

# Le Monastère opens Le Vivoir, a haven for body and soul

SHIRLEY NADEAU  
SHIRLEY@QCTONLINE.COM

**L**e Monastère des Augustines in the Old City recently opened Le Vivoir, a dining space dedicated to relaxation and nutritious, mindful eating.

The completely renovated and expanded wellness space is conducive to both friendly conversation and solitary reflection. Guests can create their own menu to suit their tastes, dietary restrictions and values. The menu prioritizes local, seasonal and organic products and offers a wide selection of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes.

According to a statement from Le Monastère, the Le Vivoir concept was developed in keeping with the mission of the Augustine sisters, who have always considered food to be the cornerstone of health. An illustrated guide filled with information on mindful eating allows guests to discover this holistic aspect. The restaurant is open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., and is dedicated to day pass holders and overnight guests who can come and go as they please, and meet and chat with others.

There is also a take-out counter for local customers to take a meal home, to work or even to a picnic. Healthy options are offered with a variety of nutritious hot dishes, light meals and snacks and vacuum-packed *sous vide* food that can be reheated at home.

Chef Will Rolleman, from Ayr, Ont., described the buffet. “There are usually eight to 10 salads every day with lots of fresh items. There is always at least one hot

offering at lunch time.” The day the *QCT* visited, there were samosas with “impossible [vegetarian] meat” and falafel with chickpeas, meat and coriander. There was also a *choucrouste de la mer* with sauerkraut and seafood, a non-dairy cream of vegetable soup and a variety of desserts from a local pastry shop.

Le Monastère guide Isabelle Houde explained, “There is a ‘give-back’ program where all the money we raise [...] is reinvested in fulfilling the mission of the Augustines, to incarnate their values in a contemporary way to meet people’s needs. We have a respite care program for personal caregivers who can enjoy an overnight stay with meals and activities for only \$30 per day. It’s nice knowing that when you come to take care of yourself, you’re also taking care of others.”

Charlotte, who preferred to give only her first name, was staying at Le Monastère for two nights while her husband was being cared for by another family member. “It’s such a wonderful place. The people are so nice and they take care of us. Sometimes, I come [...] with other caregivers to talk about what we are experiencing. We help each other with someone who is listening. So they are doing a little bit the same as the Augustine sisters were doing.”

A half-day package, including lunch or dinner, allows visitors a way to discover Le Monastère and appreciate the benefits of this haven of holistic health. It includes access to Le Vivoir, one meal with unlimited snacks, a self-guided tour of the museum’s

**VIVOIR:** A bright room for taking time to savour the present moment, a cozy conversation or quiet. Imbued with memories and exuding warmth, the vivoir is a haven for nurturing body and soul. – *Definition on a wall in Le Vivoir*

permanent and temporary exhibits, a walking tour, a 60-minute movement and relaxation activity and access to the Augustines’ choir. A day pass (\$49) gives access from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., while an evening pass (\$59) provides access from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Le Monastère des Augustines is located in the wings of the former Hôtel-Dieu de Québec monastery, founded in 1639, the first hospital in North America north of Mexico. Completely restored and renovated, it offers experiential accommodations, a museum, an archive centre, a



Photo by Shirley Nadeau

Fresh herbs are grown in a special section within Le Vivoir. A living plant wall captures carbon dioxide and releases oxygen through photosynthesis.

program of activities focused on health and culture, a food service, a boutique, specialized holistic health treatments and meeting room rentals.

For more information, visit Le Monastère des Augustines website at [monastere.ca/en](http://monastere.ca/en).



Photo by Shirley Nadeau



Photo by Shirley Nadeau

A light meal at Le Vivoir can include a variety of salads, soup and a tasty dessert or other hot dishes. An illustrated guide to mindful eating is placed at every table for guests to read. Some of the furnishings in the background are from the refectory of Le Monastère des Augustines, where the sisters used to eat their daily meals.