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Spotlight

# Lighting

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EDITOR \_Kendra Jackson

## Above the Curve

SID LEE ARCHITECTURE LETS LIGHT TAKE A LEADING ROLE IN ITS TRANSFORMATION OF A DOWNTOWN MONTREAL HOTEL

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PHOTOS \_Alex Lesage

Crafted from laminated glass panels, the Sainte fixtures by Lambert & Fils make a stunning counterpoint to the highly reflective mirrored bronze fireplace chimney in the lounge.





The oculus in the Cabinet of Curiosities mimics a skylight, diffusing the cozy “in-between space” with a seemingly natural glow. Throughout, hand-applied plaster by Venosa Interiors creates an expressive canvas for illumination.

When Sid Lee Architecture was hired to overhaul the common elements of Montreal's Vogue Hotel (a Curio Collection by Hilton), it saw an opportunity to explore the relationships between space, light and material. With the intent of imparting the sense of luxury experienced at grand hotels in Asia and the Middle East, the design team, led by architect and founding partner Martin Leblanc, first repositioned the public spaces along a classic colonnade that runs the length of the hotel's new glass facade (more on that later). This move completely opened up the ground floor and allowed them to “holistically integrate” the new Café Bazin and YAMA restaurant (both helmed by celebrated local chef Antonio Park) with the lobby and lounge.

When it came to appointing materials, the designers were meticulous, choosing a finish that would set off a series of design decisions that ultimately amplify the glow of these communal spaces: hand-applied Venetian plaster, selected for its opulent textured feel, handcrafted quality and reflective nature. “The texture of plaster has a way of capturing light,” says Leblanc of the decision. The next question was how to make it interesting and enhance guests' feeling of wellness. The answer: soften most hard corners by curving the walls and other elements. “Light likes curves, and the plaster's texture extends its reach,” says Leblanc. Strategically placed recessed LED pots and strips bathe the plaster — and the mix of Quebec white oak and Turkish travertine flooring found throughout the ground floor — with a lovely haze, which contributes to the full spectrum of light Sid Lee aimed to incorporate.

Heightened illumination was of the essence: The hotel is situated on a narrow street, directly across from an 18-storey building; its interiors were lacking in access to natural light. While a recent redesign by LemayMichaud saw the front of the building opened up by a contemporized double-height glass and steel facade (which improved conditions immensely), the interior architects knew still more could be done to tease light into every corner of the establishment's lobby, lounge and restaurants.

In addition to the softly glowing walls, other lighting levels were introduced via custom fixtures, including Sid Lee–designed U-shaped chromed aluminum pipe sconces at the travertine reception desk, in the secondary lounge (called

the Cabinet of Curiosities) and in YAMA; the tubular fixtures “participate in the wall expression” and visually link the spaces together.

Montreal lighting and design studio Lambert & Fils contributed a pair of striking sculptural installations in the primary lounge: Two arrangements of oversized versions of the studio's Sainte collection flank a suspended fireplace chimney clad in mirrored bronze, an orchestration that “plays with direct and indirect light and reflection,” says Leblanc.

From the new front door to this artwork-like “central beacon” and the other freshened common spaces, the redesign of Vogue Hotel weaves together elegance and intimacy, the light enhancing and changing the experience the deeper one ventures. [sidleearchitecture.com](http://sidleearchitecture.com)

RIGHT: The team at Sid Lee Architecture designed the U-shaped lighting fixtures found at numerous points in the reimagined ground-floor common spaces. In YAMA, they are joined by sinuous LED strips embedded in the ceiling for effective layered lighting.

