

Luxury or death

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE



Olivier Bottois is the new manager of the luxury Hotel St-James in Montreal.

Photograph by: Pierre Obendrauf, The Gazette

The decline of The Dow be damned. The St. James Hotel, the aristocratic 60-room boutique establishment in Old Montreal, is not compromising its standards of luxury, even during an economic downturn.

After all, Madonna is a repeat client. Royals have graced the palatial Royal Suite. And Elton John likes the penthouse so much that when he played gigs in the Maritimes recently, he flew back to Montreal every night for a week to sleep at Le St-James.

"We are not discounting prices in this economy, but we are exercising a strategy of added value," said Olivier Bottois, who was appointed general manager in the autumn, bringing experience from iconic hotels in Europe and the United States. "That's what the luxury traveler is looking for."

Bottois has taken over St. James, arguably Montreal's most luxurious hotel, in tumultuous times. To add value, he is sweetening the deal for his carriage-trade clients by including a gourmet breakfast worth about \$30 and currently is offering a third night at no charge. With rates that run from \$380 to \$5,000 per night, a third night on the house can be a welcome gift. He also has started limousine service for guests who want to go shopping and he has arranged for his pampered clients to have personal shoppers at Holt Renfrew.

