

# The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



MONTREAL

## AN AFFORDABLE SOAK

Relax and rejuvenate in Nordic spas in Montreal

By Bennie DiNardo  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Here's how to spend a relaxing 60th birthday on a gentle spring day along the St. Lawrence River: Steam, soak, sauna, soak, sandwich, soak.

To the list of must-try experiences Montreal is justifiably known for — bagels, poutine, jazz, hockey — add one more: Nordic spas.

Like most everything in Canada, taking the baths is surprisingly affordable, even before taking into account the 25 percent discount your US dollars get north of the border. A day in the pools ranges from \$39 to \$55 Canadian at Montreal's two options, the outdoor Strom Spa on L'Île-des-Soeurs, or the urban, indoor Scandinave Spa in the historic Old Port section.

Both feature hot and cold pools, a steam bath, a sauna, relaxation rooms, and lounge chairs to encourage the “hot-cold-relax” cycle of Nordic rejuvenation. Grab a robe, put away

all electronic devices, stop talking, and indulge.

Strom is a 15-minute drive from the center of town, but feels a world away. L'Île-des-Soeurs, or Nuns' Island, is tucked just below the massive Champlain Bridge. For 250 years it was home to a congregation of Catholic sisters, until it was sold in 1956 to become a residential community. (The island is also home to a gas station designed by noted modernist architect Mies van der Rohe that has been converted into a community center.)

The spa, open year-round, has several hot and cold pools situated on the grounds, a dock for sunning oneself along the river and watching the wildlife, tents for massage treatments, and indoor space for steam bath and sauna, facial and body treatments, and a bistro. The best touch: bowls of eucalyptus oil on the heated rocks in the steam and sauna, giving that clean, Vicks VapoRub feeling in the lungs with a deep inhale. The massage tents, positioned near the shore, allow customers to listen to the natural sounds

of the birds chirping and calling in the reeds if they prefer it to canned New Age music.

At Scandinave Spa downtown, the vibe is a little hipper. The cold pool and shower felt icy cold — a quick plunge is more than enough to get the heart pounding. The hot baths, big enough for a half-dozen people, never feel crowded (especially since no one can talk). But even here, there is none of the exclusivity normally associated with spas; the supplemental health insurance carried by two-thirds of Cana-

dians often covers spa and massage treatments, so the services are available to a broad range of customers, young and old.

After a cycle of hot and cold, the center of the experience is the dimmed “Zero Stress” room, where people sprawl on cushions and pillows scattered around the room. As at Strom, several types of massage services are available, from relaxation to bruising deep-tissue, for additional charges ranging up to \$250 for two-hour treatments.

Despite its central location, once inside you're a world away from the clatter and noise of city streets. But once you emerge, there's another Canadian treat — Queues de Castor, or Beaver-Tails, a Northern version of fried dough — just down the street to jolt you back to reality.

Bennie DiNardo can be reached at [bennie.dinardo13@gmail.com](mailto:bennie.dinardo13@gmail.com).



HERE

### KICK OFF SUMMER AT SEA

Beat the heat this summer with new adventure offerings from Boston Harbor Cruises. Hop on one of 58 vessels offering 530 daily departures, all providing cooling breezes and panoramic views of Boston from the water. Trips include a three-hour New England Aquarium Whale Watch with guaranteed whale sightings (or the next trip is on BHC); ferries to the Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park; the Provincetown Fast Ferry, which zips to the tip of Cape Cod in 90 minutes; a wet and wild ride on Codzilla, the “monstrously fun” boat that reaches speeds up to 40 miles per hour, with a few hairpin turns and 360-degree spins; lessons in Boston history aboard the USS Constitution Sightseeing Cruise; and ferry service to and from the City of Salem. In addition, BHC offers cruises to view the Tall Ships during Sail Boston 2017 (June 17-22). Centrally located at Long Wharf on Boston Harbor. 617-227-4321, [www.boston-harborcruises.com](http://www.boston-harborcruises.com)

### ISLAND RESORT DEBUTS IN RHODE ISLAND

Fans of Gurney's Montauk Re-

sort & Seawater Spa, a hospitality hotspot in the Hamptons, will be happy to know the brand's second property has just opened in New England. After a head-to-toe \$18-million transformation, the former Hyatt Regency on Goat Island makes its debut as Gurney's Newport Resort & Marina. The four-season waterfront resort, situated on nearly 10 acres with 360-degree views of Nar-

### THERE

#### AFFORDABLE LUXURY HOTEL IN BOWERY

A chic hotel room in New York City for \$200 per night? Impossible, you say? With this month's opening of PUBLIC on the Lower East Side, it's quite

possible. Ian Schrager — he of Studio 54 and boutique hotels fame — debuts his newest 370-room property in the heart of downtown Manhattan under the banner of “Luxury For All.” Designed by Pritzker Prize award-winning architects Herzog & de Meuron, the hotel features a restaurant and grab-and-go marketplace helmed by Jean-Georges Vongerichten; lobby fashioned as a social hub with bar, comfy seating, Wi-Fi and power outlets; modular, multimedia venue that can serve as a nightclub, art gallery, cultural center, performance space, screening room or intimate concert venue; roof terrace; and serene outdoor garden. Rates from \$200. 212-735-6000, [www.publichotels.com](http://www.publichotels.com)

#### LUXURY ESCAPE IN BALTIMORE

Heading to Baltimore this summer? Treat yourself to the Urban Escape package offered by

The Ivy Hotel, a boutique property in a 19th-century mansion located in the heart of historic Mount Vernon. Includes two-night suite accommodations, wine and cheese in room on arrival, three-course dinner at Magdalena Restaurant, Champagne high tea, full gourmet breakfast, and \$150 treatment of choice at in-house spa. (Available thru August. Rates from \$2,100.) Or eschew the package for a regular night's stay in one of the hotel's eighteen distinct guest rooms and suites. Includes the not-too-shabby perks of cocktails at the Mansion Bar, black car service within city limits, daily made-to-order breakfast, high tea, 400-count Frette sheets, stocked in-room refrigerator, valet parking, all gratuities, and more. Designed to feel like the home of a friend — or your very wealthy uncle — public spaces include book-filled library, sunlit music room with piano, and an ivy-walled courtyard. Rates from \$540. 410-514-6500, [www.theivybaltimore.com](http://www.theivybaltimore.com)

### EVERYWHERE

#### SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL GAME

As more and more travelers journey across international borders, the folks at Adventure Junky worried about the effects of overtourism on the environment and culture. Their solution? Enlist adventure travelers to turn sustainable travel into a game with a new free smartphone app that crowdsources adventures that are high on experience and low on impact. AI-



lows users to interact with other intrepid travelers, book sustainable tours, research thousands of adventures, submit photos/videos/trips, and compete for the title of Adventure Junky of the Year. Simply download the app and add your adventures to earn points, patches and prizes. Adventure Junky currently partners with Tourism Board partners from Australia, Sweden, Greenland and Canada, and many of the world's best-practice tour operators. [www.adventure-junky.com](http://www.adventure-junky.com)

#### WOMEN'S ADVENTURE APPAREL

Flygear, known for its functional, durable, and stylish winter outdoor apparel, unveils its first women's spring collection. The line includes shirts, tanks, shorts, hoodies, leggings and pants; everything a gal might need for trail runs, yoga class, camping, climbing and more. Mountain bikers may like the Carter Short, a tough and slightly stretchy quick-dry fabric that sits just above the knee. Features include two plastic snaps on the waist, fifth panel gusset, zippered hand pocket with media cord capabilities, and zippered thigh pocket. Available in two colors: sunrise and coal. \$85. [flygear.com](http://flygear.com)

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