

# Profile

## NIGHTSPOT

### Rushing Beauty

ENJOY THE POSH INTERIOR AND CREATIVE COCKTAILS AT RUSH RESTAURANT & LOUNGE

By dee Hobsbawn-Smith

**T**HERE'S NO NEED TO HURRY once you get to Rush. This bar is Vintage Group restaurateur Lance Hurtubise's latest downtown opus. Designed by Hribar Design Group of Calgary, its six million dollar price tag looks very well spent.

This hot new lounge and restaurant is drop-dead gorgeous, high-ceilinged and hospitable. Suede-upholstered ecru stools with huggy backs attend two long granite bars that wrap around Brazilian walnut walls and tables, framed by a half-dozen curved banquettes. An uncommon table that accommodates 18 is decidedly barroom baroque, illuminated by a trio of dangling oval lampshades wearing black velvet and dripping with crystals. The rest of the lounge is lit by oversize lampshades, each big enough to invert and convert to a swimming pool.

Barkeep Andy Dufort is happy to welcome his guests to the molecular side of the art of the cocktail. Dufort is a fan of molecular deconstruction, and he applies it painstakingly to some of his signature blended drinks. His "Pear-fect" martini makes a suave spring sipper or post-prandial: Hangar One's spiced pear vodka is "paired" with amaretto, then scented with ignited cinnamon for a spicy afterburn. But the drink's dots are all connected by the sweetened lime foam that Dufort painstakingly swirls on the finished drink's surface. "I love this foam," Dufort says ingenuously. "I like it with mojitos, too, and in the summertime, on a blueberry martini with fresh berries." It's easy to drink your fruits and vegetables when they taste this good.



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There are other kitchen inspirations on Dufort's bar menu, each simple and stylish, many with an acid edge, all made from premium spirits. "Less but better," Dufort says, as he muddles a snappy "Sinful Cucumber" with Buddha's Hand citron vodka. He is keen on an upcoming new collection of herb-spiked summer sippers, but won't share any details. Wait for warmer weather, he suggests, and adds they are all food-friendly, although Dufort cheerily admits the star of the show is the wine list. This generous collection by the glass assembled by wine director Marnie Harfield complements executive chef Justin Leboe's lush fare. The list is led by several sparklers, one of which Dufort hijacks for his "French 75" spiked with gin and lime. This bar classic, named after World War I's big howitzer gun called the Soixante Quinze (75), wears its age well; in 2009, it is as cutting and contemporary as Dorothy Parker on a good day. Dufort agrees. "The 75 is more refreshing a drink than any Mimosa."

A delicious highlight exclusive to the lounge's small plates dining menu, Rush's deceptively named pan bread features deeply flavoured braised and shredded Spring Creek short ribs wrapped in pastry chef Lisa Cheah's lush wheat roti. Eating and drinking doesn't get much better when there's no need to hurry. [T.M.](#)



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