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THE
Sept
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Issue



People Change
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THE BEST ADVICE FOR
PEOPLE WHOSE
BODIES CONSTANTLY
CHANGE?

Inside *the* Issue

FASHION Five Canadian brands celebrate 65 years of Barbie

STYLE Sustainable accessories are leading the way

BEAUTY The 411 on Clarins' reformulated Double Serum

DINING Vancouver's latest and greatest dining spots

TRAVEL The best way to see Montréal is on foot



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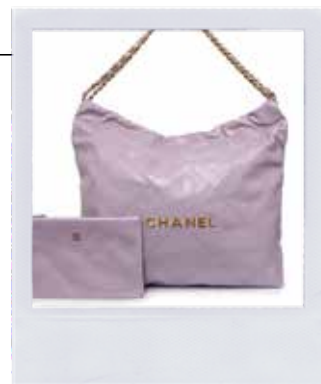


Editor's DESK

A Note From Noa

September's gradual transition back to fall really has me fired up this year; normally, I hate seeing the last of summer, but this time around I am looking forward to all that autumn (and, inevitably, winter and the holiday season) has to offer. In this issue of VITA, that feeling is palpable, as we dive into all things fashion (sustainable accessories and eyeglass facts), beauty (bodycare and Clarins' reformulated Double Serum), food and wine (seven new restaurants and five cocktail recipes to try) and travel (a walking weekend in Montréal). As for the story below, learn about five female-founded Canadian brands collaborating to celebrate a big Barbie anniversary—plenty of excitement there, as we gear up for an epic giveaway on Instagram on September 16!

Noa Nichol
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



SEPTEMBER STYLE: I love this stunning pre-loved Chanel bag from Modaselle.com

It's a Barbie World

5 Canadian female-founded brands collaborate with Mattel to celebrate 65 years of Barbie fashion

BY NOA NICHOL

What happens when five Canadian brands team up with Mattel to celebrate six decades of Barbie fashion? A chic collab for the ages!

Marking Barbie's 65th anniversary, Mattel has unveiled a cross-industry partnership that reimagines the doll's iconic style through the creative lens of five trailblazing Canadian female founders. This first-of-its-kind collection, launched last month, sees designers Hilary MacMillan, ai, Paris Jewellers Canada, Cheekbone Beauty and Sol Kyst reimagine Barbie's fashion legacy over six decades, resulting in an offering that includes eight distinct head-to-toe looks and more than 100 products.

From fashion to accessories, jewelry and beauty, this release celebrates Barbie's evolution as both a fashion icon and a symbol of empowerment. Each look draws inspo from iconic Barbie dolls, including the 1959 Barbie, 1960s Twist 'N Turn Barbie, 1970s Superstar Barbie, 1980s Black Barbie and Totally Crystal Barbie and 1990s Totally Hair Barbie (still in my childhood bedroom!), bringing her style history into the modern age.



"At its core Barbie has always been about showing the world that you can be anything," says Jennifer Gileno, head of licensing and retail development at Mattel Canada. "This collection is a testament to that legacy and to what can be achieved when women come together to break barriers in the fashion and beauty industries."

Diversity and inclusivity are at the core of this collab, with garments sized from XS to 4X, adjustable accessories,

expanded ring sizes and designs that celebrate a broad spectrum of beauty. From Barbie's signature black-and-white chevron of 1959 to the bold neon shades and textured fabrics of the '80s and '90s, the collection stays true to Barbie's bold aesthetic while elevating it for today.

The designers involved are equally thrilled to lend their creative vision to this iconic project. "When women support women, we all succeed," says Hilary

MacMillan. "Coming together to bring our strengths to the table to create these looks in partnership with Barbie has been a rewarding experience."

For Hannah Kim, co-founder of ai, the project was nostalgic: "Barbie invokes childhood memories and has brought out our inner child. Harnessing creativity, empowerment and self-expression, we are beyond excited."

Chau Liu, co-owner of Paris Jewellers, reflects on Barbie's influence: "As an immigrant, family-owned company with a 90 per cent female workforce, we are honoured to be a part of this once-in-a-lifetime collaboration. Barbie inspires us to dream big and reach for the stars." Jenn Harper, founder of Cheekbone, also highlights a deeper meaning: "[We have] always pushed for meaningful change in representation in the beauty industry. Our collaboration with Barbie showcases that strong message with a global brand—beauty belongs to all, and every face has a story worth celebrating."

For Meghan Victoria, founder and CEO of Sol Kyst, the collab was deeply empowering. "Barbie teaches us that we can grow up to be anything we want. It's so special that this collaboration shines a light on Canadian women entrepreneurs paving our path and coming together to honour Barbie's 65th Anniversary. How iconic!"

Indeed, this project stands as a powerful reminder of what women in business can achieve when they unite to create something extraordinary. Shop the collection on all participating brands' websites. V

THE MAKING OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Innovative Accessories lead the way in sustainable style

Accoutrements

Accessories lead the way in sustainable style

BY ALEESHA HARRIS

Anna Molinari is the first to admit her approach to fashion is unconventional. “Aside from being an art form, I use unconventional materials like trash to create garments that relay a message of sustainability,” the New York City-based artist says. “In my personal styles as well as designs I like to use a playful, quirky approach to outfit-building, while keeping the style elevated.”

Molinari’s signature aesthetic and innovative design outlook made her a perfect fit for a collaboration this spring with American fashion and accessories brand Coach to mark a milestone anniversary for its Coachtopia initiative. “I have worked with Coachtopia multiple times now, and have nothing but good things to say,” Molinari says of the company’s collaborative lab for innovation that aims to close the loop on its circular fashion ambitions. “Not only do we share the same design morals and ethics, but they give young creatives the opportunity and platform to share their creativity. Also, as a clothing designer, I don’t have experience making bags and purses, so when the opportunity to design a purse and learn about the process came along, I jumped at it!”

First launched in April 2023, Coachtopia merges the company’s eight-decade history in leather goods with the forward-thinking approach to fashion championed by young creatives and sustainability insiders. As an example of its impacts, the brand’s Wavy Dinky handbag design, made from “upcrafted” leather, equates to a 71 per cent reduction in carbon emissions due to the use of repurposed materials rather than virgin options.

“We reimagine waste as a valuable raw material and work backward, crafting our products from recycled, repurposed or renewable materials and designing them to live multiple lives with clear pathways for takeback, reuse or recycling,” states

the company on its website.

A staple of Molinari’s design style, grommets were a key feature in her Coachtopia creation. “I love using grommets unconventionally in my upcycle designs,” she says of the front-and-centre feature of the crescent-shaped Ergo Bag she upcycled for the release. “Grommets typically serve a functional purpose, so I think it’s fun, playful and different to use them decoratively instead. I also think that using metal hardware elevates a piece, and makes it easier to style.”

A fan-favourite within the Coachtopia collection, Molinari admits that maintaining the integrity of the Ergo bag design was a peak priority—and presented the biggest challenge of the partnership. “Whatever upcycle design I decided to go with must be cohesive with the pre-existing bag shape and material,” Molinari shares. “So, my mind was immediately drawn to hardware.”

Designed by Molinari, the bag was hand-constructed in the Coachtopia workroom along with the creations by fellow collaborators Sabrina Lau and Zizi Zeng. That first-person connection to the creation process, Molinari says, was one of the most special aspects of the partnership. “As consumers, people tend to only think about the product itself, and not the team behind it—it was eye-opening and heart-warming to meet the individuals who brought my design to life in the workroom and hear about the process. Knowing how your garments and accessories are made, and the environment that they are made in is so important, especially now.”

Indeed, having a greater understanding of and connection to the origin of clothing and accessories is a key pillar of the sustainable fashion movement. According to a 2020 survey of 5,000 people ages 16 to 75 in five major European markets including Italy and the U.K. by not-for-profit Fashion Revolution, 69 per



COACHTOPIA



COACHTOPIA

cent of respondents noted a desire to know how their clothes were manufactured. That number is up from 59 per cent in 2018.

With a growing interest in sustainability and transparency, it makes sense that more brands are introducing green initiatives—especially in the accessories space, where companies seem eager to initiate changes that range from the introduction of upcycled materials to full-on end-of-life product recycling. Within the jewelry sector, there’s been a sizeable shift in recent seasons toward more innovation in waste reduction. Canadian brand Mejuri is an example, introducing an interesting material this summer—dubbed Salmon Gold—as part of its ongoing sustainability targets.

“Salmon Gold is an innovative initiative to sourcing gold from Regeneration-associated mines; gold that is fully traceable from its origins while also contributing to habitat restoration,” says Noura Sakkijha, co-founder and CEO of the Toronto-headquartered brand. “It connects biodiversity and environment to our industry in a way that has not been done before.”

More than just a material, Salmon Gold symbolizes how precious metal sourcing can actually do better for the environment rather than being mostly bad. Comprised of 14-karat gold—and featuring the Regeneration logo—the material is gleaned from a re-mining process that sees abandoned mines sites processed for waste and materials while supporting rehabilitation activities and natural environment restoration efforts.

“If left untreated, these abandoned mines pollute sensitive watersheds, ecosystems and native species. Regeneration is reversing the effects of past industrial demands, which altered the flow of rivers, disrupted natural habitats that were vital for the fish populations and left unsecured tailings,” says Sakkijha. “Restoring mines is about creating a space where the habitat can once again support a flourishing ecosystem.”

Perhaps one of the most buzzed-about topics in sustainable accessories—specifically in jewelry—has to do with lab-grown diamonds. Created via a controlled technological process in a laboratory setting, lab-grown diamonds share identical physical and chemical properties to their mined counterparts while being billed by brands as less environmentally impactful and more ethical.

Pandora is one of the leading mass-market jewelry brands betting big on lab-grown diamonds, joining brands like Mejuri, Michael Hill and Vrai in the endeavour. Launched in 2022, the company’s lab-grown gemstones are positioned as having a “lower carbon footprint compared to mined diamonds” while still harbouring the coveted four Cs—cut, colour, clarity and carat—held as a standard in the diamond industry. In addition to offering a sustainable spin on diamond jewelry, lab-grown options often come with a more attractive price that can be 75 to 95 per cent less than mined diamonds.

As more consumers convey their interest in finding eco-friendly options from their favourite fashion accessory brands, shoppers can expect to see more innovation coming from companies that are eager to do better—and keep up. V

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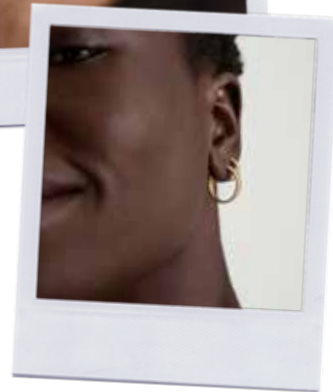
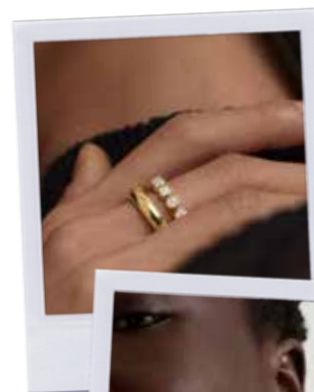


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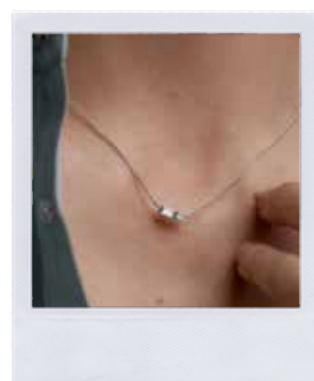
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PAMELA ANDERSON FOR PANDORA



MEJURI



Specs Appeal

Getting new glasses can be confusing; industry experts take you through the whole spectacle

BY AILEEN LALOR

I've worn glasses since I was 12 and I've never had a pair I truly liked. But I thought I'd cracked it when, a decade or so ago, a raft of cheap online retailers launched. They were selling specs at knockdown prices, marketing themselves as perfectly equivalent alternatives to rip-off designer brands. I bought a pair! They felt a little flimsy, but they looked pretty good and they cost less than a night out. My baby broke them. I bought another pair. My baby—now a toddler—broke them. “Wow, my kid is so strong,” I thought.

And then Gwyneth “I wish you well” Paltrow changed my life—or at least, my attitude to buying glasses. During her ski-crash trial, she famously wore glasses similar to serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer's: 1970s-inspired oversized aviators. While not particularly keen to cosplay as a murderer, I was curious what spectacle brand a lady of taste like Paltrow might wear. My search took me straight to Caddis Eyewear, a U.S. brand launched in 2017. I ordered a pair, and they opened my eyes: they were substantial, but not heavy, they stayed put instead of slipping down my schnoz and, so far, they appear to be childproof.

What gives? I had been labouring under the misapprehension that pricy glasses were a con. So I decided to ask the experts. First up: Eric Dickstein, founder of Vancouver's Dutil Eyewear. He believes there's certainly a place for low-priced eyewear in the market—people need specs at every budget. “What I have issue with is that they're the Robin Hoods of the optical industry,” he says. “You can't compare a luxury car to a Kia. There's nothing wrong with a Kia, but they're not the same thing as a Rolls Royce. Going direct to consumers and telling people that they're overpaying is extremely disingenuous.”

What are the specific differences between the two types of eyewear? First, there's the materials and construction. “We deal with Italian bio-acetate, a proprietary lens that we pour ourselves, and hinges that are also proprietary,” says Tim Parr, founder of Caddis Eyewear, which explains why the glasses I bought from his company feel sturdier and more substantial than others. Dickstein says it's also about the nuance and details. “With cheaper acetate frames, they will go out of adjustment more easily, the lenses might start popping out. If you look at a metal frame you can tell by details like the plating.”

Then there's the style and design. Caddis Eyewear started out because Parr saw the need for cool-looking reading glasses. “The whole industry fixated on how small and lightweight and inconspicuous they could be, whereas if I have an opportunity to accessorize, I will accessorize,” he says, referring to the “apologetic moment” where people try and get their specs from their bags as quickly as possible to read a menu in public, then stow them away again. “And no one was talking about age when we started it—but how could you not, when it's inherently embedded in why you need this?” Parr was also informed by his own background as someone who grew up with board sports, music culture, art and fashion and couldn't find anything he wanted to actually wear when the time came for him to get readers. Caddis quickly developed a cool following including Robert Downey Jr. and Michelle Pfeiffer to go with its platform of age-positivity and began to diversify into sunglasses and prescription specs. A turning point for Dickstein was when Meryl Streep was photographed in a pair of his Dutil Eyewear glasses.

Another component that distinguishes good and bad specs? The fit. Caddis Eyewear's prescription glasses are made to order, based on pupil-to-pupil measurement from photos. This is great for folks who can't or won't shop in real life (hello, it's me), but Dickstein says it's ideal for consumers to go to an optical store or boutique and select their frames that way. “There are variables and measurements that you can do online, but it's never going to be better than speaking to a professional,” he says. While he does sell online, you can also buy Dutil Eyewear in dozens of locations around Canada and the U.S.

Brittany Reinbold is the owner of Exhibit Collectors + Creatives in Kitsilano and a third-generation optician, and she says the real-life experience is certainly the best. “It's like buying clothing online—sizing can be hit or miss. Say you order



10 garments, maybe three or four won't fit,” she says. “Optical is more complicated than that because you're dealing with prescriptions and visual needs as well. Sometimes it works for people, but I do see a lot of people back after they order online.”

She specializes in by-appointment consultations to find you the perfect frame or frames. “For the most part when you come into my store, I want you just to sit down,” she says. “The first thing I need is

your face. I need to have a conversation with you about how and when you're wearing your glasses and what you want them to say.” She believes most people aren't in the right glasses—the right shape for their face, something that fits correctly on their nose bridge. “It's easy to see when you try on in real life what fits your face or doesn't.”

As a curator of glasses for her store, she says she doesn't carry designer names like Prada, Gucci or Chanel, but

opts for very high-quality frames, often from indie brands. And it's not the case that only one style of glasses will suit you. “If you say you need 10 pairs, I will find you 10 pairs,” she says.

If you're spending a little more on your specs, you want to make sure they stay in good condition; Reinbold has a few recommendations. The first and most basic is always to keep them in a case, and never put them on a seat. “It's not usually you [who's] going to sit on them,” she says. Secondly, keep them out of heat: avoid hot cars, try not to wear them when you're blow-drying your hair and even be cautious when opening the oven because you get a big blast of heat that can melt your lenses' coating. For cleaning, a little wipe on a tissue or the end of your shirt will not do at all; there could be a grain of sand or speck of dirt there that would scratch the glass. Even those little cloths are not meant for proper cleaning; what you should be doing is washing your glasses at least once a week with dish soap and warm water. “Wash the lenses and nose bridge then rinse and use a clean cotton tea towel to dry,” she says. “This will make a world of difference.” At a pinch, you can use a lens spray, but rinse after because of the alcohol.

As a long-term and proud specs wearer, Reinbold says she can feel the attitude to glasses changing. “It was not cool when I was young. Even though I had cool glasses I didn't want to wear them,” she says. “I have to give credit to the showbiz industry because, previously, whoever was fitting glasses for film was not great. Now they do a really phenomenal job. They're better at showcasing glasses and making them look more stylish.” It's true; I have, on occasion, Googled glasses from TV shows. Often people are blogging about them and cataloging them online—even the ones worn in celebrity court cases. V



CADDIS EYEWEAR



CADDIS EYEWEAR



BRITTANY REINBOLD

VITA X WALMART

5 Essential Organizational Items for a Functional Dorm Room

With students across the country preparing to head back to campus, creating a functional dorm room is top of mind. Maximizing limited space without compromising comfort and style can be challenging, which is why Walmart is here to help students transform their dorms into organized, comfortable and trendy living spaces with a wide range of affordable and versatile furniture. [Walmart.ca](https://www.walmart.ca)



1. MAINSTAYS 6-SHELF METAL FRAME BOOKCASE, \$99.97 Standing over six-feet tall, this bookcase, with its elegant gold metal supports and sleek white shelves, adds tasteful charm to any room. Whether seeking additional storage or looking for the perfect spot to display your favourite items, it is the perfect addition to a dorm room.

2. MAINSTAYS WOOD & METAL WRITING DESK, \$99.97 Effortlessly blends function, durability and modern design into a sleek, versatile work-space. With thoughtful features, including a closed-door cabinet and two open-shelving storage areas, this desk provides ample space to organize folders, books and office supplies, keeping your desktop clutter-free.

3. MAINSTAYS PLUSH VELVET OFFICE CHAIR, \$99.97 Padded with high-density foam and wrapped in plush velvet, this chair offers superior comfort and support. The ergonomically curved back and gold base add elegance, while black dual-wheel casters provide smooth mobility.

4. MAINSTAYS 6-CUBE ORGANIZER, \$53.97 A chic solution for all your storage needs. Whether you use it with collapsible bins, to store shoes or to showcase décor, books and photos, this organizer adapts effortlessly to your space. It can be positioned both vertically and horizontally to fit any layout, making it an effective storage option for any dorm room.

5. MAINSTAYS CUBE STORAGE BIN, \$7.97 Available in various colours to reflect your personal style, this foldable bin is perfect for storing games, toys, books, clothes and more. It's designed to fit seamlessly into cubbies, bookcases and shelves while adding a touch of charm to any décor.

Reinventing a Classic

We got the 411 on Clarins' reformulated Double Serum

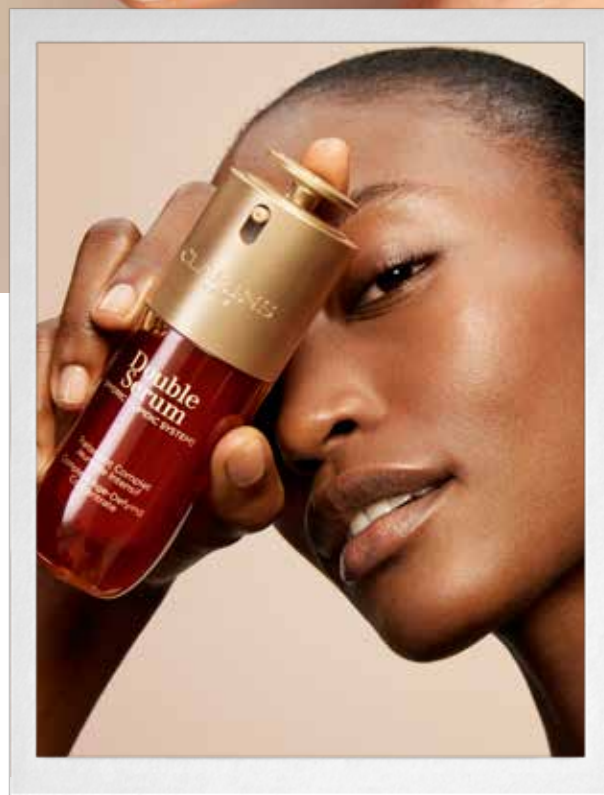
BY SHERI RADFORD

Every celebrity icon knows that continual reinvention is the key to staying power, and the same is true for beloved beauty and skincare products. That's why the ninth generation of Double Serum from Clarins includes a new age-defying ingredient and uses innovative technology while also staying true to what has made the anti-ageing facial serum so popular for years. Paris-based Marie-Helene Lair, who is the brand's Responsible Innovation Director, shares with us some insights about the reformulated serum.

Clarins began by studying 30 pairs of homozygous female twins. Researchers examined how twins, who start with an identical genetic makeup, age differently due to the effects of epigenetics, which include lifestyle and environmental influences such as diet, activity level, sleep, vocation and chemical exposure. Differences in the twins' everyday lives inevitably lead to variations in the appearance of frown lines, crow's feet, nasolabial folds, ptosis (eyelid drooping), radiance and other skin characteristics.

To target epi-ageing (accelerated ageing), Clarins researchers added a key ingredient to the new Double Serum formula. "The giant Provençal reed is used for the very first time, for its skin-care properties," Lair says. "It has been selected by our labs among 800 other plant extracts. We wanted to identify a plant with epigenetic properties." She notes that this robust, adaptable plant can thrive in harsh conditions such as droughts and temperature extremes. "The giant Provençal reed was the most powerful plant to resist this tough environment due to its richness in very specific molecules: flavonoids. These molecules are highly concentrated in the extract we have created."

This extract of the giant Provençal reed, which Clarins grows organically in the south of France and hand-picks in



springtime, helps to neutralize epigenetic modifications connected to lifestyle, giving Double Serum the power to fight the visible signs of ageing. "Thanks to in vitro tests, we have proved that the organic giant Provençal reed extract can actually reverse 100% of the impact of epi-ageing," Lair says.

To further boost the serum's effectiveness, Clarins researchers took 22 powerful plant ingredients and paired five of these with new pure active molecules, to stimulate the skin's five vital functions: regeneration, oxygenation, protection, hydration, and nutrition. "At the end of the day, 27 powerful active ingredients for an augmented efficacy," Lair says. For regeneration, organic harungana extract is combined with pro-collagen peptides to produce firmer, more elastic skin. For oxygenation, teasel extract and horse chestnut escin work together to optimize cell energy, resulting in radiant skin. Vitamin E and ginger lily extract help to strengthen the skin's protective barrier. Organic leaf of life extract and acetylated hyaluronic acid boost hydration. And horse chestnut flower extract and plant-based squalane nourish the skin.

The reformulated Double Serum was tested on hundreds of women around the world. After a month of using the new serum, 94 per cent of women reported that their skin looked younger, and 90% found this ninth generation of Double Serum to be faster-acting and more effective than the previous generation.

Pairs of twins were also involved in the testing. For each pair, the twin most impacted by epi-ageing used Double Serum for a month, then researchers compared her skin to her twin's skin. They found that the serum helped reduce the impact of epi-ageing on wrinkles (20 per cent), radiance (46 per cent), and uniformity of complexion (46 per cent). Lair notes that the twins themselves could see the improvements. "That is why they weren't jealous at the end of the study!"

Changes were also made to Double Serum's elegant amber bottle. "We don't use a plastic lid anymore," Lair says. To reduce plastic usage, a locking system has replaced the lid. The newly redesigned bottle also boasts a dial-pump dosage system, to deliver the perfect amount of serum each time.

Though much is different about the updated version of this iconic product, certain key elements remain unchanged. "The new Double Serum carries the same fruity, floral, fresh, refined notes loved so much in previous generations," Lair says. "Developed by a Japanese master perfumer, the signature fragrance of Double Serum is unique and unforgettable."

And one element that will never change, Lair says, is the product's double texture. Two-thirds of the serum is comprised of hydric (water-soluble) plant extracts in aqueous gel, while the remaining one-third consists of lipidic (oil-soluble) plant extracts in rich oil—mimicking "the ratio of the natural hydro-lipidic film of the skin," Lair says—and the two parts only come together after you dispense the serum into the palm of your hand. "This ratio allows the integration of the most powerful plant ingredients, whatever their solubility," Lair says. "Clarins has been the pioneer of this innovation."

Clearly this new Double Serum is delivering double the wow factor. V



"I overplucked my eyebrows in the 1990s and, when they didn't grow back, had them microbladed back on. But they faded and bled over time. Brianna has brought my brows back to life, with better results than I ever expected. Talk about a fluff up!"

NOA NICHOL, EDITOR IN CHIEF, VITA MAGAZINE



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Body Bliss

BY EMILY MACCULLOCH & INGRIE WILLIAMS @T.ZONEBEAUTY

No longer the sensible sibling of skincare, bodycare is being transformed with high-powered ingredients, luxe textures and more

ICYMI, bodycare has gotten a glow up. For years, basic soaps and lotions were the norm when it came to caring for the skin below your neck but, recently, the category has entered a new, more expansive phase. From tapping anti-aging ingredients like retinol to smooth and soften limbs to luxe splurge-worthy formulas, such as serums and masks, bodycare (including for hands and feet) is finally in the spotlight.

ACTIVE APPROACH

Scanning ingredient lists on a serum or night cream is standard practice; the actives inside a formula are key to knowing what a product is going to do for your face. Lately, beauty has proven that high-powered antioxidants and exfoliants belong in body products, too. Ingredients like vitamin C to brighten dull skin, retinol to minimize fine lines and blemish-busting salicylic acid now play starring roles in body creams and washes—if you ask us, it's about time the rest of our skin reaps the benefits of gold-standard actives.

✨ Naturium The Brightener Vitamin C Body Wash
\$22 @ SHOPPERS DRUG MART

✨ Paula's Choice 2% BHA Weightless Body Treatment
\$44 @ SEPHORA



BONUS FEATURES

The latest in bodycare also offers a heightened sensorial experience. You'll find lightweight yet ultra-hydrating serums, transformative masks and frothy butters that are a delight to dip into. Elevated fragrances play a part as well, with notes typically found in best-selling scents (such as vetiver and musk) adding to the luxury vibes. Oh, and there's a growing shift to refillable packaging, too, and we're big fans of anything in the beauty space that makes sustainability look sexy.

✨ Josie Maran Bohemian Fig Whipped Argan Oil Ffillable Firming Body Butter Jar,
\$49 @ SEPHORA

✨ Body Proud Sleep Hero Overnight Recovery Body Mask,
\$15 @ WALMART

PALM ROYALE

Alongside upgraded treatments for head-to-toe use, formulas made to tend to specific body parts, such as feet and chest, are earning a greater share of the spotlight. Our pick for the worthiest investment is hand care. By default of exposure to the environment (as in UV light, cold air and hot water), our hands display signs of aging more acutely. To keep your mitts youthful looking, commit to the ultimate daily duo: a multi-tasking hydrator that plumps and reduces dark spots and a nourishing sunscreen lotion that doesn't leave a sticky residue.

✨ Paume Renewing Hand Serum, \$52 @ MYPAUME.COM

✨ Ultra Violette Extreme Hydrating Body + Hand SPF 50+ Screen, \$41 @ SEPHORA



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People Change

Sustainable fashion isn't one size fits all

BY JILL VON SPRECKEN

Trends may come and go, but the environmental impact of our fashion choices stick around. And the antithesis to fast fashion has emerged: slow fashion. In a nutshell, slow fashion hits pause on the furious pace of clothing consumption in favour of fewer, better-quality items. But is this approach good for everyone?

In late June, Vancouver-based fashion designer Ogechukwu Ajibe asked that question on her brand's Instagram page, @ogeajibe: "Is buying less the best advice for people whose bodies constantly change?" It got almost five times the likes as her previous post, and dozens of comments. Ajibe herself suffers from an extreme hormonal imbalance that causes her weight to fluctuate. The post was inspired by a TikTok video on street style, where a woman in her 60s is stopped and points out that the denim she is wearing is from her youth.

That got Ajibe thinking, "I can't even fit into the clothes I bought as of December, because my body keeps changing," she says. "So that was actually what made me ask that question. I was genuinely wanting to know, are other people going through this? And for someone who preaches and who tells people to only buy what they need, and buy less, does that also include me and other people who their body keeps changing?"

Thanks to the rise of fast fashion, we buy and discard more clothing than ever before—much of it cheap and disposable, made to last through a season's trends and no longer. Canadians, per person, discard around 37 kg of textiles every year—globally, it amounts to 92 million tonnes of waste. Through this lens, 40-year-old denim is aspirational, not because of body size, but because it's the kind of high-quality item we should all have in our closets. But what if our bodies refuse to cooperate?

Nadine Woods founded Mayana,



OGECHUKWU AJIBE



MAYANA

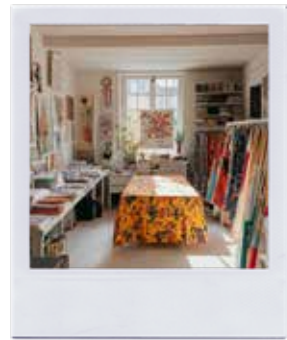


MAYANA

"Is buying less the best advice for people whose bodies constantly change?"



OGE AJIBE



a lingerie brand, based on changing bodies—specifically, women's pregnant, postpartum and menopausal bodies. "When I had a baby, the most important foundational piece that I needed for me to actually feel supported ... was my undergarment," she says. "In terms of the design, we really focus on garments that are able to fluctuate with your body."

The bottom line for Woods is learning to love your body—in all its iterations. "I deal with a lot of body changes for women, so I specifically focus on people while they're going through very vulnerable changes in their life," she says. "So forcing yourself to squeeze into something you once were is not really healthy from a mental health perspective. And it's unrealistic."

This sentiment resonates with plus-size fashion influencer Alicia Gilby, who doesn't recommend trying to force an item that no longer fits. "There's a lot of people who gain weight, and then they have everything in their closet from their previous weight ... I think that works against being confident in your own body." Her Instagram page @curvy_ chronicles has a community of more than 100,000, who follow her body positivity and size-inclusive content. "I personally would recommend buying clothes at the size that you're currently at, whether that means just a couple of items which make you feel really good and confident," she says.

In Ajibe's view, there's more than one way to think about sustainable fashion, and cautions against buying things that aren't needed. "Which, unfortunately, fast fashion keeps pushing that," she says. She gives the example of buying fast fashion and not being able to return it—even if it's ill-fitting or quickly out of style. In her view, there are opportunities to consider sustainability in every step of a garment's lifecycle: buying, wearing and discarding.

Woods has a similar viewpoint. "I think it's about buying with intention, and not so much the quantity," she says. "There is a huge wave in the sustainability realm to not buy at all, when what we should be doing is divesting from these larger corporations that are taking advantage of people, manipulating them so that they feel unworthy." She points out that a form of shaming can happen online when people do buy. "But you wouldn't be contributing to the problem if you're buying from people who are producing in an ethical way, who are doing their best to source fabrics that are healthy for you and the planet."

When both Ajibe and Woods design their clothing, they keep changing bodies in mind. In Ajibe's case, that can mean an elastic waist or an oversize dress that can be belted to suit a changing figure. In the future, she wants to focus on event clothing. "Imagine adding a drawstring to a dress, a wedding dress, that you can pass that on [to someone else] ... and they are able to wear it," she says. At Mayana, the lingerie is made with stretch fabric and a clasp-free fit. "We mill all of our laces specifically from scratch so that they function with our patent," says Woods. "Because we have the only bra in the world that you can pull down without a plastic clip, and is true to size."

For those dressing a changing body, a few words of wisdom: "Try to spend your money on things that you can always fit in, no matter your body," says Ajibe. Gilby has a similar sentiment: "Find one or two pieces that you feel really confident in. Or if you find pieces that you like the look of, but you don't feel like you personally could wear that ... put it on anyway." Woods recommends "classics," like a "crisp white shirt," and "investing in pieces that you are proud to wear."

One thing is certain: the only constant is change. "Whenever the world started, there were fat people, there were slim people," says Ajibe. "And when the world ends, if it ever does, there are still going to be fat and slim people. So women's bodies, or people's bodies in general, we keep changing." V

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The Fresh Sheet

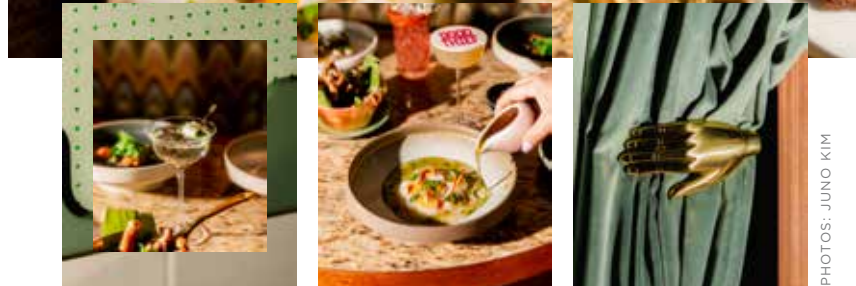
Vancouver's latest and greatest drinking and dining spots

BY KATIE NANTON

BARRA GITANO Sometimes you find yourself downtown needing some really good tacos and a margarita—now, with Tacofino Gastown closing, even more so. Barra Gitano in the West End (where Mary's on Davie used to be) is your new spot for south-of-the-border food with flair and flavour. The vibe is more casual than Ophelia and Monarca, its sibling restos, but the dishes are no less well-executed. Start with a margarita—in this case, a signature Gitano cocktail (cuervo reposado, guava purée, lime, house-made curaçao)—before ordering share plates for the table. Standouts include: Guajillo prawns, flavoured with the chili pepper of the same name served with wine chorizo and a truffle mash; a spicy trio of confit pork belly tacos dressed with avocado purée and cured red onions (vegans, there's a tempura broccolini taco trio for you); and birria noodle soup, complex and laden with ramen noodles, Mexican-chili braised beef brisket, cilantro, an egg and bamboo shoots—perfect for a chilly fall Vancouver day. **1202 Davie St., 604-563-0420. BarraGitano.ca**



LAVANTINE RESTAURANT & SKY-BAR Vancouver needed another buzzy hotel-top patio to see and be seen at, and Lavantine has delivered. Enter the Azur Hotel lobby, get whisked up the elevator, then walk out to a fashionable crowd clinking cocktails and feasting on cuisine inspired by the Levant region: modern Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Jordan and Cyprus. Start with a kaleidoscopic mezze platter with fresh veggies and pita, dipping everything into fresh baba ganoush, hummus and muhammara (walnut and roasted red pepper dip), then dive into sumac fries with feta, lamb aleppo kebabs with homemade sauces—a dollop of the rosewater harissa is sheer bliss—and share plates like a whole branzino with smoked pepper and lemon. When we visited, the vibe was immaculate: a saxophone player serenaded our patio with contemporary covers as the sun set over the North Shore mountains. **833 W. Pender St., 604-416-2855. Lavantine.ca**



GOOD THIEF “Nhậu or never”—that’s a tagline of sexy new cocktail spot Good Thief, open beside Vietnamese mainstay Anh and Chi. Nhậu is the culture of eating and drinking together, and there’s no better time to do it than the present. Serving up “rebellious Vietnamese,” Good Thief buzzes with certain bites you won’t see on many local menus (fish sauce-glazed frog legs, quail egg balut); some familiar but with a twist (pommes frites but with Thai green chili aioli, Cornish hen with Vietnamese herb salad); and some done

better than the rest (B.C. side stripe prawn crudo, fresh oysters). And the cocktails: surprising, stellar and served in stunning glassware. A Juicy Tale is salted watermelon soda mixed with blends of vermouth and berry bitters; the Six Inch Yellow is a tart-spicy mix of rye, yellow chartreuse, rectified starfruit and guanabana, salted honey, galangal (a ginger-like root), pineapple and spicy foam. It’s a long and thoughtful cocktail menu: plenty of excuses to return again and again. **3336 Main St., 604-428-3336. Goodthief.ca**

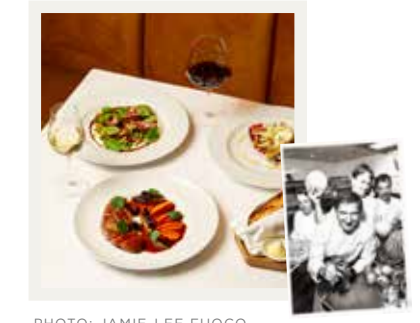


FLUTE & FROMAGE Cheese heaven is a plate artfully decorated with burrata from Puglia, Grey Owl goat from Quebec and creamy Le Maréchal (similar to Gruyere) from Switzerland alongside a flute of natural rosé overlooking Whistler Village and the mountains beyond. That’s exactly what we experienced at Flute & Fromage, an independently owned cheesemonger just across from Araxi. Owner Tara May, who grew up skiing in Whistler, has sourced almost 60 cheeses primarily from France, Italy and Quebec, serving them to dine in, to-go or as pre-packaged cheese-and-charcuterie boxes along with snacks, sandwiches and craft beer and cider. Don’t leave without a few of the curated condiments stacking the shelves: a jar of Miels d’Anicet Honey or a box of Maldon sea salt flakes. **4305 Village Stroll #102, Whistler, 604-932-7000. Fluteandfromage.com**

LE CROCODILE There isn’t a fork, garnish or taste out of place at Le Crocodile by Rob Feenie, the latest iteration of the fine-dining landmark off Burrard. At first blush, we spy a notable room revamp—exacting new millwork, faux-croc-embossed seats—but the cuisine, while refreshed, remains top of its class and, quite frankly, exceeds all expectations. A sliver of the expansive French-forward menu looks like this: chilled watermelon and cucumber soup with side stripe prawn and dill; herb-crusted lamb saddle with confit tomatoes and cauliflower puree; Alsatian apple tart with brown butter cardamom ice cream. A few bites into each, all conversation stopped to savour the excellence; no culinary corners are cut here. Notably, co-owner and executive chef Feenie worked in the kitchen with Le Crocodile’s founding chef Michel Jacob back when the former was 23, making his return there all the more fitting. **909 Burrard St., 604-669-4298. Lecrocodilerestaurant.com**



ARTIGIANO ROUNDHOUSE We love watching Artigiano cafés quietly pop up all over town—more coffee for us! That said, the cocktail-lovers in us were thrilled when one transformed into a day-to-night aperitivo bar serving up wood-fired pizza and cocktails steps from the seawall in Yaletown. Artigiano Roundhouse has a huge patio, interiors that are far chic-er than your average coffee bar, occasional live music and a tight menu of Italian cuisine done right. The Pineapple Tropicale ‘za with smoked ham, crispy prosciutto and caramelized pineapple relish on a hand-stretched sourdough crust had us head over heels, as did crispy risotto bites and warm citrus-cured olives to start. For a show-stopping dessert get the Sorbetto di Limone served in a frozen lemon shell; if you plan to continue the party elsewhere, energize your night with an affogato or espresso martini made with Artigiano’s Private Reserve espresso. **126 Davie St., 604-336-3628. Caffeartigiano.com**



MIDNIGHT JOE'S We don’t mention many food trucks on this page—when you see one, you know it’s good. Midnight Joe’s owners Drèa Whitburn and Britt Irvin have, in under a year, made a splash in Vancouver’s food scene, participating in a slew of events (Culture Crawl, Weirdos Market, Tulip Fest) and festivals (FVADED, Bass coast). Now, the ladies are prepping for an even busier fall/winter. Catch them at the Cloverdale Fairgrounds this October, and in December at the Shipyards Night Market, where they’ll be serving up their classic diner-style eats with a gourmet twist. A standout dish, the Midnight Joe, takes the beloved sloppy joe to new heights: Two Rivers ground beef slow-cooked in a signature sauce, layered with crunchy coleslaw and pickles, sandwiched between a toasty ciabatta bun. The veggie version is equally mouth-watering, featuring tofu and a crispy cheese skirt for a tempting crunch. For dessert, tart cherry pies and (unforgettable) cherry pancakes; or, for the more adventurous, Sloppy Pancakes—a decadent combo of signature Sloppy Joe mix atop fluffy buttermilk pancakes, with all the fixings. You’ll need a napkin. **@midnightjoesvancouver** NOA NICHOL



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A Walking Weekend

Get to know Montréal by exploring it on foot

BY SHERI RADFORD

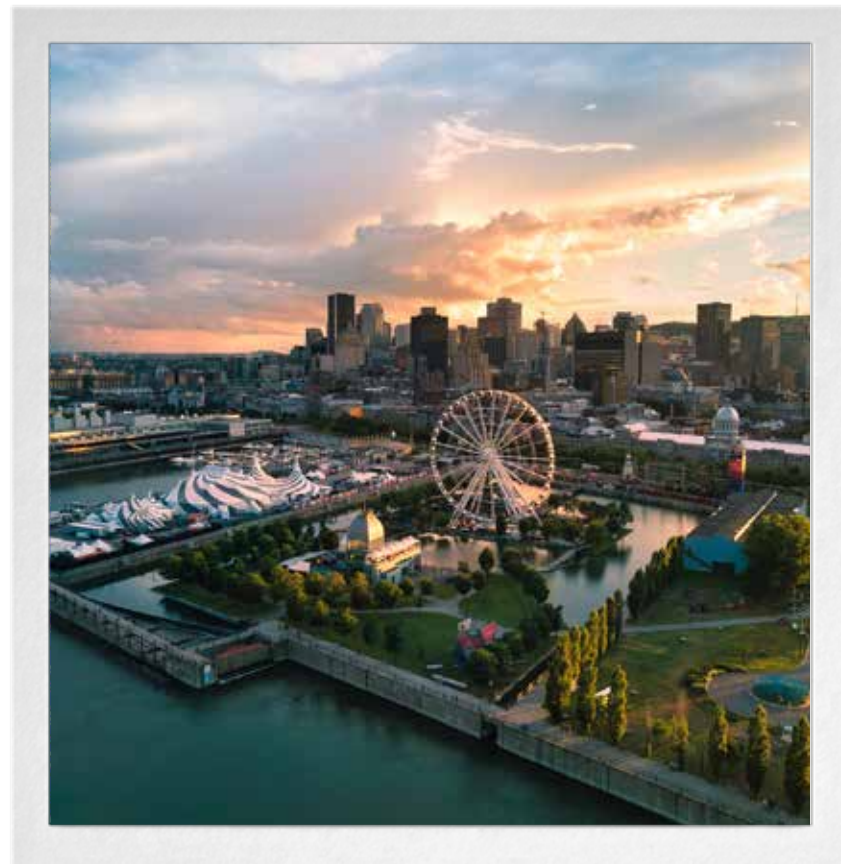
SOAR

The first order of business: getting to Montréal there. Porter Airlines, which now has daily direct flights between Vancouver and YUL, is known for having no middle seats and offering free, fast Wi-Fi, premium snacks, wine and beer. For an even comfier experience choose Porter-Reserve, which includes front-of-cabin seating with extra legroom, two checked bags, meals and cocktails. The alcohol is served in glassware, a throwback to a more genteel era of flying, and the flight attendants wear chic uniforms with pillbox hats. Flyporter.com/en-ca



STAY

Humaniti Hotel Montréal, Autograph Collection is the ideal home base for a weekend of wandering. The luxury hotel features bold décor and large guest rooms flooded with natural light. Work up a sweat in the 24-7 fitness centre, then cool off in the outdoor rooftop pool (summertime only). Enjoy local cuisine and creative cocktails at H3 Restaurant and Lounge, and treat yourself to a massage, facial, manicure and more at Spa Humaniti. Humanitihotel.com



SEE & DO

Spade & Palacio's "non-touristy tours" includes a three-hour Beyond the Basilica walking tour to explore the ornate Notre-Dame Basilica; amble through some of the underground city, including the huge Lipstick Forest art installation, and visit Chinatown, Esplanade Tranquille, Saint-Laurent Boulevard and the former red-light district. To see the basilica in a different way, the Aura Experience blends orchestral music with a dynamic light show on the interior architecture of the church.

Inside Palais des congrès de Montréal, Root for Nature, a collab between Oasis Immersive Studios and National Geographic, spotlights nature's grandeur in wall-sized videos of bumblebees, lions, whales and everything in-between. It's just one of many attractions included in Passeport MTL, which helps visitors save money while exploring.

Finally, every Barbie fan needs to make a pilgrimage to the free Barbie Expo in Les Cours Mont-Royal, where more than 1,000 dolls are on display. The most glam are dressed in outfits by big names—Oscar de la Renta, Vera Wang, Christian Dior, Giorgio Armani, Christian Louboutin—while others are based on celebrities like Marilyn Monroe, Lucille Ball, Farrah Fawcett and Audrey Hepburn. The Elvis and Priscilla dolls are kitted out in their wedding finery, as are the William and Kate ones. Pose for a snapshot in the human-sized Barbie box before you leave. Mtl.org/en/passeport-mtl

Keep Summer From "Sipping" Away



Don't let go of Euro girl summer just yet: these inspired cocktails will help keep the trans-Atlantic vibes going through September

Mediterranean Mojito

10 MINT LEAVES
1/2 LEMON
2 TSP HONEY
1/2 CUP SODA WATER
1 1/2 OZ FLOR DE CAÑA
12 YEAR OLD CENTENARIO
1 SPRIG ROSEMARY
ICE CUBES

Muddle mint and lemon, add honey, muddle again until mixed. Fill glass with ice. Pour rum over ice, top with soda water and stir. Garnish with mint, lemon and rosemary for an extra Mediterranean flair.

Spanish Spritz

3 OZ MIONETTO PRO-SECCO TREVISO BRUT
2 OZ SPANISH VERMOUTH
1 OZ SODA WATER
ICE CUBES
ORANGE SLICE
GREEN OLIVES

Fill wine glass with ice, pour in vermouth, prosecco and soda water and stir. Garnish with orange and two olives on a cocktail pick for a Spanish touch.

Turkish Espresso Martini

1 OZ WHITE CLAW PREMIUM VODKA
1 OZ COFFEE LIQUEUR
1 OZ BREWED, COOLED TURKISH COFFEE
1/2 OZ SIMPLE SYRUP
PINCH CARDAMOM
ICE CUBES
COFFEE BEANS

Fill cocktail shaker with ice. Add vodka, liqueur, coffee, simple syrup. Add ground cardamom and shake vigorously for 15-20 seconds. Strain into chilled martini glass, garnish with coffee beans.

Italian Negroni

1 OZ GIN
1 OZ CAMPARI
1 OZ AMARO MONTENEGRO
ICE CUBES
ORANGE TWIST

Fill mixing glass or cocktail shaker with ice. Pour in gin, Campari and Amaro Montenegro. Stir for 20-30 seconds, strain into chilled rocks glass filled with ice. Garnish with an orange twist.

British Gin Martini

2 1/2 OZ DILLON'S GIN DRY 7
1/2 OZ DRY VERMOUTH
ICE CUBES
LEMON TWIST OR GREEN OLIVE

Chill a martini glass by filling it with ice water. Fill a separate glass or cocktail shaker with ice. Pour in gin and vermouth, stir for 30 seconds. Discard ice water from the martini glass and strain gin and vermouth mixture in. Garnish and cheers!



SAVOUR & SIP

It's futile trying to resist the trifecta of Montréal cuisine—bagels, poutine, smoked meat—that pops up on menus throughout the city. Locals like to argue over which bagels are better, Fairmount or St-Viateur, and where to find the perfect combo of French fries, gravy and cheese curds, but the truth is it's hard to go wrong in this foodie paradise. For smoked meat sandwiches, Schwartz's Deli has been a fave for almost a century. Order a signature sando on rye with yellow mustard, and when offered the choice of lean, medium or fat smoked meat, always choose medium (trust us). Wash it all down with a black cherry cola (again, trust us). In 2012 Céline Dion became part-owner of

Schwartz's, and even makes occasional appearances in the deli.

Paparmene takes the stuffiness out of high tea with its sassy décor and unfussy service. Crew Collective & Café serves hot drinks, sandwiches and pastries in a stately old building that was once the Royal Bank of Canada. The pastries at cosy Café Nocturne tend to sell out quickly. Steaks are the stars at Le Butterfly, a modern French bistro where it's crucial (but difficult) to save room for dessert. Find lobster done every way you can imagine—grilled, in ravioli, on risotto and (of course) in a roll—at Pincette Lobster Bar. Hanging from the ceiling are assorted lobster traps transformed into light fixtures.

SPA

Try to resist singing "I'm on a Boat" while aboard Bota Bota, spa-sur-l'eau, especially since this unique floating spa demands silence. Moored at the Old Port, it offers a circuit of heat (saunas, steam baths, hot tubs), cold (showers, plunge baths) and relaxation (deck chairs, hammocks, guided meditations). Massages, wraps, and facials are also available. Botabota.ca/en

SHOP

A few places worth browsing: Boutique Eva B may look like a condemned building, but inside two crowded floors of thrift-store treasures await and the items hanging from the ceiling are wonderfully bizarre. Kemmi sells handcrafted jewelry designed in Montréal and L'empreinte coopérative has gifts handmade by Quebec designers. Marché Bonsecours is touristy, but has a few quirky gems, like MTL Décor, along with every maple syrup souvenir you could possibly dream of.

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