

FEBRUARY | MARCH 2019

BOULEVARD

VICTORIA LIFE AT ITS FINEST



WORK,
PLAY,
REBOOT

WHITE HOT WEEKEND

Gems to spark
romance

MODERN DELIGHT

Seamless beauty in a
classy Gonzales home

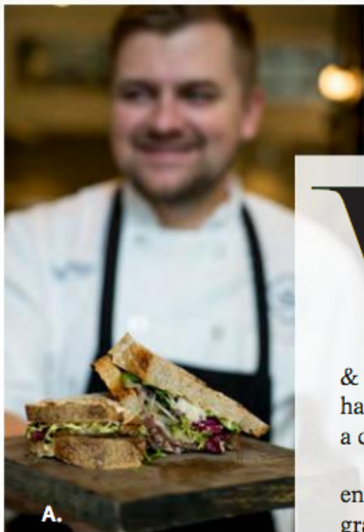
THE INFLUENCERS

Business people
who inspire

French twist

**New Courtney
Room meshes
menu and
design for
a casually
elegant
Parisian
experience**





A.

BY CHELSEA FORMAN
PHOTOS BY LIA CROWE

VICTORIA'S Courtney Room has added a little *je ne sais quoi* and *miam!* to the city's dining scene with a restaurant redesign that hums with a French bistro vibe on the lower level and offers fine Parisian dining upstairs.

"Old world meets new" at the Magnolia Hotel & Spa's newly renovated Courtney Room, which — through harmonizing design and menu — evokes a sense old Paris within a classically modern setting and a uniquely local expression.

High ceilings, elements of Art Nouveau, artfully tiled entranceway and chevron-patterned wood floor conjure the grand dame hotels of Paris, while the menu further elevates the Parisian experience with locally sourced and seasonal cuisine — from both land and sea — created with a French flourish.

"The vision and goal was to take the area and turn it into a classically modern space that would tie into the hotel's overall design," says Bill Lewis, general manager at Magnolia Hotel & Spa. "We wanted the dining experience to meet the food experience, so we developed the menu to match the space."


Two separate menus, one in the downstairs, casually elegant bistro area and one in the upscale, upstairs dining room, offer a range of French-style delicacies from caviar and velour en croute to charcuterie sandwiches. Although created with a French twist, the cuisine pays homage to its locally sourced ingredients with names such as Nootka Rose lentil and Bean Ragout, Yarrow meadows Duck Breast and Cache Creek Beef Tartare.

The Courtney Room renovation was undertaken by Sharon Bortolotto of BBA Design in collaboration with Vancouver-based design agency Glasfurd & Walker.

"Sharon has worked on the aesthetic of hotel for over 20 years ... continuity in the design exists throughout the hotel, spa and now restaurant," says Bill.

The main bar features gray marble and a custom glass oyster station. The elevated upstairs dining room features brasserie-style velvet banquette seating in a carpeted space with white tablecloths and a glassed-in wine room.

Vintage lighting creates a casual elegance reinforced by the restaurant's sophisticated colour palette of smoky grey-blues, taupes and earthen hues. Commissioned abstract expressionist-style artwork by Blu Smith pairs with the space's decorative accents of leather, brass, bronze-beaded curtains and white marble chevron details.

"Ideally, The Courtney Room will become an iconic dining space that is as timeless, classic and as long-lasting as the hotel. We think we built something exceptionally well designed and well thought out. It's a timeless dining experience in a classic restaurant," says Bill. 



B.



C.



D.



E.



F.

A. "For the Charcuterie Sandwich, we use a country loaf (made in house — it's a mix of sourdough and rye), pickles, mustard and a rotating charcuterie, also made in-house." B. "The French 250 cocktail is a take on the classic French 75, but instead of regular gin we use Empress Gin from Victoria — hence the 250 (Victoria area code) to make it local. We also add wild mountain honey syrup and lemon juice and top it off with the Unsworth Charme de L'île (also local from the Cowichan Valley)." C. Smoked honey mussel, fermented radish foam and pieces, trout roe. D. Chef de Cuisine Chris Klassen. E. "Potatoes Courtney — essentially they are potatoes rosti that are cooked in duck fat and served with a green onion dipping sauce." F. Entrance to the Courtney Room.