

Game: The Canadiens “Rebuild” started with owner Molson’s brilliant personnel move

Game and Grub

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It was back in 2021 in a National Hockey League season highlighted by COVID-19 protocols that the Montreal Canadiens last qualified for the Stanley Cup finals, going down in five games to the Tampa Bay Lightning. It would effectively mark the end of two great careers – goalie Carey Price and defenceman Shea Weber.

The following season the Habs got off to a bad start and club owner Geoff Molson fired General Manager Marc Bergevin. In came Jeff Gorton, previously from the New York Rangers, as vice-president of operations to initiate a rebuild. Bergevin clearly did not do a horrible job running the Canadiens for nine seasons, but I am sure if Molson could have one do-over during that time then a mentor like Gorton is what was really needed.

Five years after that Cup final, the Canadiens rebuild is way ahead of schedule. They made it all the way to the conference finals against the Carolina Hurricanes and Gorton deserves a good portion of the credit. Talk about thinking outside of the box. His first move was to hire former player agent Kent Hughes as general manager. A West Island native, he had been living in the United States for many years yet still maintained his bilingualism from back in the day when he attended CEGEP St. Laurent. It was immediately clear that he knew how to handle this pressure cooker of a job. Soon after his hiring he fired head coach Dominic Ducharme and brought in former NHL star Martin St. Louis to step behind the bench. Again, this was a highly unorthodox move. St. Louis had never occupied any sort of coaching role except for his kids’ teams in Connecticut. He was a quick study.

Gorton, now elevated to the title of President of Hockey Operations, clearly had the magic touch. The rebuild attracted so much interest that Crave TV produced a documentary on the subject. There have been two seasons thus far and I watched each episode more than once. It truly brings you behind the scenes. While I have never formally met Gorton or Hughes (I did introduce myself to Kent on an elevator at the Bell Centre last year), the appropriately titled *The Rebuild*



Bâton Rouge Pointe-Claire owners Dimitra and John Frintzilas



Jeff Gorton and Kent Hughes

made me feel as if I knew them. It shows how much in sync they are with each other. You will also get to see how intense St. Louis is before and after games.

Cameras have been following the team all year, not to mention clipping media personalities from TSN 690, so it is very likely that season three will air before next season begins. And what a story that will be!

How Molson rebuilt the hockey management team is the polar opposite to that of the Toronto Maple Leafs. And that folks is the reason why the Habs have enjoyed such a banner season!

Grub: New Korean Steakhouse

Hana Korean Steakhouse is one of Montreal’s newer upscale dining spots, blending Korean BBQ with fine-dining steakhouse vibes in Old Montreal. It certainly has not taken long for the place to become a “go to” spot.” The restaurant opened on January 15, 2026, headed by Hanhak Kim. He already owns Momiji by Otto and Bar Otto.

There are eight seats at the bar and 70 at tables. Born and bred in Seoul, South Korea, he had a vision and brought in Chef Wongoo Jeon, who used to work at a Michelin star restaurant in Korea. This isn’t your typical casual Korean BBQ place. It is designed as a premium, almost luxury experience. There is table-side grilling. The servers cook high-end cuts of beef right in front of you. Prime and dry-aged cuts here are the star, some aged 30 plus days Traditional banchan (side dishes) are paired with refined, contemporary plating. The special grills keep the dining room from getting smokey. There are two main ways to dine: Korean BBQ (à la carte or set menus) or the Omakase / tasting menu. The latter is what my party of three chose, a nine-course experience that started out with beef tartare on tartelette, shrimp toast, filet mignon & truffle, dry aged strip Loin and mustard seed, oysters with a kick, ribeye & Un, Hanger Steak and Kosho, Hansang & Galbi, Sondubu soup, fresh fruit and des-



The new Bâton Rouge décor is fresh, modern with the same great food



Each table at Hana has its own barbecue

sert. All the portions are small, so you will not walk out of here overfilled so a pretty good deal for \$115 a person.

Servers manage four tables at a time. Hugo handled our table superbly, describing the menu in detail and every course that hit the grill. This is a wonderful dining experience. We spent nearly three hours there. I also noticed how friendly people were at other tables. Hana’s is described as a “communal dining experience” for a reason.

Hana’s Korean Steakhouse is located at 301 Lemoyne. It is open Tuesday to Saturday from 5 pm to 11 pm. There is valet parking on Friday afternoons. For reservations call 438-892-6127, e-mail info@hanakoreansteakhouse.com or log on to www.hanakoreansteakhouse.com/

Bâton Rouge Grillhouse & Bar Relocates to Complexe Pointe-Claire

The Bâton Rouge Grillhouse & Bar location on Boulevard St-Jean has moved just up the street, relocating from Dollard-des-Ormeaux to the Complexe Pointe-Claire. John and Dimitra Frintzilas—the dynamic brother-and-sister franchise team behind this location as well as the Décarie restaurant—recently welcomed me into their new space. There’s no question: this is a significant upgrade from their previous premises. Taking over the former L’Académie location, the restaurant now offers seating for 268 guests indoors, along with a seasonal terrasse that accommodates an additional 70. The décor is fresh, modern, and a clear step up from the DDO locale.

John explained that the move was unavoidable, as the former building is slated for demolition to make way for new condominiums. Faced with either shutting down operations for up to three years or relocating, they chose the latter—and it’s safe to say things worked out in their favor. The new site boasts a much larger parking lot, immediate access to Highway 40, and proximity to major anchor tenants like Indigo and Maxi, all of which should help drive steady walk-in traffic.

I enjoyed a piping hot bowl of cream of potato soup, buttery garlic bread, an 18-ounce rib steak and some decadent chocolate cake for dessert.

The new Bâton Rouge Pointe-Claire is located at 6321 Trans-Canada Highway in Pointe-Claire. For reservations, please call 514-626-6440 or visit www.batonrouge.ca.

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