

Created by: Debra C. Argen

## Hotel Le St-James, Montreal, Canada

Located on the prestigious rue Saint-Jacques in [Montréal, Canada](#), the elegant [Hôtel Le St-James](#), which opened in 2002, stands proud; a luxurious, yet tiny property with 61 total rooms (23 rooms and 37 suites) that was once a bank.

The property, which dates to 1870, is architecturally stunning and filled with rich details of high ceilings, intricate marble floors, ornate woodwork, as well as an eclectic mélange of antiques and other interesting artwork that the owners collected during their travels abroad that create its intimate and visually interesting ambience from the safe that remains on the lower level from the property's former banking days, to the Spa with its fortification wall, the "table" that we learned was actually a wood carrier used for camels, and the elevator with its ornate brass door, which was from a renovation at the Waldorf=Astoria hotel in New York.



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Although one would not know it from looking at the exterior of the hotel, the property has an interesting history of growth, which began as the Commerce Bank in 1870 (it would later become the Merchants Bank). By 1899, four floors were added to the building, and in 1999, when the present owners purchased the by then vacant bank, three additional floors were added. The exterior as well as the interior is a harmonious blend that only if one looks closely will you notice the differences; the fifth floor, part of the original plan, has wooden floors and 20-foot ceilings, floors six through nine are part of the second period of growth in 1899 and have lower ceilings, and floors ten through twelve were added in 1999 and have even lower ceilings.

Edward F. Nesta and I stayed at the Hotel Le St-James in May 2009, where the ambience was set when Isabella handed us the old-fashioned heavy brass key with red-tassel at the Reception Desk. The old-world ambience continued in the elegant Library with its high ceiling graced with three sparkling crystal chandeliers, decorative plasterwork and intricate molding, fireplace, paintings, opulent milk chocolate damask window treatments with camel-colored fringe that pooled on the floor and cream sheers that framed the five large windows, lavish floral arrangement, and intimate seating areas to relax and enjoy the abundant selection of newspapers, magazines, and books.

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Our guestroom featured a high tray ceiling accented with a brushed gold chandelier with six globes, intricate dentil molding, sconces on the walls, and a leopard print carpet. The queen-size four-poster bed was dressed with a pristine white duvet, European square pillows and two queen-size pillows, and there was a python print velvet bench placed at the foot of the bed. Two framed botanical illustrations graced the wall over the bed, and burl wood nightstands with inlaid angel designs held tall lamps with cream shades and an iHome system.

Floor-to-ceiling beige print window treatments with ivory sheers framed the two long narrow windows; framed botanical illustrations hung over the large desk that was accessorized with a brass desk lamp and a Denon audio system with CD. A large niche held a SONY plasma television and two decorative ginger pots, and there were two wingback chairs with hobnail accents, a small round table, and complimentary WIFI Internet access that completed the in-room amenities.

The white marble bathroom featured a walk-in shower, Moulton-Brown amenities, and a lighted vanity/shaving mirror on the wall. There was a hairdryer and a scale in the large closet, and a mini-bar and safe were discretely located inside a cabinet.

During our stay at the hotel, we enjoyed breakfast each morning at XQ Le Restaurant before venturing out to discover the charming city of Montréal. The restaurant's focal point is the large metal XQ sculpture in the center of the dining room, however, once we were seated at an intimate table dressed with white linens and orchids in a glass vase in the lovely curtained alcove by the window, which was once the teller area of the bank, we were able to notice and appreciate all of the other details of the room; the ornate soaring ceiling, the chandeliers, the decorative plasterwork of lions with ribbons in their mouths holding bouquets of flowers on the walls, and the interesting artwork located throughout.

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**Breakfast at X  
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Le Restaurant**

The Hôtel Le St-James may be small in stature, however it is abundant in charm, history, and service. The hotel's prestigious location on rue Saint-Jacques is perfectly situated from which to explore the city, and is located 12 miles (20 km) from the Dorval International Airport.



**X  
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Le Restaurant**



**Hôtel Le St-James**  
355, rue Saint-Jacques  
Montréal, (Québec), Canada H2Y 1N9  
Telephone: +1-514-841-3111  
Toll-Free: +1-866-841-3111  
Fax: +1-514-841-1232  
[www.HotelLeStJames.com](http://www.HotelLeStJames.com)

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Montréal

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