

12 hot spots in Montreal's Furniture Design District

By Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf



The Montauk "Stanley."

Available in a variety of comfortable fabrics and with down-filled cushions, Montauk's "Stanley" sectional lounge also features a hardwood frame and hand tied coil system.

Montreal is that rarest of Canadian cities—a little island of European sensibility in the larger North American stream. It is a city with a *joie de vivre* that people the world over have come to know. It's a place of festivals, fine dining, and fun. But it has also quietly developed another reputation: home to one of the best furniture and home decor districts in the country.

Over the past few years, the northern stretch of what Montrealers affectionately term "The Main" (the name is now synonymous with Montreal thanks to writers like Mordecai Richler) has developed into a burgeoning design district. Walking along this 10-block section of Saint-Laurent Boulevard between Sherbrooke Street and Mont Royal Avenue, one can find a pack of modern furniture stores and studios coexisting peacefully alongside famous old-time smoked meat shops, trendy clubs and exquisite antique shops.

The Main earned its nickname for

two reasons: firstly, it is ground-zero for addresses east and west of Saint-Laurent. Secondly, this strip is the "main" area where a multitude of immigrants settled after the Second World War and began plying their trades in earnest.

It is no accident this area became home to a furniture district. The "main" advantage Saint-Laurent Boulevard offers furniture designers is space. Because the street was once home to many manufacturing companies, furniture shops have remodeled these old ground-floor premises to provide the area needed to display furniture collections to great effect. The depth of the showrooms and their high ceilings help highlight sofas, tables, chairs and all manner of decorative objects. It makes shopping for furniture a truly comfortable and pleasant experience.

Whether you're looking for imports from around the world, exclusive Quebec designs or custom-made items, here are the stores and studios you need to browse when you are next in *la belle province*.



Latitude Nord "Hola" armchair. Italian design by Cassina, the "Hola" chair's elongated back forms two short comfortable arms. The removable upholstery is available in fabric or soft leather.



The Urbana "Calla" chair. The "Calla" chair features flexible arms that can be moved into five different positions and is available in a wide range of colours.

AND THEY LIVED
HAPPILY EVER AFTER
THAT IS, UNTIL SHE DECIDES TO UPGRADE THE FIXTURES



The Interior Design Show 2006

February 23-26, National Trade Centre, Exhibition Place, Toronto

Not to worry. The Interior Design Show will have ideas and inspiration for any and all home and garden plans. It showcases design excellence and functionality among furniture, kitchen and baths, windows and wall coverings, paint and fabric and architectural products. For more information visit us online at interiordesignshow.com

February 23 – Opening preview | February 24 – Trade only day | February 25 and 26 – Open to the general public



The NonUseless "To Place The Glasses" stool. With a base of maple wood and a top of expanded urethane and linen with zippers along the side for storage, this handmade NonUseless stool combines form and function.

existing furniture but responding wittily to a specific need not yet filled. Examine any one of their pieces and see for yourself.

Their collection presents furniture whose dimensions and forms make them adaptable to any decor. In addition, pieces are accompanied by specially designed outfits (think of clothing for furniture), which can be changed at will to fully integrate the furniture into its environment or give it a new personality. There is nothing else like it out there. Where else could you find an item titled "to place the glasses," which is, in essence, a pillow-top stool with zippered pockets for putting eye-glasses or change into? Their products are simply inimitable. www.nonuseless.com

1 The Non-Useless Furniture Studio
4060 Saint-Laurent Blvd,
Suite 200

The artists of Non-Useless Furniture create unique, funky, contemporary pieces that sometimes defy conventional design logic. Their highly original work straddles the line between functionality and art.

Non-Useless designs derive first and foremost from function—an invented function not corresponding with any

2 Latitude Nord
4400 Saint-Laurent Blvd

One of the original players of The Main's contemporary furniture district, Latitude Nord specializes in presenting exclusive designs from top furniture makers around the world to Quebec customers. The store displays a vast array of furniture, lighting and accessories from Italian, Scandinavian, Spanish, Swiss and Canadian sources.

Founded in 1995, Latitude Nord showcases its high-end products in an open concept showroom at the top of The Main. Every year, they proudly present a new collection of products that were hitherto only seen in some of the most famous international showrooms.

Currently on display is the new "DeDede" collection from Switzerland. Described as "sophistication meets with elegance," this all-leather collection incorporates the philosophy of blending adaptability with great comfort. The pieces are rapidly becoming modular timeless objects.

www.latitudenord.com

3 Licari
4441 Saint-Laurent Blvd

Licari specializes in what they call "furniture from elsewhere." What that means is the owner, Mathieu Licari, has made it his mission to present shoppers with unique designs from the Far East. Shoppers will find pieces from exotic locales such as Tibet, Nepal and India alongside more contemporary furniture in Licari's spacious showroom setting. There are also objets d'art that are sure to present the shopper with the

pleasant problem of what to buy first.

Licari lies in an ideal location, just seconds from the intersection of Mont-Royal Avenue and Saint-Laurent Boulevard. After browsing Licari's exotic selection, you can stop by a nearby cafe or one of the local cultural restaurants to ruminate over the exotic furniture you've just seen. www.licaridesign.com

4 OHM Mobilier
4440 Saint-Laurent Blvd

Specializing in oriental and medieval-style furniture, the folks at OHM pride themselves on offering furnishings that were constructed with recycled materials, including carved frames, antique doors, wagon wheels and even pillars from ancient temples.



OHM red sofa. Adding an impressive dash of colour, this vibrant, red leather, twin-seat offering from OHM livens up any room.

With this strong link to the past, OHM's furniture is undeniably unique. Customers will notice the selection of exotic materials used in their furniture such as teak, mango wood, acacia, sheesham wood and leather. All their pieces are individually handcrafted and chosen for their distinctive qualities.

This season, OHM is showcasing their new collections gathered from Indonesia, Thailand and India. www.ohmmobilier.com

5 Moderno International
4268 Saint-Laurent Blvd

Yet another in the line of expansive, beautiful storefronts on The Main, Moderno rivals any and all of its competitors in the contemporary furniture industry. Using Montreal as its headquarters, Moderno steadily built its international reputation and now also boasts its collections internationally in



The Montauk "Big Ben." The "Big Ben" is also available as a chair or loveseat. Upholstery includes lightweight linen slipcovers, raw silk fabric and distressed leather for a beautiful, refined look.

Brussels, London and New York.

Moderno designs and builds an exclusive collection of finely crafted contemporary furniture. The company also produces and distributes high-quality residential and commercial furnishings and accessories. This includes sofas, chairs, beds, tables, lamps, cushions and bedding collections.

Moderno's mission is to eliminate the extraneous and to create a furniture that is timeless, durable and aesthetically pleasing. To that end Moderno offers a superior product based on the highest standards of craftsmanship, functionality and innovation. www.moderno.ca

6 Dragore
4295 Saint-Laurent Blvd

One of the newer stores, Dragore opened its doors in the spring of 2003 after years of successful interior design projects in Europe.

Dragore offers somewhat of a departure from the rest of the contemporary crowd on The Main. They are a company enchanted with the sublime natural materials of the Indonesian forests. Instead of lush sofas, chairs and beds, the company specializes in original and comfortable teak furniture. It has its own production unit in Bali and offers a high-design product made using traditional methods from a selection of species of teak. Also on display are many decorative pieces of art and paintings inspired by



Eskif from Erik Desprez's "Pygma" collection is a moveable standing bar that boasts hidden bottle compartments built into the steel frame.

the owners' travels.

Their showroom smells like a sweet teak forest, making it a nice haven when shopping on a cold Montreal winter day. www.dragore.ca

7 Atelier Roger Landreville
(furniture artisan)
10 Duluth Street W.

Unless one knew where to find it, Mr. Landreville's ordinary storefront would be easy to miss. Taking a small detour west off Saint-Laurent Boulevard onto the small street of Duluth, one can get sidetracked by the imposing vision of Mount Royal looming just up the street, which is why furniture shoppers need to look closely for his address.

The antithesis of the other huge, dynamic stores in the district, Roger Landreville is a one-man operation.



Latitude Nord "Nathalie" Bed. The Nathalie bed can be upholstered with fabric or leather covers that are completely removable. Available in four types of bases (including one with storage), the headboard is also available in an adjustable reclining version.



Urbana "Le Corbusier" chaise longue. Urbana's "Le Corbusier" chaise longue boasts adjustable positions and is available in the full range of Urbana's fabulous selection of fabrics.

His tiny shop (often closed because he is out personally visiting with clients) harkens back to a simpler era, but his work is timeless. Make sure to book an appointment first to ensure he is there to greet you. Landreville specializes in custom-built residential and commercial furniture.

514-843-4075

places like the conference rooms of the acclaimed Cirque du Soleil and Montreal's famous Hotel St. Paul.

His pieces lend themselves to lofts and wider spaces as he mainly constructs tables, benches and stools from solid, thick chunks of rough-hewn wood.

www.erikdesprez.com

9 Montauk

4404 Saint-Laurent Blvd

In 1995, Montauk opened their flagship store on Saint-Laurent and have never looked back. Though they have since opened stores in Toronto, Calgary, New York and San Francisco among other cities, you never forget that it all started in Montreal. Boasting some of the most beautiful and comfortable sofa designs, the brand is the evolution of the art of furniture-making,

steeped in family tradition and hand-craftsmanship and brought into the contemporary world for the sensibilities of a new generation.

The originators of the spacious and uncluttered store environment on The Main, Montauk continues to be a leader on a strip that has seen many competitors imitate their style but never surpass their quality. It doesn't hurt that their line of sofas, chairs, loveseats, sectionals and ottomans are all so darned comfy.

www.montauksofa.com

10 Urbana

4158 Saint-Laurent Blvd

Another new player on the Montreal furniture design scene, Urbana opened its doors in 2003. Its design roots are based on the urban lifestyle and they cater to those looking for international contemporary products.

Urbana offers a marriage between creation and furniture. Spacious like an art gallery, Urbana has walls that are decorated with paintings created by Montreal artists. The store features products such as wall units, sofas, tables, chairs and bedroom decor. Urbana designer Henri-Pierre Lavoie points out that Urbana specializes in Italian imports from companies such as Venier and FBL. If you have a taste for style and high art, pass by Urbana where you are sure to find something to suit your home design needs.

www.urbanamobilier.com

Latitude Nord's "Nathalie" shown ready for storage.



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