

# Homes & Leisure

**Travel** Apache Trail offers wild ride **F3**

**Decor** Style for a home in the country **F5**



A couple visiting Montreal enjoy the view of the city's downtown from at a lookout at Mount Royal, known by locals as 'The Mountain.' PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

## BONJOUR MONTREAL!

Head to Quebec's largest city for a weekend getaway

**CATHY DONALDSON**  
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Looking for a little getaway that won't break the bank? Consider a weekend in one of my favourite Canadian cities – Montreal! With our dollar not faring well against other currencies like the U.S., Quebec's largest city is a great option for those who enjoy a fun mix of things to do, sights to see, and yummy places to eat. Whenever I go back, I realize how much I miss Montreal. I lived and worked in the city's West Island area in the 1990s and have some great memories (especially of the food!) Through the wonder of social media, I stay in touch with old friends/dining colleagues, like writer and cartoonist

Fred Serre. During a recent return trip with my daughter, Sarah, I met Fred to catch up and chat about his suggestions on the best ways to have a fantastic weekend in Montreal. We reunited at one of his 'must visit' locales, La Cabane du Portugal on Saint-Laurent Boulevard, just across from the smoked-meat mecca, Schwartz's deli, both restaurants situated in the Plateau Mont-Royal area. "Tourists love to line up at Schwartz's but this, for me, is the truly Montreal experience," Fred explained as we sat at La Cabane's well-stocked bar, preparing to dig into one of the restaurant's Portuguese-influenced specialties – a heaping plate of grilled chicken. "This place has been around since 1983 and is an institution here. It's where you come to hang out with your friends, have some amazing food, watch the game ... be a part of the neighbourhood. It's the kind of spot

that really gives Montreal its character." Fred's pal, Dave O'Gorman, couldn't agree more. "La Cabane is part of the wonderful fabric of this cosmopolitan city," said the Gainesville, Fla. college professor, who joined us for lunch after arriving in town for one of his regular visits. "This place exemplifies why I love coming here. You can have such a cross-section of experiences in Montreal, from edgy coffee bars and relaxing restaurants like this to all of the trappings of a world-class metropolis, like live jazz, symphony, theatre, and of course, professional hockey. I'm hooked! As our conversation continued, La Cabane co-owner Humberto Seara ('Hubie' to his patrons) appeared with a plate of desserts, which we wasted no

PLEASE SEE → **MONTREAL, F4**



Montreal has a wide variety of urban art and murals, such as this intriguing piece on Saint-Laurent and Napoleon. PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

## Home renovation process helps a widow heal

Deborah Terry-Hays says 'My life had to go down to the studs, just like the house: Keep the frame, but add new'

**SANDY DENEAU DUNHAM**  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SEATTLE • Renovations are messy. As is life. No great earthshaking revelation there, of course – until the foundation wobbles under house and home, one right after the other, and suddenly shiny-new tiles and lights and surfaces aren't just pretty design elements; they're rebuilding blocks. Deborah Terry-Hays and her husband, Roy Hays, were downsizing and strategizing when they made a four-level house their home in 1992. Their three kids were growing up and moving out, and the nature-nestled "treehouse in the city" presented 2,500 square feet of pure potential. "We had lived in a ranch house (in the suburbs)," Terry-Hays says. "This was wide open with lots of possibilities for later in life." Two decades later, talk turned to the



Before the renovation, the main staircase, at bottom, was way too wide, and the kitchen was way too narrow. Now it's intuitive, functional and gleaming, with new and refinished white oak flooring. PHOTO: TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

possibility of retirement – and maybe even moving. But in April 2014, her husband of 42 years passed away. "Suddenly I was left with the house, deciding what to do," Terry-Hays says.

The house itself forced the decision just months later, when the entire basement and garage flooded. Contractors traced the problem to the roof, where a "huge leak" had been sending water down the inside of exterior walls into



Deborah Terry-Hays loves purple, so K&L Interiors introduced some softer, updated shades in all-new furniture, most notably in the Lee Industries sofa in Pindler & Pindler fabric. PHOTO: TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

the basement, likely for years. "When they fixed it, I thought I'd either have to move or fix up the living spaces until it was ready to sell," says Terry-Hays, a part-time Social Work instructor at the University

of Washington. She decided to update a couple of key needy areas: the tiny kitchen and the outdated master bath. Folks at

PLEASE SEE → **RENO, F8**

Quality starts with our people.

And our people live here. People and teamwork are the key to our success and we're proud of those individuals and their ability to bring quality tissue products to your home straight from our plant in Dieppe.

People like Tom

Tom Kaniak has worked with the Royale team since 2010. Tom works as a Senior Manager of Business Improvement at Head Office in Dieppe.

## Homes&amp;Leisure



Mount Royal Park is a popular year-round destination for locals and visitors to Montreal. Here, skaters take to the ice recently at the park's Beaver Lake. PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

## Worth the drive: Head to Quebec's largest city for a weekend getaway

### MONTREAL → F1

time in devouring. My favourites: an outstanding crème caramel that made me hog (and almost lick) the plate, and a divine little custard tart called 'pastel de nata,' the recipe for which I would consider trading in my family.

After Sarah and I finished our reasonably-priced meals and double-kissed everyone, we took our leave and heeded Fred and Dave's advice, spending the next two days checking out their other recommendations for an authentic Montreal getaway.

Of key importance to a decent visit, they noted, is having a good downtown base for a stay.

Ours was the InterContinental Montreal, an elegant and modern property in historic Old Montreal that adjoins the World Trade Centre and connects to the city's convention centre, the Palais des congrès.

As travellers who love to explore by foot, we found the InterContinental to be an excellent choice, not just because of its proximity to the old city and the shops, museums, and restaurants its cobblestone streets have to offer, but also because it links to Montreal's 'underground city,' a vast network of subterranean pedestrian walkways where even more stores, eateries and attractions can be accessed.

Since Sarah and I lucked into good weather on our visit, we stayed mostly above ground, popping into a variety of Old Montreal shops, stopping by the beautiful Notre-Dame Basilica (one of the many examples of striking architecture in Montreal), and taking photos along the Old Port, including of an old ferryboat that Fred had mentioned is now a spa called Bota Bota.

I later discovered that the InterContinental Montreal is working with Bota Bota on a promotion that might lure me back for another getaway before long.

Hotel guests who take the 'Digital Detox' package get a night's stay in one of the InterContinental's stunning Tourelle Suites, receive an assortment of goodies to help them relax, and – in keeping with the package theme – have their electronic devices placed in a safe.

Goodies for participating guests include magazines about health and happiness, a gourmet breakfast served in their room, access to the hotel's fitness centre, a visit to Bota Bota for spa services, a cocktail at the InterContinental's Sarah B. bar, and a table d'hôte dinner at its Osco! restaurant, accompanied by a bottle of wine.

The \$499 double occupancy price tag may not be for all but sounds like a lovely splurge for a special occasion. (Hint to hubby: Our 25th anniversary is just around the corner...)



If you love seafood, check out Le Pois Penché, a stylish brasserie on De Maisonneuve Boulevard. The restaurant's 'Moules-Frites' (mussels and fries), shown here, were the author's top menu pick. PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

On our second full day, Sarah and I had hoped to take part in Montréal en Lumière, one of the largest winter festivals in the world, a newer addition to the city's festival offerings, which also include Just for Laughs, the International Jazz Festival and the Montreal Beer Festival.

Unfortunately, we became too absorbed in shopping on Saint Catherine Street and munching our obligatory smoked meat sandwiches at Reuben's Deli to catch the festival activities before they finished for the day.

Instead, we took a drive back to the Plateau and considered a visit to one of Fred's other favourite haunts, the Parisian-style bistro, L'Express, or his 'local,' Else's Pub.

Common sense held firm, though, and we headed back to the InterContinental, knowing we had reservations that night at the hotel's Osco!

Wise decision. After our waiter, Arnaud, seated us at a cozy table with supremely plush dining chairs, we embarked on a multi-course extravaganza.

The table d'hôte began with a lovely tapenade and toasts, followed by a creamy vegetable soup that Sarah and I enjoyed to the last drop. Then it was on to two magnificent entrées – each.

(They were appropriate portions, thankfully.)

Sarah savoured a delicate crab and fresh herb ravioli in beurre blanc followed by a velvety pesto risotto with sundried-tomato-crusting scallops. I sampled her selections, while also sharing my picks, which ranged from grilled octopus to beef tenderloin, both cooked to perfection.

Somehow we made room for dessert. The next day, we continued the eating fest. I had no regrets.

After years of travel writing, I knew that one of the best ways to soak up the ambiance of a city is by experiencing its food options and dining spaces, each of which sheds light on the personality of the place.

That's certainly the case in Montreal, and was readily apparent the next morning when we opened the door to La Société, a gorgeous bistro in the Loews Hotel Vogue on De la Montagne.

What a show-stopper! From its rich wood panelling and exquisite black-and-white-tiled floor to its incredible stained-glass ceiling, the classy interior had Sarah and me feeling like we were on a movie set.

We did avert our eyes from the attractive decor long enough to scour the menu, eventually deciding on La

Société's 'Montreal Benedict.' The soul-heartening array of smoked meat, pickles and hollandaise spread over a chewy Montreal bagel did not disappoint. The city's charm once again shined through.

Nourished for at least a few hours, my daughter and I parted ways to do some independent exploring. I got dibs on the car and made a bee-line for some of my preferred city sites, meandering along Sherbrooke Street, past McGill University, winding my way up Mount Royal, simply called as 'The Mountain' by most Montrealers.

I stopped for a bit at the city's Mount Royal Park to watch skaters test their skills on an ice surface at Beaver Lake. From there, I drove to one of the mountain's lookouts for a panoramic city view before scooting over to the grounds of Saint Joseph's Oratory for another stellar vantage point. (The basilica, located on Westmount Summit, is easily identifiable by its massive dome, which reaches a height of 97 metres.)

After a morning of chilly but sunny outdoor photography fun, I was happy to warm up indoors, lunching with another old friend at Le Pois Penché, a stylish brasserie in the heart of downtown, on De Maisonneuve Boulevard.

While waiting for my lunch date, the



Sarah Donaldson enjoys a 'Montreal Benedict.' PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON

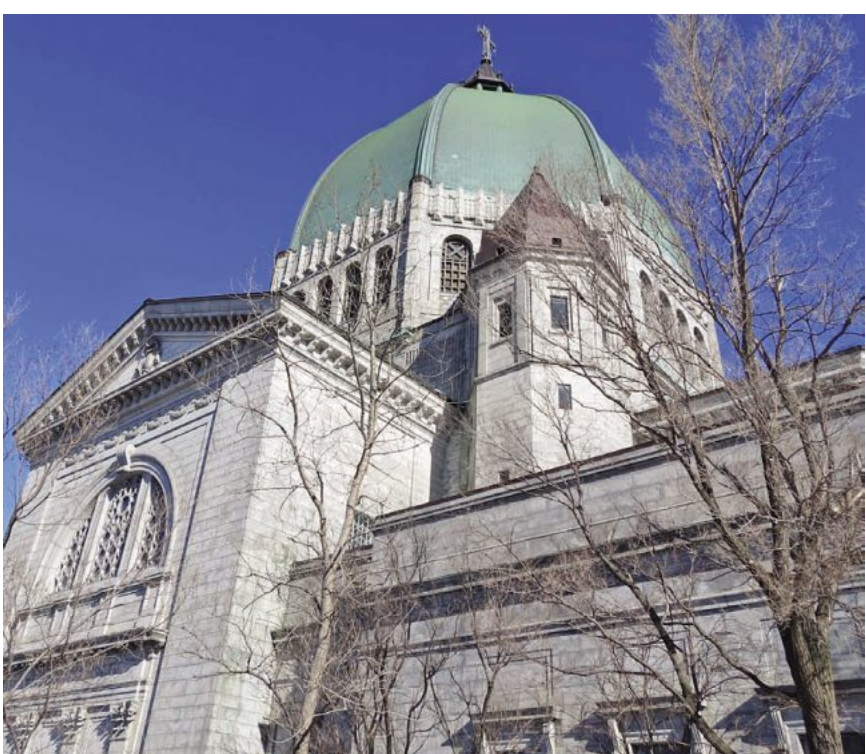
restaurant's Director of Sales and Marketing, Patricio Cruz-Gutierrez, showed me around both the chic, bright dining area and the hip, adjacent hotel, Chez Swann. (The 23-room boutique property, featuring furniture and art by local designers, will be on my list should hubby need additional anniversary suggestions.)

Once back in the restaurant itself, I connected with my friend and surveyed the menu. He settled on the special, salmon tartare, me on the 'moules-frites,' mussels and fries. We were both genuinely pleased with our dishes, though I was likely the more obvious, enthusiastically using my fresh baguette slices to sop up the creation's delicious mussel-wine-cream-herb broth.

The crème brûlée we shared at the end of the meal was equally celestial, hitting the right balance of smooth, vanilla custard and crunchy, caramelized topping.

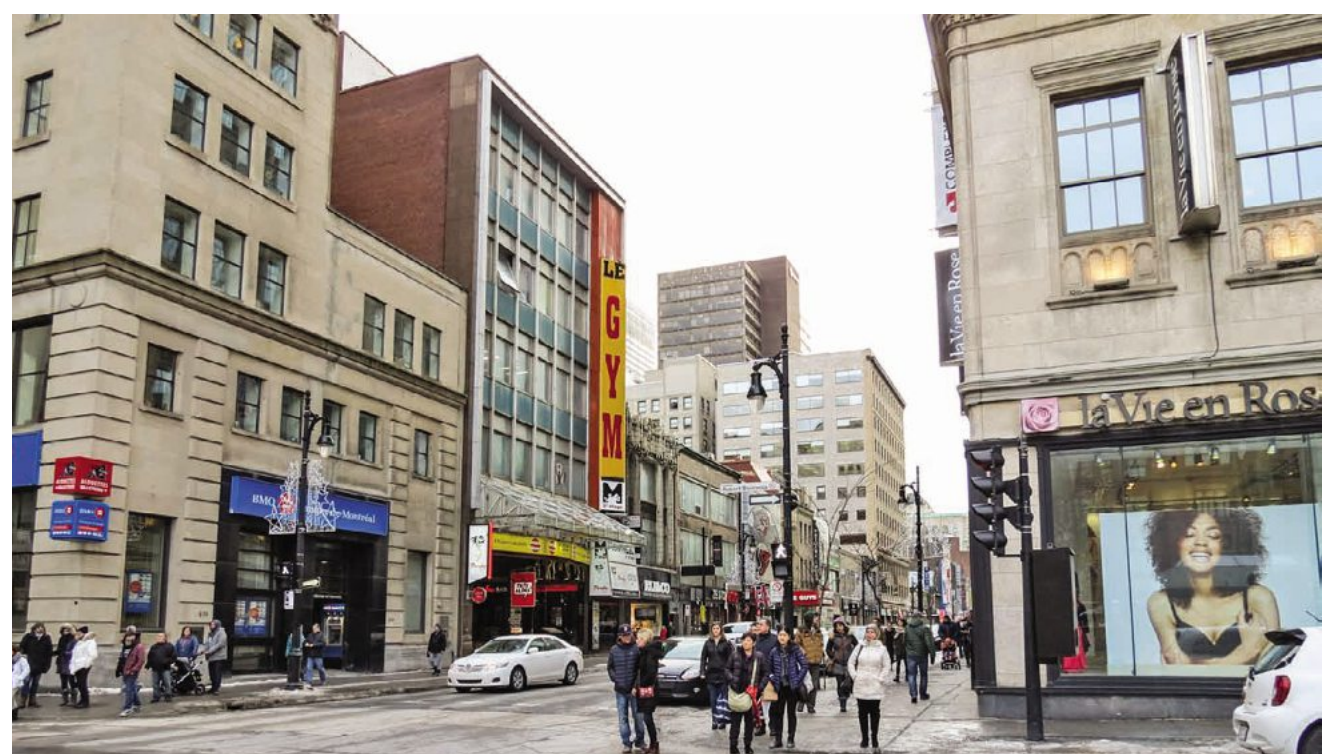
Maybe it was time to move back to Montreal? My taste buds would surely comply.

Cathy Donaldson is a professional writer based in Moncton. While in Montreal, the Donaldsons were guests of the InterContinental Montreal, including Osco, as well as La Cabane du Portugal, La Société, and Le Pois Penché restaurants.



St. Joseph's Oratory is one of the most recognizable landmarks in Montreal.

PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT



Sainte-Catherine Street is Montreal's main commercial artery and always bustling with activity.

PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT