



## Ladurée Vancouver

*Petite luxury.*

STORY: *Alison Sinkewicz*

Olesya Krakhmalyova isn't just serious about macarons—she is serious about Ladurée macarons. “For me, macarons are only Ladurée,” she adamantly explains. It’s an unusually serene scene at the recently opened boutique on Robson Street, as the queue snakes around the velvet rope. Krakhmalyova, the Parisian company’s Canadian partner, is quick to point out that this is quietest it has been in weeks; the store’s inaugural day welcomed a line of 300 people patiently waiting for their taste of the tiny treat. The Vancouver boutique, the first Ladurée location in Canada, has been steadily inundated with customers, bringing with them a few bumps along the way: the limited-edition Easter boxes sold out in two hours; the computers crashed, exhausted after so many transactions; and Krakhmalyova even had to call Ladurée headquarters to ask if her workers could switch from the brand’s approved pumps to more forgiving flats. “These poor girls, they’ve been working so hard,” Krakhmalyova says, perhaps including herself.

The Ladurée macaron—no relation to the lumpy, yokel North American coconut counterpart the macaroon—has won legions of fans with its smooth, crispy top and creamy ganache centre. The French company, whose founder Louis Ernest Ladurée, as the legend goes, invented the macaron in 1862, still uses that same original recipe. The company today isn't just famous for its petite confections, but also, and perhaps even more so, for in its delicate and precise in-store presentation. Lined up in tidy rows in their respective ornate boxes, everything has its place in the boutique, as well as in the 16-seat tea shop tucked away in the back. No aspect of the store deviates far from the pastel colour scheme accented with gold; it's a calculated effort pulled quite literally from the Ladurée textbook. "Everything here is exactly the same as it is in Paris," Krakhmalyova says. All of the macarons are flown in direct from France weekly, including classic flavours such as lemon, pistachio, and coffee, as well as seasonal offerings including cherry blossom and the Canadian-tailored maple syrup (which, Krakhmalyova confesses, is not a best seller).

Many of the ingredients used for the finger sandwiches, French toast, and other delights available in the tea room are also flown in from France. Other components, such as the jambon for the croque monsieur, are sourced locally, but carefully chosen to be as close to France as possible. The Marie Anotinette tea, a Ladurée signature blend, is recommended to match the rosy-sweet French toast speckled with fresh raspberries, a tart raspberry sauce, and floral rose whipped cream. Krakhmalyova hopes to bring champagne to the tea room by the end of the year, and aspires to have a second Canadian location in Toronto.

Back outside the boutique, the line has crept far out the door as adoring fans line up for a glimpse and a taste of France's finest. Let them eat macarons.

POST DATE: MAY 10, 2016

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MONTECRISTOMAGAZINE.COM, MAY 10, 2016