

HOTEL INTEL



The new AC Marriott Montréal Centre-Ville features spacious guest rooms and suites. PHOTOS: AC MARRIOTT MONTRÉAL CENTRE-VILLE

IF YOU GO

AC Marriott Montréal Centre-Ville: 514-877-9999, 888-236-2427; achotels.marriott.com; 250 René-Lévesque Blvd. W. Marriott/Starwood rewards apply.

Price: King rooms for two and double queens for four start at \$249, May-Oct.; \$199, Nov.-April; suites with sofa beds cost \$50 more. Rates include Wi-Fi, guest computers, indoor pool, sauna, sundeck, exercise room, in-room bathrobes, Nespresso and bottled water, baby gear.

Extra: breakfast buffet, \$19.95; indoor self-parking, \$28; room service, 5 to 10:30 p.m.; AC Store for snacks, sundries.

AC MARRIOTT BRAND IS PRACTICAL, POLISHED

Montreal hotel caters to a next-generation clientele, whether entrepreneurs or tourists



ROCHELLE LASH

The new AC Marriott Montréal Centre-Ville delivers the essentials of hospitality with style.

The first of its brand in Canada, the AC Marriott is a sleek four-star operation with striking contemporary design, a pivotal downtown location, and moderate prices at certain times.

The AC Marriott is aimed at a mobile next-generation clientele, both entrepreneurs and fun-seekers. It is a business hub, virtually adjacent to the Palais des congrès, Complexe Guy-Favreau and Hydro-Québec. It's also ideal for culture lovers, within a block or so of the Quartier des spectacles and Place des Arts.

Plus, right outside the hotel is a stop for the 747 bus to and from the airport, at René-Lévesque Blvd. and Jeanne-Mance St.

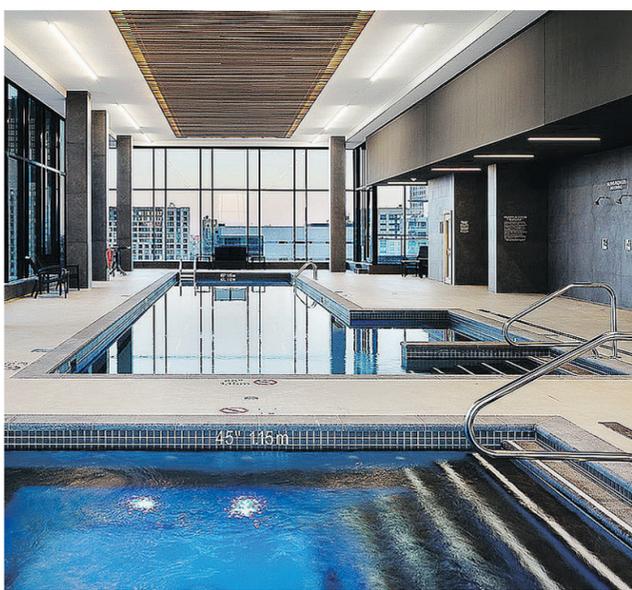
While it has a cool look and efficient approach, the AC Marriott

also has a personal feel. The staff is trained to reach out to guests to ask what they can do. No pamphlets, and almost no paper.

The look: With bold architecture by the Architex Group and sharp interiors by Provencher Roy, the hotel is eye candy for fans of design. The lobby is a dramatic, soaring space with two storeys of glass walls warmed by pillars of glossy black marble and panels of dark Brazilian walnut.

The living rooms around the reception area have deep leather and tweed sofas, large abstract paintings and displays of objets d'art such as silvery vases or Giacometti-like sculptures. You can chill in the library, which has a fireplace, computers, books and a 65-inch flat-screen TV. Or hang out at the AC Lounge, a happening place for get-togethers over tapas and cocktails.

The 12th floor is a stunner, surrounded by glass and outdoor spaces, with panoramic views of downtown. The 21-metre indoor lap pool may be the longest hotel pool in Montreal, and it's heated to a balmy 29 C. The pool area has a large hot tub and an outdoor deck, and a fitness room



A large indoor pool with an outdoor sundeck is a highlight.

is adjacent.

The Barcelona Ballroom, also on the 12th floor, will be a top choice for receptions and weddings because of its impressive wraparound outdoor terrace.

The rooms: The accommodations are practical — AC Marriott's goal is to be uncomplicated — so people on the go have everything at hand.

To that end, the 166 guest

rooms and three suites have lean lines, floor-to-ceiling windows, neutral colours and hypoallergenic hardwood floors, with only a bedside rug. Handy items include bedside USB outlets, mini-fridges and bathrobes. And although AC Marriott bills itself as a mid-range brand, the rooms are quite spacious, with armchairs, work desks, excellent lighting and high-quality

bathroom fixtures. The 50-inch TV has HBO and streams Netflix and YouTube. Hotel information is displayed on the TV.

Food: The AC Marriott brand was founded in Spain, so the cuisine has a Spanish accent.

The chef is David Capel, who used to work at the University Club of Montreal. Here, he dishes out classics and adds exciting Mediterranean flavours.

The AC Lounge is the signature watering hole of all 120 AC Marriotts around the world. The choice of tapas includes meatballs, salami, octopus, calamari, spicy potatoes, shrimp and serrano ham. The signature drink is a zingy gin and tonic with star anise and a twist.

At La Palma restaurant, the menu features paella, lots of fish and seafood (such as giant shrimp in spicy salsa), plus steaks, veal paillard and rack of lamb. There are pastas and salads with serrano ham and manchego cheese, plus bouillabaisse and hearty traditional Spanish tomato soup.

The AC Kitchen, a breakfast room on the mezzanine, lays out a Euro-style spread, plus à la carte options like baked eggs, for \$19.95. Your first Nespresso is on the house and you can help yourself to croissants, cheese, muesli, fruit, juices and quiche-style egg tarts. A highlight is the artisanal prosciutto, which the server carves with an impressive red Berkel slicer.

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