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Rush

Vintage Group continues to tighten its hold on Calgary's dining scene with the introduction of its latest venue: Rush. Already counting the eponymous Vintage Chophouse, numerous Redwater Grille locations, and the bakery, Rise, in its stable, Rush will further entrench VG in the minds and mouths of Calgary foodies.



Globally-trained Justin Leboe is at the helm, a chef who has an impressively extensive CV that features tenures at Waterloo House in Bermuda and the Belvedere at the Peninsula Hotel Beverly Hills. He also logged hours in Vancouver as a Tournant at Century Grill and a Saucier at C restaurant. His positioning at Rush is his first Calgary term.

For Rush, Leboe et al have a contemporary ethos that will have a staunch malleability thanks to a reliance on seasonal ingredients. Featuring fixed, a la carte, and tasting menus (depending on whether you're in the lounge or dining room), this is luxurious multi-pronged dining. Expect innovative art plates and an out-of-the-gate exuberance.

While the amicable host describes the room as "relaxed but elegant," Leboe has grander aspirations. His series of tasting menus feature the best of what the market has to offer that particular day, including some "outside the box" appetizer items that really delivers.

Offered in three- or five-course packages, the tasting menu rotates daily, and for slightly more timid souls, Leboe's delightful, Mediterranean-inspired menu includes plenty of classic entrées, such as caviar and lobster starter plates to a rather tame selection of mains: fork-tender pork that's been slow-cooked for 12 hours, superthick lamb chops, and a grilled halibut - served over a cushion of mashed potatoes.

Purportedly and apparently oenophile friendly, Rush has a huge wine list care of Wine Director Marnie Harfield. Look for a Spanish Armada-large list of choices from throughout the world. Furthermore, several wines are available by the glass, so you don't necessarily have to burn your budget or permanently stain your tongue purple.

Mirroring the vino card, an expansive space houses Rush. Lush seats abound, ceilings scrape the sky, and drapery heightens the posh aura. The aforementioned dining room and lounge are joined by private dining areas. Despite the largeness, the utilitarian Rush uses the confines to the max. Aside from the dining room and lounge, it also offers an in-kitchen Chef's table (yes, you read that correctly).

I don't know if it puts the love back in dining. But, with seating for eight, patrons can get up close and personal with Leboe and his staff as they prepare that night's meals (do your best not to sneeze). -S.T. with P.B.

Location: 207 9th Avenue SW, Calgary, AB

Phone: 403-271-7874

Area: Beltline

Cuisine: Contemporary

Cost: \$\$\$\$ (Expensive)

Hours: Mon. to Fri.: 11:30am - 2:30pm; Mon. to Sat.: 5:00pm - 9:30pm

Payment Info: Master Card, Visa, American Express