

INTERIORS
BEST
COMMERCIAL
SPACE



NUOVO GROTTO

INTERIOR: Scandinave Les Bains
Vieux-Montréal

LOCATION: Montreal

FIRM: Saucier + Perrotte Architectes,
Montreal

TEAM: André Perrotte and Gilles Saucier
with Jean-Philippe Beauchamp,
Anna Bendix, Trevor Davies and Yves
de Fontenay

THE INTERIOR Old Montreal, with its nightclubs, restaurants and galleries, is hardly an obvious location for a Nordic-inspired thermal bath, but with a dazzling use of natural materials and subtly organic forms Saucier + Perrotte has managed to create a contemplative temple for the body amid the urban chaos. Housed in a former warehouse, Scandinave Les Bains Vieux-Montréal is an immersive drama of space and light, water and steam, hot and cold. The 1,000-square-metre interior flows with slow, open-ended rhythms, and gentle depressions in the floor form basins for bathing. An undulating Brazilian walnut ceiling slants dramatically down a long corridor over a circular cold bath set with marble tiles, where sheets of water fall continuously into an adjacent hydro-jet pool. The most stunning room is the sauna, which takes the shape of a nearly complete circle of tiered

seating, with natural light streaming in through an opalescent window. Another sauna, clad in warm poplar with nested benches, surrounds a core of volcanic rocks. These archaic, sublime spaces are toned down by a more relaxed, modern lounge; a juice bar; and a sitting area filled with soft, slouchy chairs that invite sleep.

THE FIRM André Perrotte and Gilles Saucier have won seven Governor General's Awards for architecture since establishing their Montreal firm in 1988. They are internationally recognized for bringing their particular, contemplative art form to both single-unit homes and such large-scale projects as River City, a 900-unit master plan now under way in Toronto. saucierperrotte.com

A hydro-jet pool and an inset cold bath are capped by an undulating ceiling in Brazilian walnut.



Floor-to-ceiling black slate tiling and an iridescent window give the spa's steam bath a distinctive feel.

WHAT THE JURY SAID:

"We looked at many sophisticated projects, but they didn't seem to have a qualitative soul. That wasn't the case here. This interior is about darkness as much as it is about light; it's about openness and tightness. It brings together a huge dialogue of interests."

- CRAIG DYKERS

Clad in poplar, the sauna features hot volcanic rock and light-diffusing, tiered seating.

