurant and an outdoor swimming pool.

Because Old Montreal is low-rise, the views from the hotel's higher floors are an amazing panorama of the St. Lawrence River, Marché Bonsecours and the bridges to the South Shore.

It's Canada's first Hyatt Centric, which is an urban brand that celebrates contemporary life-style and local culture. The staff wear blazers and jeans, and signature amenities include hooded bathrobes in sweatshirt-grey cotton, eco-friendly BeeKind toiletries and, if great hair is a priority, powerful blow-dryers by Drybar.

RushCycle, which has branches on the West Island and the South Shore, will soon launch kick-boxing, spinning and yoga sessions.

Concept: The hotel is only one aspect of Place Gare Viger, an innovative complex built around Canada's first train station and its Canadian Pacific Railway hotel.

The 2023 development is a mixed-use community of hospitality, apartments, offices and shops on Notre Dame St. E. in a neighbourhood of condos on the edge of Old Montreal.

Designed by the illustrious architecture firm of Provencher Roy, the Hyatt Centric is housed in a set of avant-garde cantilevered buildings, a stunning contrast to the 125-year-old former castle that anchors Place Gare Viger.

"Provencher Roy aced this incredibly sensitive architectural project and, working with local governments and the heritage community, we have ensured that Place Gare Viger is in harmony with its surroundings," said Anthony O'Brien, the senior managing director at Jesta, who has been working on the venture for 11 years.

"All of the exterior building materials are in sync with the historic fabric of Old Montreal. The white concrete is the same as the Old Port's Clock Tower, one building is wrapped in zinc like the metal rooftops of 19th-century churches, and we have sourced beige norman brick to complement vintage buildings."

Interiors: Even with a multinational banner, the Hyatt Centric keeps its local character. The interior millwork, artwork and furnishings are by Montreal artisans.

The lobby is an appealing collection of eye-catching curves — the walls, windows and furniture are all rounded. Designed by Ivy Studio, it's polished, grace-



The new mixed-use development of Place Gare Viger, on the edge of Old Montreal, is an architectural triumph with offices, rental apartments and shops. *HYATT CENTRIC VILLE-MARIE MONTRÉAL*

ful and lighthearted, decorated with unique sofas and ottomans. Bronze arches, wood panelling, a terrazzo floor and a massive marble reception desk are meant to recall the old railway days.

The guest rooms are straightforward and functional, done in businesslike white and grey, with some concrete detailing adding a modern industrial effect.

Cuisine: Cartier Arms has the soul of a pub, based on its extensive choice of beer and spirits, make-your-own martinis and privately imported wines. But it seems like a bistro, with mirrored columns, dark velvet seating and rich Mediterranean-spiced dishes. It's strong on local ingredients and there is a subtle English accent.

Your starter might be salmon crudo with chili oil and cilantro, lamb kebabs over a pink beet hummus or grilled octopus with lentils. Main courses include organic salmon with salsa verde, lamb with eggplant and rapini, guinea fowl sweetened with

prune sauce or a pork chop with mustard sauce.

The anglophile angle is mostly in desserts: toffee pudding, trifle with cream or banoffee pie, an over-the-top sweet confection of chocolate, banana and toffee.

Breakfast takes flight with BLT sandwiches, gravlax with dill, and a truly gala French toast with apples, almonds, crème fraîche and lemon syrup. Brunch adds a hearty beef and venison burger, plus mimosas, fancy coffees with liqueurs and house mocktails such as the Boréale Breeze, with pine syrup.

Old Montreal: St-Paul St. and the Old Port waterfront promenade are nearby. At night, Cité Mémoire, one of the largest outdoor video-projection installations in the world, depicts Montreal's yesteryear throughout Old Montreal.

Cirque du Soleil will present the world première of Echo on April 20, a story about evolution told through acrobatics. *rochelle@rochellelash.com*

IF YOU GO

Hyatt Centric Ville-Marie Montréal: 514-657-2444, hyatt.com and placegareviger.com; 621 Notre Dame St. E. World of Hyatt loyalty plan valid at nearly 30 brands. Hyatt app accesses remote check-in, digital room key, housekeeping, accounts and Headspace meditation. Accessible. Pets, \$75 per night. **Price:** Best rate guarantee. Rooms start at \$299, suites from \$449, including rooftop pool (summer), Chromecast, fitness centre, Wi-Fi, in-room Rainforest coffee/Tazo tea. Valet or self-parking. Room service. Private dining/meeting space. **Cartier Arms:** 514-657-2444, Ext. 4610, cartierarms.com. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, drinks daily. Vegetarian, gluten-free available. **Info:** Tourisme Montréal: 514-844-5400, 877-bonjour (877-266-5687), mtl.org. Old Montreal: 514-732-8685, vieuxmontreal.ca.

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