



Photos Courtesy of Le Germain

# Hotel Indulgence

by YANIC SIMARD

**Y**ou should be pampered whether you're home or at your home-away-from-home. ➤



Hotel Le Germain, one of Canada's first boutique hotels, started right where I did: in Quebec. Born from the passion of Christiane and Jean-Yves Germain, the concept has grown from a singular avant-garde hotspot for trendy businessmen to a modern pinnacle of unique design in cities across the nation – the perfect inspiration for a hotel-chic home.

I take mental notes (and hundreds of pictures) every time I visit memorable accommodations, and my recent stay at the Calgary edition of this growing hospitality family gave me plenty of ideas for how you can achieve a hip hotel vibe without a trip to the airport.

#### FIRST IMPRESSION: BIG IMPRESSION

- Stepping into Le Germain Calgary, guests are immediately presented with the “wow!” factor we all strive for. No space is wasted in the compact lobby, and neither is an opportunity to make a statement. The check-in desk is faced with a glowing backlit stone and topped with oversized black pendant lamps.
- The lobby furnishings feature bold, low modern sofas. Using a few full-sized pieces in even the smallest of spaces can achieve a much more satisfying result than piling on the “condo-sized” clutter and the low profile won't detract from floor-to-ceiling windows – all of this adds up to a space that actually feels larger.

#### MATERIAL MATTERS

- For a cohesive, architectural look, the hotel uses a singular mid-tone wood finish for much of the suite interiors, from closet doors to the low headboards. Rather than drapery, the windows are dressed with sleek wood shutters, continuing the linear statement. In-window shades are a returning trend, and can provide a more clean aesthetic than fabric; however, you can also consider a minimal roll down shade for a covering that almost completely vanishes when not in use.
- Because the wood – carried into the bathrooms – already brings so much character, most of the tile work is simple white. Using large tiles (12 by 12 or even 24 by 24) laid in a simple straight grid with minimal grout lets the floor visually blend into one clean plane. Smaller mosaic tiles on just the shower floor add a little interest and continue the palette. Use these sparingly to avoid having to maintain all that extra grout.

#### SIGNATURE REQUIRED

- I believe it's always important to put the effort into giving a bedroom (whether for occasional guests or the long-term residents) a few touches that make it feel unique and special. Le Germain drapes an iconic “g” blanket (reminiscent of haute fashion labels) as a diagonal stripe across the corner for a playful detail that gives a bed a luxury look every day.
- The hotel also injects a bold pop into their otherwise subdued neutral palette with their signature colour: royal purple. The hue would be overbearing if overused, but as an accent it gives depth and drama that guests will remember. It shows up in lounge chairs, book covers and cityscape artwork. Choosing just one colour you really love and carrying it throughout is the easiest way to avoid clashing. Try Benjamin Moore's 2071-20 Gentle Violet to mimic their regal hue.
- Swing-arm-style task lights are popular lately (think the classic desk lamp on your grandfathers drawing table), and the hotel twists this trend by using a pair as the bedside reading lamps, then hanging one with a modern shade from the ceiling over desks to preserve a clean surface area. Try Artemide's Tolomeo Mega lamp for a similar take on the modern classic.

#### SWEET SUITE ENSUITE

- A strong trend in hotel design lately is shown beautifully in Le Germain's many suites: breaking down the division between the ensuite and the bedroom results in a combined space that is much larger and feels more luxurious. Some suites feature a window between the rooms (with shutters for privacy), while others use a sliding door that opens wide, reducing the physical



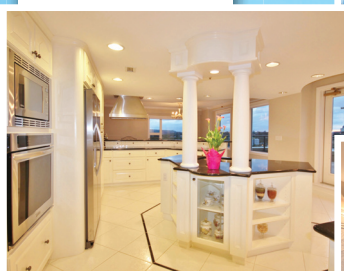
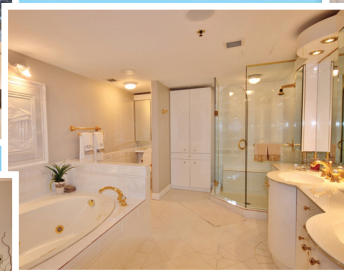
separation. The apartment suites do away with a wall around the bathroom altogether: the bathtub is backed by a glass panel only, and no other walls define the space. If you have a beautiful bathroom, why not enjoy the visual more often?

- The extended, organically shaped vessel sinks are installed with the wall-mounted faucet set off-centre for a surprising, asymmetrical look. Lights built into the sides of mirrors give an even glow for morning rituals, with pendant lamps added for that important light-layering.
- My favourite take away from my suite was the tub filler faucet – I couldn't find it at first, because it had been installed in the ceiling! This isn't as impossible as it may seem - just make sure to check with professionals (and your condo board) before attempting any structural or plumbing changes. You could also have yours shifted to the side of the tub (even as part of a freestanding unit) to avoid bumping into it when taking a relaxing soak.

I hope these ideas inspire you to make your own home a little more exciting for the most important guest: you. Meanwhile, if you're visiting Calgary, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec or (as of just this year) Halifax, look to Le Germain for a stay with even more one-of-a-kind twists – just make sure to bring your camera.



**YANIC SIMARD** is the principal designer of the Toronto Interior Design Group. Specializing in residential and commercial projects, Simard often applies his signature high/low and old/new combination design techniques in developing unique designs. Simard has created designs for clients in Toronto, Montreal and Miami, and has appeared as a regular guest expert on Citytv's *CityLine*. For more information visit [tidg.ca](http://tidg.ca).



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