

# Quebec's Hôtel PUR is bridging history

Nestled in the St-Roch creative district, landmark underwent \$11-million makeover



ROCHELLE LASH

Hôtel PUR in Quebec City bridges history.

It is a modern landmark in the St-Roch district that was founded in the early 1600s and just happens to be a hip neighbourhood of the 2000s.

The hotel has an indie look and feel, which fits in with St-Roch's progressive, creative community. It is a full-scale establishment with an indoor pool, indoor valet parking and Table, an outstanding contemporary restaurant. Plus, PUR is a great buy, with a keen staff and recent renovations from top to bottom.

Thinking globally, PUR also recently affiliated with one of the world's largest hotel companies — Marriott International — and it is the first Canadian hotel to join the brand's Tribute Portfolio. (Marriott embraces nearly 30 brands, including Westin, Sheraton, Ritz-Carlton, Courtyard, Delta, W and the trendier AC, Moxy, Autograph Collection and Tribute Portfolio.)

"It's an international link, but Tribute's style allows PUR to express its own personality and to keep an authentic connection to this historic neighbourhood," said general manager Dominique Lapointe.

"It combines the spirit of an independent hotel with the perks of a worldwide reservation system and the SPG (Starwood) loyalty program."

Lapointe reflects a similar trajectory. Her roots are in Quebec, but she brings a universe of hotel management experience from Tahiti, Singapore, Indonesia, the U.K., Bangkok and, most recently, Hôtel Omni Mont-Royal in Montreal.

The news: The hotel recently invested \$11 million on an upgrade and a new look.

"It was nice-looking," Lapointe said. "But it needed love."

To that end, Lapointe supervised a thorough refurbishing of the 242 guest rooms and suites,

the public areas, meeting spaces, the indoor pool and sauna, the indoor garage, the elevators and an expanded fitness room.

Before the makeover, the hotel had been modern, minimalist and "PUR," with floor-to-ceiling windows letting in lots of light. LemayMichaud Architecture Design of Montreal kept that fresh, airy spirit, but warmed it up with new textures and fabrics.

The lobby now is a series of engaging spaces with caramel leather chairs set in circles. You can pick your perch beside the fireplace, the pool table, the computers, the wine machine or the window where you can watch the passing parade of St-Roch.

The rooms: The accommodations have been totally overhauled with new pillow-top mattresses and bedding, curtains, rugs and honey-coloured modular furniture. The walls are decorated with whimsical sketches of urban street scenes — quite like St-Roch, with vintage buildings and micro-shops.

The bathrooms — many with soaking tubs — are well equipped with bathrobes and herbal toiletries by made-in-Canada Pharmacia, which uses verbena and green tea. PUR has thought of all the essentials: mobile device outlets, Nespresso coffee machines, hypoallergenic pillows, good reading lights, workspaces and mini-fridges.

The food: PUR'S thoroughly appealing restaurant, Table, fits in perfectly on rue St-Joseph, one of Quebec City's best avant-garde foodie communities. With a commanding location on a strategic corner of rue St-Joseph, it's more of a local hot spot than a hotel restaurant. Table is open and modern with long communal tables, high-tops, a bar and cool urban decor of concrete and distressed leather.

Chef Maxime de la Durantaye breaks new ground with adventurous menus and luscious fusions.

"It's contemporary Quebec cuisine, with respect for French technique and farm-to-table ingredients, where possible," de la Durantaye said.

Breakfast is an indulgence, featuring such dishes as crêpes with brown sugar, apple butter, sour



Table, an innovative gourmet restaurant in Quebec City's Hôtel PUR in the St-Roch district, serves excellent farm-to-table cuisine. PHOTOS: HÔTEL PUR



Hôtel PUR's \$11-million makeover included its 242 guest rooms and suites.

cream, caramelized pecans and spiced maple syrup; or waffles with chocolate-mascarpone mousse and strawberries.

The list of "poutines matin" includes sausages, bacon and duck; and the Benedictines are topped with smoked salmon, avocado, grilled mushrooms or ham. Another breakfast winner is Le Cousin Français, eggs with duck confit, rösti and hollandaise sauce.

If you're popping into Table for a drink, you can fuel up with sharing plates like warm artichoke dip, BBQ wings, Quebec cheeses, calamari or casual fare like gourmet burgers and fancy club sandwiches.

For dinner, de la Durantaye cooks up such delicacies as grilled octopus and veal carpaccio, veggie delights like yellow beets with goat cheese mousse or butternut squash ravioli, and main courses of tuna tataki, beef, lamb, tofu or curry.

The neighbourhood: St-Roch is a 15-square-block urban village where 150-year-old factories and tenements and even the neo-Gothic Église St-Roch have been recycled into indie boutiques, tiny bistros and avant-garde art spaces. Even with its working-class and industrial roots, today St-Roch is driven by a new wave of young and dynamic citizens. rochelle@rochellelash.com

## THE DETAILS

**Hôtel PUR:** 418-647-2611, hotelpur.com; 395 rue de la Couronne at rue St-Joseph, Quebec City. SPG rewards apply.

**Price:** Rates fluctuate and are approximate. In high season, May-Oct., rooms are \$159-\$359, suites are more. Low season, Nov.-April, rooms are \$129-\$189, including newspapers, Wi-Fi, indoor pool, sauna, fitness room, guest computers/printers. Extra: Pet-friendly, \$25 per night; room service (food), indoor valet parking, \$29; indoor self-parking, \$24.

**Table:** 418-647-2458, tablequebec.com. Breakfast, cocktail hour bites and dinner, Mon-Sun.; lunch, Mon-Fri.; children's menus available.

**Tourism info:** 877-783-1608, quebecregion.com. Also see St-Roch: stroch.com.

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