

CONTACT

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montréal

vibrant cultural mosaic



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montréal cultural city

From port cities to inland hubs, from the vistas of the open prairie to the ruins of ancient capitals, the world offers a variety of destinations, providing a plethora of choice for convention organizers. And in this competition for global destination dominance, Montréal habitually emerges among the leaders, as evidenced by the city's consistent ranking as Canada's premier site for international events.

Montréal is a jewel of multiple facets. A green city closely wired to the environment and the digital world yet ever connected with its rich history. It is also a city of culture and design, hailed for its inventive nature. Indeed, it is its creative energy that best characterizes this vibrant mosaic.

In this issue of *Contact*, we invite you to join us on a journey as we look at Montréal from the cultural perspective. Its vitality and dynamism are conveyed not only by impressive museums and art galleries or the world-renowned international festivals with which it has become

synonymous...but by its emerging reputation as a thriving center of circus arts and as a city of design, as recently recognized by UNESCO.

At the core of this cultural heartland is the Palais des congrès, nestled between the historic landmarks of Old Montréal and the downtown entertainment district. Our Palais has become an iconic figure in the Montréal environment. With its award-winning landscape design, its spectacular, colored glass facade, bold architecture bridging three centuries of history and the numerous works of art that it houses, the Palais is a fascinating place to explore and an exceptional environment in which to create memorable events.

In the architectural brilliance of the Palais, you'll find a concrete expression of the irrepresible character that makes Montréal unique in North America: an inspired blend of charm, gracious elegance and the playful avant-garde...all yours to discover!

Paul Saint-Jacques

President and Chief Executive Officer
Société du Palais des congrès de Montréal

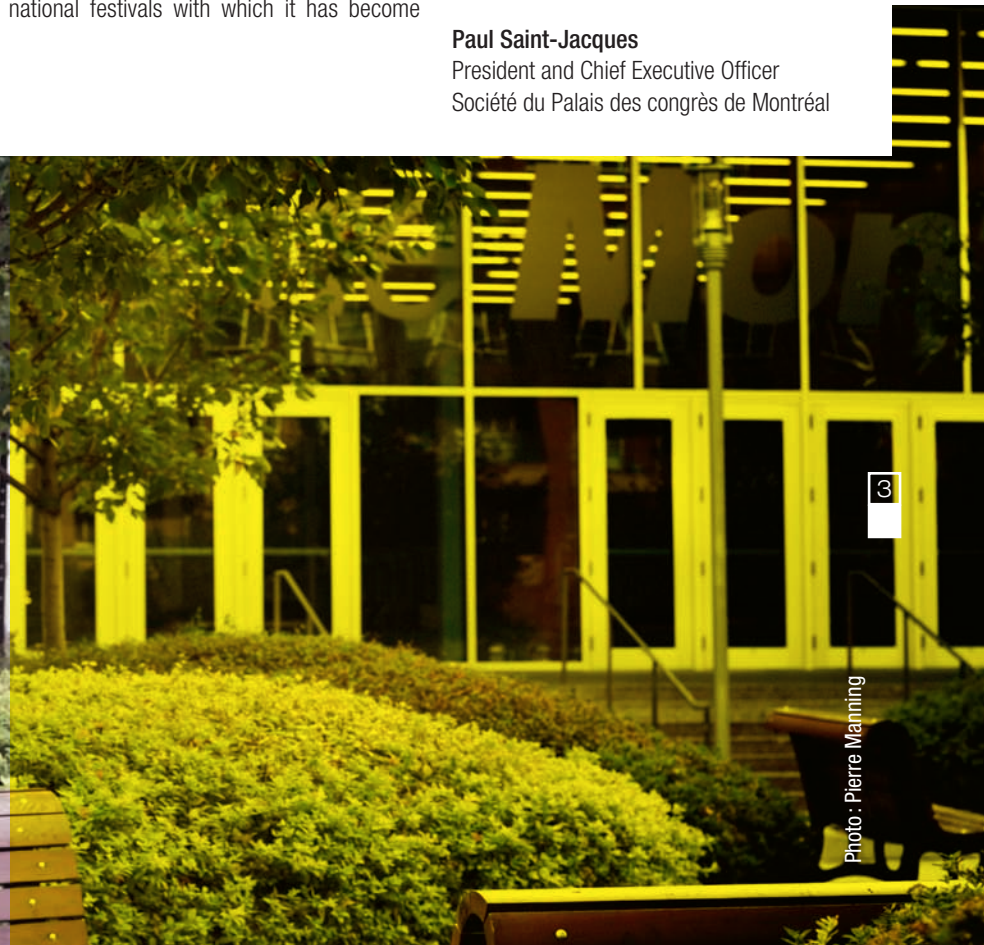


Photo : Pierre Manning

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Paul Saint-Jacques



Photo : Pierre Manning

Designated City of Design in 2006, Montréal became a member of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, an initiative of the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity created to enhance and develop cultural industries and identities. This designation acknowledges twenty years of sustained efforts to place design at the heart of Montréal society. As a city of contrasts and cultural pluralism, Montréal is a free and open space for design, highly conducive to bold invention, says **Marie-Josée Lacroix**, **Design Commissioner at the City of Montréal** since 1991 and Director of Design Montréal.

"Design, like architecture, reflects the creative fiber of a city. It is a fundamental component of any cultural metropolis, because it is through design that culture is expressed and made manifest," affirms Lacroix.

"The Palais building is an extraordinary example of Montréal's creativity. It is a building whose signature has become a Montréal icon. Because it is out of the ordinary, its provocative nature leaves no one indifferent. That's where its beauty lies. Montréal is a tremendous playground offering the freedom to embark upon this kind of project without dictates."

Belonging to a network of creative cities enables Montréal to share international practices and to fully develop its creative potential through contact with various influences.

"Montréal is an emerging city of design, not a spectacular city like New York or Paris. We establish our place in the world by displaying who we are, as being different, and

we can benefit from international experience to enable us to be even bolder. You know, the beauty of creative energy is born from the chaos of plurality and diversity."

According to Lacroix, the beautification of the city is a social project, beyond aesthetics. That's why the focus is on small-scale efforts aimed at improving the quality of life of Montrealers by offering them a lifestyle that fosters well-being.

"We have implemented a series of actions over the years to help Montrealers adopt design as their own. Our oldest and most internationally recognized project is our annual Commerce Design Montréal contest. Its greatest achievement? To have democratized the idea of design quality. We have succeeded in making business owners aware of the importance of investing in the design quality of their buildings with the assistance of a qualified professional. In so doing, we have improved the quality of life of Montrealers while elevating the design profession."

Created in 1995, the Commerce Design Montréal contest has spawned the creation of other similar concepts. Today, the cities of Trois-Rivières in Québec, Saint-Étienne, Marseille and Lyon in France, as well as the famous Times Square in New York have adopted the Montréal concept. The competition was also selected for the *2006 Dubai International Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment*, which recognizes outstanding projects to improve the living environment in a remarkable and sustainable way.

"Our greatest source of pride is to have succeeded in mobilizing the public around the importance of design. Here, the integration of design in the environment is very real. Montréal is the only city in the world to have a team of four people whose sole mission is to promote design and its integration in municipal projects."

staging artistry

As a preferred site for high-level scientific and academic conferences, the Palais is also renowned for its stage facilities. Various entertainers and performers are regularly called to the Palais to dazzle international delegates with their talent and artistry. According to **Sébastien G. Côté**, **Director of Communications, Marketing and Artistic Recruitment** for Canada's oldest talent agency in corporate entertainment, PGI Pierre Gravel International, the Palais offers artists unparalleled facilities.

"At the Palais, there is no limit to creativity. The halls have been designed to offer delegates exceptional events at all levels," explains Côté. "Our artists love performing at the Palais because they can work under excellent conditions."

Artists can expect the latest in technology, sophisticated lighting techniques and an experienced team. "What is most interesting at the Palais is that when we want to stage a highly varied and complex show, their experience really shines."

PGI agents frequently sell shows as part of international conventions. They offer customized service that reflects the versatility of the various rooms at the Palais. "Variety shows, magic, big band, circus acts or comedy, we can meet the demands of event organizers whatever they may be. Since we have worked

closely with the Palais for a long time, we are really familiar with the different space configurations, and we can act as consultants with our clients so that the performers are cast in the best light and can fully contribute to the success of these evenings."

The secret to staging a memorable event really lies in the choice of performers, who must please an international clientele while maintaining their character and originality. "Our artists adapt the show to the clientele and some actually speak up to seven different languages! We know that providing this international touch is really appreciated."

Founded in 1962, PGI is the exclusive agency for more than one hundred Canadian, American and European artists on the national and international scene.

no media, no message

6

"There are many forms of culture and the job of our Operations team is to put these concepts—whatever they may be—in the best light," says **André Tardif**, Director of Palais Operations, summing up the vital role of his team. "It is the team's expertise that works to maximize our diverse technologies to create a signature event," adds **Claude Sergerie**, Audio-Visual Supervisor.

They believe that what distinguishes the Palais from other convention centers is its broadcasting versatility. "Thanks to our ubiquitous infrastructure, we can broadcast from absolutely anywhere in the Palais," explains Sergerie to which Tardif adds, "and our fiber optics network allows us to receive and send both analog and digital signals of superior quality which can be transmitted around the world." Such capacity enables the Palais to obtain maximum visibility and reach for events such as the Prix Gémeaux Gala, an awards ceremony for Canada's French-language television, or for an international event such as the United Nations Climate Change Conference or for the dozen press conferences held simultaneously during the International Auto Show.

Clients also find a financial advantage in the fact that each room has separate cables to reduce to the minimum the need for equipment

rental and to avoid all the attendant technical unknowns. Microphones and other equipment are connected directly in the wall. The level and quality of sound and lighting are adjusted and controlled in the room itself, through a control panel on the wall or by a laptop (which serves as a remote control if the artist or speaker so requires) or through the control room of the Palais. With this level of flexibility, the Palais can ensure rapid and superior quality service.

For shows that require, for example, the installation of lighting bridges, sound systems, set decoration and other suspension requirements, the Palais can provide turnkey service. Its personnel begin by checking the feasibility of the project, recommend any adjustments and proceed with the rigging work.

The Operations team all work with the attitude that "technically, nothing is impossible," affirms

Sergerie. "The only constraints we have are spatial, not technical. For example, if we have a set 42 feet high that has to go in a room with a 30-foot high ceiling..." And the fact that the rigging points and equipment are installed under the supervision of Palais personnel, trained by experts in staging, reassures clients in terms of safety. According to Tardif, the reliability of the team is widely recognized and the technicians receive regular training to stay up to date with the latest technology.

And now that the Palais is a wireless Internet zone, an asset highly attractive to both promoters—wanting to offer Internet access to participants in their event—and to individual delegates or exhibitors who want to take advantage of an à la carte service, our clients have all the necessary infrastructure to put the best light on any cultural expression and to share their vision with the world.

vibrant cul

Circus thrills at the Palais

International delegates attending a conference here are occasionally treated to upscale entertainment featuring high-level talent such as Québec-based Cirque Éloize whose mastery of circus arts is in demand the world over. Their long list of appearances includes a performance at the launch of Europe's TGV train in Strasbourg and as a featured act for the closing ceremonies of the Turin Olympic Games! "The Palais is often a showcase for Québec talent who are distinguished by their originality," affirms **Jean-Philippe La Couture**, Director of Sales and Special Events for the Cirque Éloize.

"On the international stage, Montréal is perceived as fertile ground for circus arts. Visitors from abroad are impressed by our shows which they remember vividly," continues La Couture. "Moreover, it is what organizers are looking for, to draw upon our expertise and homegrown creativity to offer participants an unforgettable experience during their stay."

The Cirque Éloize has just what it takes to meet delegates' expectations. For close to fifteen years, they have been astounding audiences with their poetic productions, which combine the technical prowess of circus acrobatics with dance, song, music and theatre in order to evoke a sense of beauty, fantasy and emotion.

Over the years, the Cirque Éloize has toured the world entertaining more than 3 million people in 300 cities. And while the troupe has developed an impressive repertoire of productions, they still approach each request to perform as a new challenge. "We like to discuss our program with the client. Then we develop our shows according to the event's theme, the audience profile and the client's objectives," explains La Couture. "In so doing, each production we create is unique and relevant,

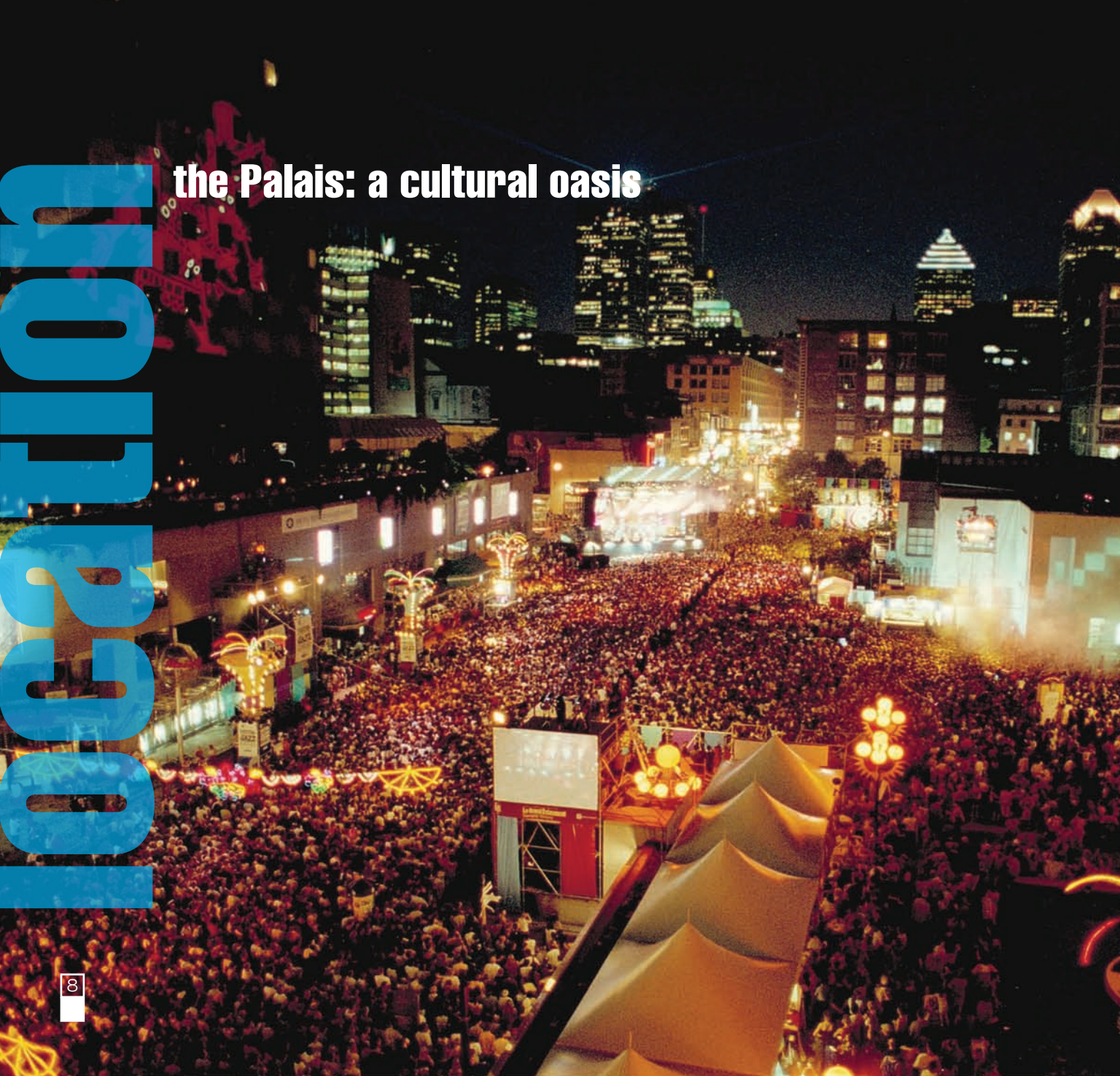
and speaks directly to the audience for whom it was conceived."

Productions can be presented either in one block of 30 minutes to an hour or broken up into different acts at different times during the event, according to the pace and program planned by the client. Whatever the format selected, the effect is always captivating, giving audiences a chance to experience the troupe's unique artistry and virtuosity.

"There are very few venues like the Palais. They allow us to explore our creativity rather than impose a host of constraints. We are not restricted to floor work and can even include acts with fire or aerial components. It is the ideal site to truly showcase the artists' performances," insists La Couture.

The troupe also appreciates the Palais for its technical team which scrupulously respects their technical specifications. "For more complicated productions, we even have the option of installing our own equipment two or three days in advance to rehearse on site," concludes La Couture.

the Palais: a cultural oasis



8

The Palais is situated at the crossroads of various cultural influences in Montréal, giving it premier access to a host of attractions and a constant infusion of vitality. As a link between the downtown core, the Quartier international, Old Montréal and the Quartier des spectacles, or entertainment district, the Palais is a hub for anything festive and celebratory.

Since its inception, the Palais has been an important and integral part of the city's cultural fabric. Its design alone has injected a sense of *joie de vivre* to the neighborhood, its contemporary architecture incorporating the facades of the district's heritage buildings and promoting the installation of spectacular works of art such as *Lipstick Forest*. It also houses a unique architectural gallery.

Main tourist attractions near the Palais

- 1 Château Ramezay
- 2 Bonsecours Market
- 3 Notre-Dame Basilica
- 4 Pointe-à-Callière Museum
- 5 Science Centre
- 6 Place des Arts
- 7 Museum of Contemporary Art
- 8 McCord Museum
- 9 Redpath Museum
- 10 Museum of Fine Arts

- Quartier des spectacles
- Chinatown
- Quartier international
- Old Montréal





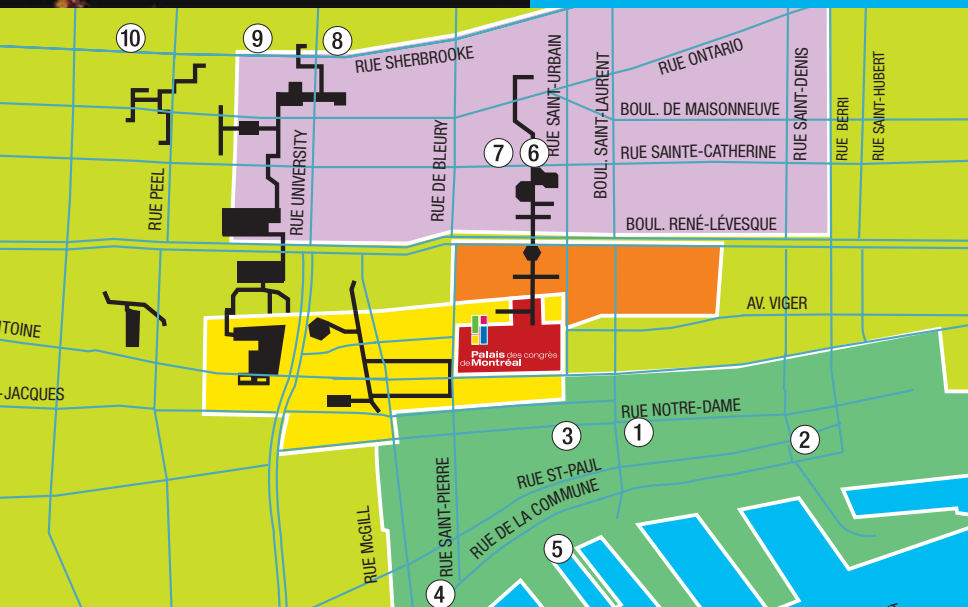
Jean-François Leblanc ©Festival International de Jazz de Montréal 2002

In this cultural oasis, there is no shortage of interesting events and attractions. Only a short walk from the Palais towards the river, one can explore the history of New France, visit such historic landmarks as the **Château Ramezay**, the **Bonsecours Market** and the **Notre-Dame Basilica** and an array of museums including **Pointe-à-Callière** and the **Science Centre**, whose programs are both fun and educational.

A stone's throw in the opposite direction is the **Quartier des spectacles**, home to more than 30 performance halls, numerous bars, art galleries and several alternative cultural venues. **Place des Arts** remains the grand concert hall here, featuring a complex of theatres where the **Orchestre symphonique de Montréal** and the **Opéra de Montréal** perform. Its **Vitrine culturelle** on Sainte-Catherine Street is a centralized, interactive information and ticket office for last-minute purchases and serves to promote the various events in this thriving cultural Mecca. The district is also center stage for Montréal's world-famous festivals that keep the city in a constant state of celebration. The streets are closed to traffic, so that festivalgoers—whether they come for jazz, comedy, film, or francophone music—are free to revel in the carnival atmosphere.

In addition to the **Musée d'art contemporain (Museum of Contemporary Art)**, adjacent to Place des Arts, the downtown core is teeming with cultural institutions especially in the area known as the **Golden Square Mile**. Here, prestigious art galleries and haute couture mingle with the **McCord Museum**, the **Redpath Museum** and the **Museum of Fine Arts**, which will soon boast a new pavilion of Canadian art with the renovation of nearby Erskine and American Church, considered an architectural jewel designed in the Arts and Crafts style.

On every corner, Montréal offers visitors compelling sites and intriguing creations often found in no less intriguing buildings, such as the **Ex-Centris** (film and multimedia), the **Tohu** (circus) or the **Usine C** (theatre). In a city where even the *Nuit des sans-abris*—an event organized to raise public awareness to the plight of the homeless and disenfranchised—is an occasion to celebrate, Montréal's cultural dynamism is always at play. Film crews abound along with new and exciting restaurants in this city of design, where creativity, in all its forms, is a precious commodity to be enjoyed and openly expressed by all.



For more information on tourist attractions in Montréal, visit Tourism Montréal's web site at www.tourism-montreal.org.



Zero waste? Zero problem!

Our new program, “Supporting Zero-Waste Practices” was launched on the occasion of the World Education Congress of Meeting Professionals International (MPI-WEC) held in July. It was the first time that MPI offered its some 3,600 participants a green event.

The aim of the program is to significantly reduce the volume of residual waste usually destined for landfill. Waste produced during the WEC was sorted on site, recycled and composted. A green brigade was on hand to provide information to participants and raise their awareness of environmentally responsible practices.

At the end of the congress, the Palais produced an environmental performance report detailing the waste management efforts and providing an assessment of the greenhouse gas emissions produced during the event.

Among the many environmentally responsible practices implemented during the WEC, let us mention the use of reusable china instead of paper containers during social activities, the dissemination of electronic documents to eliminate printed material as much as possible and the distribution of passes providing access to public transit.

WEC participants were also the first to walk on the new carpet installed this summer in the common areas on the 5th floor. Made of up to 47.3% recycled fibers, with a backing of 100% recycled rubber, the new carpet will not be thrown out at the end of its active life, but rather will receive a special treatment to revitalize the fibers so that they can be reused.

Moreover, Palais employees have themselves proudly adopted the “Supporting Zero-Waste Practices” philosophy by changing their consumption habits. Styrofoam cups and cardboard have given way to reusable and washable dishes for everyone. Capiat Traiteur will follow suit by using compostable dishes as of April 2008.

By ensuring a combined effort to reduce residual waste with concrete actions right from the planning stages of an event, the Palais can indeed claim that it is an environmentally responsible convention center and is ready to accommodate any Zero-Waste event.

AIPC welcomes our CEO

At its 49th Annual Conference in July, the International Association of Congress Centres (AIPC) appointed Palais President and CEO, Paul Saint-Jacques, to its board of directors for a two-year term. Saint-Jacques is the only American representative to sit on the seven-member board, headed by Edgar Hirt, President of the International Congress Centre in Munich, Germany, who replaced Barbara Maple of the Vancouver Convention Centre.

Founded in 1958, the AIPC is a professional non-profit association whose mission is to recognize and encourage excellence in convention centre management. Based in Brussels, Belgium, the organization represents convention and exhibition centers from over 49 countries.



Paul Saint-Jacques

Protocole de Montréal 20^e Montreal Protocol



High-level dignitaries, security and satisfaction

In September 2007, the 19th meeting of the Parties to the Montréal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, or MOP19, could count on an unprecedented level of security so that the event could take place peacefully and without incident.

Managing security for dignitaries and senior civil servants is fairly straightforward when there's only one event and all it requires is to "lock down" the building. But the MOP19 coincided with several other events and the Palais did its utmost to ensure the peace of mind of organizers.

The Palais provided turnkey security service, deploying a staff of 60 people familiar with the premises so that they could ensure quick problem resolution and rapid, proactive response. The team included a security consultant, a nurse and all the permanent security staff of the Palais, assisted by agents from an outside firm.

Already trained in security and first aid, the team also received more specific training a few days before the event in order to attentively and tactfully accommodate representatives from various cultures.

11

Moreover, security was broken up into shift work of eight hours, rather than the usual 12 hours so that agents could be fresh and alert. As a result, our agents received several positive comments on the quality of security and on the professional manner in which they received delegates.

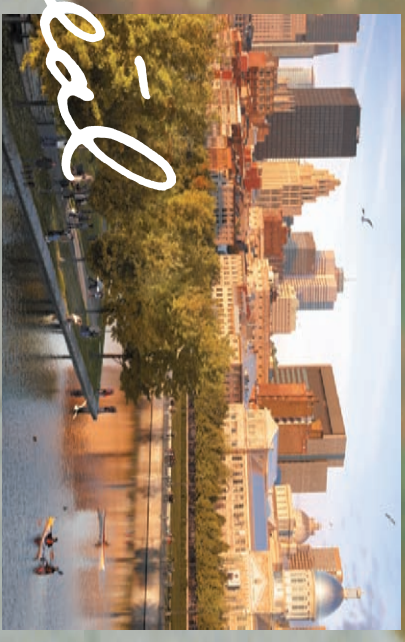


The Palais adopts new accessible signage

To meet the needs of participants at the 11th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons (TRANSED) held from June 18 to 22, the Palais revised its signage making it more accessible to persons of limited mobility.

TRANSED 2007 posted record attendance with 600 delegates representing 54 countries. The conference gave Kéroul, a non-profit organization promoting accessible tourism and culture, a splendid opportunity to convey its mission and enable persons with restricted physical ability to discover several tourist sites and attractions in Québec.

Ahead of schedule - Montréal



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tourism-montreal.org/meet

*Source: The Union of International Associations (2006).

MEETINGS à la
Montréal

