

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Nuances leveil des sens at the Casino du Montreal, Canada

[Nuances leveil des sens at the Casino du Montreal](#) in [Montréal, Canada](#) provides guests with a fine dining experience that will "awaken the senses" along with magnificent views of the Saint Lawrence River that are the perfect pre-Amuse to complement the innovative cuisine of **Executive Chef Jean-Pierre Curtat**.



It was late May 2009, the trees were in bloom, and the night was clear, which was perfect for dinner at Nuances leveil des sens. Maitre D' Claude Magazzinich warmly welcomed Edward F. Nesta and I to Nuances where a curved wall of windows provided us with a spectacular vantage point from our cream leather banquette. Artistic elements filled the contemporary space; black columns added presence, hanging glass cylinders in the shape of a fish added a touch of whimsy to the high ceiling, and bold paintings that graced large cream leather squares framed by black wood at either end of the restaurant completed the sophisticated setting. Nuances leveil des sens is more than a pretty face though, it is also an award winning restaurant, and has consistently received the CAA-AAA Five Diamond rating since 2000.

The tables were stylishly dressed with pristine cream linens and linen napkins, rolled wood chargers, chartreuse candles, orchids in glass vases filled with stones, and specially designed glass bread plates by glassblower, Annie Michaud incorporating the restaurant's signature colors of cream, chocolate, and chartreuse.

The restaurant has a rather unique approach when it comes to their designer-dressed waitstaff, as they are all Sommeliers. Louise, our Sommelier, began our gastronomic evening of "léveil des sens" a five-course dining experience where each of the courses is a surprise by the chef, with an aperitif of champagne and Fragiolini (Italian tiny wild strawberry liqueur) to accompany our first surprise, an Amuse Bouche of Chilean seabass with puree of asparagus, tomato compote, and lime that was a lovely presentation of color and taste. With palates awakened, we eagerly awaited our next surprise.

Chef Jean-Pierre sent Edward seared foie gras with Asian pear chutney, jellied honey and mead white wine sauce, garnished with beet and watercress, that Louise paired with a 2001 Domaine las Bruges-Mau Michau, Cuvée Papillon, Côtes de Duras, 13.4% alcohol, from France, which had a lovely golden color, with caramel, honey, and yellow prune notes, and light acidity. The foie gras was excellent and was well paired with the wine selection.

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Foie Gras

My surprise came in the form of lobster with milk and coffee emulsion, chow mien noodles, seafood gastrique, and Sauvignon cappuccino jelly buttons. Beautifully prepared and presented on a slanted bowl, the lobster was removed from its shell with large claw and tail meat, with each ingredient providing a perfect balance of taste and texture to this exquisite course that was well paired with a 2007 Terrassen Rainer Wess Grüner Vetliner, 13% alcohol, from Austria.



Lobster

The next surprise to arrive was a lovely cream of lobster soup made with lobster, clams, mussels, heirloom tomatoes, and perfumed with fennel, with a grilled scallop in the center of the deep bowl as the focal point, paired with a 2006 Domaine Gibault Platine, Sauvignon Vieilles Vignes, 13.2% alcohol, from France.



Cream of Lobster with Grilled Scallop

Every course kept getting better, each time teasing and tempting our taste buds with layers of delectable flavors, as the sky changed dramatically throughout the evening bestowing us with a beautiful sunset over the Saint Lawrence River.

Chef Jean-Pierre next sent Edward a wonderful tuna course with the tuna presented two different ways as

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four slices of seasoned and seared tuna, and thinly sliced marinated tuna rolled and stuffed with tuna tartar and garnished with a sesame crisp and herb flavor buttons, which Louise expertly paired with a 1981 Château Pichon Longueville, Comtesse de Lalarde, Grand Cru Classe, Pauillac, France.



Tuna

For me, he sent a delectable surprise of black cod from Alaska accompanied with kumquat ravioli, baby bok choy, and creamy risotto, bathed in a pool of ginger, lemon, and cilantro sauce. The contrasting colors as well as the slightly sweet/tart, yin/yang combination of flavors made this course a standout.



Black Cod

Vension was the last savory surprise for Edward, presented as three seared medium rare pieces of venison with mashed Yukon gold potatoes, yellow and pink beets, fiddleheads, baby bok choy, and jus, that was sensational and well paired with a 1995 Madiran, Château Bouscasse, Vieilles Vignes, 12.5% alcohol, France that really brought out the flavors of the venison.



Venison

As my final savory course, Chef Jean-Pierre sent me a buttery and golden Chilean seabass accompanied by fiddleheads and Japanese black forbidden rice, which was once reserved only for the Emperor as it was considered to be an aphrodisiac, with an herb olive oil adding color and flavor to the very tasty course, that was paired with a 2005 Grand Vin de Graves, É'Abeille de Fieuzal Blanc, Pessoc-Léognan, 12.5% alcohol, from France.

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Chilean Seabass

Edward's last surprise of the evening was a pecan biscuit with chocolate mousse, topped with a quenelle of housemade ginger ice cream, garnished with a green spun sugar hoop and berry caviar, with painted berry coulis on the plate and anchored with fresh berries in a row that was a lovely finish to an excellent gastronomic evening.



Chocolate Dessert

Chef Jean-Pierre sent me a strawberry vision as my final awakening for dessert, which was a light and lively strawberry macaron base topped with mousse and crowned with tiny diced strawberries and lime zest, accompanied with strawberry sorbet, with strawberry coulis painted on the rectangular white plate.



Strawberry Dessert

By the time that we had finished our desserts, the sky had deepened in color to an inky black providing a dramatic backdrop for the now twinkling lights of the city. It indeed had been a night to awaken all of the senses.

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Nuances léveil des sens located at the Casino du Montréal and is open for dinner Sunday - Friday from 6:00 pm until 10:00 pm, and on Saturday from 5:30 pm until 11:00 pm.

Read about Nuances léveil des sens in the [Chefs' Recipes](#) section where **Chef Jean-Pierre Curtat** shares a delicious recipe to "awaken your senses" in **English** and in **French**.



Nuances léveil des sens
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