

TRAVEL

MONTREAL
LOVES A
PARTY

City has 350th
birthday celebration
and everyone's
invited

BY KATHERINE ARHENDURGE
NEW YORK TIMES SYNDICATE

The logo for Montreal's 350th birthday celebrations shows a man, wedged between symbols of Mount Royal and the St. Lawrence River, welcoming the four corners of the world.

Well, so far it hasn't happened that way, to the disappointment of Montreal's hoteliers and taxi drivers.

The recession and probably some (groundless) anxiety about political discontent in Quebec have made for festivities that are more familial and subdued than those great local touchstones, Expo '67 and the '76 Olympics.

Because Montreal loves to party and has an unquenchable Gallic penchant for street life and crowd scenes, the inhabitants seem underwhelmed by the festivities.

But the tourist industry's loss may be the traveler's gain: The city has been spruced up and there's more to do and see than ever; the streets are cheerfully but not uncomfortably busy; and there's plenty of room in hotels and restaurants.

If this suggests that the city threw a party and no one came, that's definitely not the case. It's just that visitors have the agreeable sensation of being included in a family birthday party rather than a bash for outsiders.

The list of spectacles, public events and exhibitions planned from now until mid-October fills a plump 47-page booklet (available at Marche Bonsecours, Old Montreal's refurbished 19th-century market, which is the anniversary information center, 350 St. Paul St. (514-872-7292 or 800-463-6350). They range from intimate fairs for neighborhoods and ethnic groups to special editions of the city's biggest late-summer and early-fall attractions.

Of course most of these celebrations — film festivals, comedy festivals, walking tours of Jewish Montreal, bicycle tours — would have been inconceivable to the city's founders, Paul de Chomedey, who was Sieur de Maisonneuve, and Jeanne Mance. They marked their arrival on the island of Montreal on May 17, 1642, by offering a Mass and decorated the altar with jars of fireflies. But, when it comes to cele-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GREATER MONTREAL

brating in Montreal, each to his own taste.

Events

The city has created a new downtown square, Place du 350e, in honor of its birthday.

"Rome: 1,000 years of Civilization" is a one-time collection of more than 200 objects selected from Italian museums on show daily, 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., at the Palais de la Civilisation, on the Ile de Notre Dame (514-872-4560), until Sept. 27; \$10.50.

Dancers from the Bolshoi, L'Opera de Paris, les Grands Ballet Canadiens and the New York City Ballet perform in the 350th birthday edition of the Gala des Etoiles at Place des Arts. Tickets range from \$12.00 to \$84; call (514) 934-3620.

Sightseeing

Birthday parties come and go, but thankfully not all Montreal's presents to itself are transitory; 1992 may well be remembered as the year the city commemorated its 350th with a quartet of new or significantly augmented museums.

The most prominent is the

Desmarais Pavilion of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1380 Sherbrooke St. West (514-285-1600), which opened last fall. Designed by Moshe Safdie, it is across the street from the museum's original building and connected to it by underground galleries.

The pavilion is a not always digestible mix of heritage facade and modern elements, and Safdie's would-be processional staircase forces visitors into a mining gait.

But inside the galleries are thoughtfully planned to accommodate a rich cross section from the permanent collection as well as special exhibitions. Open Tuesday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., on Wednesday and Saturday until 9 p.m. The admission is \$4.20.

This summer's special exhibit at the Desmarais Pavilion, more than 150 drawings, sculptures, paintings and engravings arranged to shed light on Michelangelo the sculptor, is on display until Sept. 13. Tickets for "The Genius of the Sculptor in Michelangelo's Work," which include general admission, cost \$8.40.

A few blocks down the street the McCord Museum of Canadian History, 690 Sherbrooke St. West (514-398-7100), has just taken the wraps off an impressive renovation and a new wing by the architects LeMoine Lapointe Magne in asso-



ciation with Jodoin, Lamarre, Protte & Associates that doubles its space.

The McCord always knew how to use its menagerie of objects, from Indian costumes to 18th-century armchairs to milk-bottle caps, bringing Canadian social history vividly to life. Happily, its sleek new surface just means there's more of a good thing. Open Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday and Sun-

day 10 to 5. Admission is \$4.20 (free Thursdays 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.).

Established almost 50 years ago, the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art, 185 St. Catherine St. West (514-847-6236), had a permanent collection of 3,300 objects but no home of its own until last spring.

The most original and diverting of the new museums is the one that goes furthest back to the city's origins. Visitors to Pointe-a-Calliere, the deconstructionist museum by the architect Dan Hanganaut 350

Place Royale, Old Montreal (514-872-9150), will find a dazzling museum of archeology and history that makes carry out of an archaeological site (including a 17th-century cemetery and a 19th-century sewer), a witty multiscene film about Montreal's history and interactive videos about the first inhabitants.

This eerie walk through the city's foundations is highly recommended. The museum is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$5, free on Wednesdays after 5.

Party on:
Along the
promenade of
the Old Port
of Montreal,
above, visi-
tors can
watch per-
formers, rent
a bike or visit
many terraces,
races, restau-
rant and pic-
nic areas. At
left is Mon-
treal's Olymp-
ic Stadium.

Getting a line on fly-fishing

BY EVERETT POTTER
SPECIAL WRITER



"In our family there was no clear line between religion and fly-fishing," writes Norman Maclean in "A River Runs Through It" (University of Chicago Press, 1976).

By now, the book has sold more than 350,000 copies. Maclean, 73, is a university of Chicago professor emeritus of English.

And soon "A River Runs Through It," a film starring Robert Redford, will add to the fly-fishing mystique. It is set to open this autumn.

No doubt, after the movie hits theaters new fly-fishing devotees will appear like freshly hatched mayflies on the water.

"There's a real romance to fly-fishing. And it appeals to people who may never have done any other outdoor sports," says Doug Truax, a spokesman for Orvis, a Manchester, Vt.-based company that has sold fishing and outdoor goods since 1850.

But while fly-fishing has a meditative, cultlike appeal, few sports are as intimidating to the novice. First, it smacks of a kind of gentility, even elitism, that makes many people uncomfortable.

Second, a fly rod and line is often not a thing of beauty in the hands of a beginner. More commonly, it's

a nightmare of tangles and frustra-

tion. Orvis sells dozens of different graphite and bamboo fly rods, precision-made fly reels, floating lines, sinking lines and enough nymphs, streamers and dry flies to fill any fly box to the brim.

In schools around the country, they also teach people to use the equipment.

"If you've ever tried to learn it on your own and found yourself flailing in the bushes, with your fly stuck up in a tree, the school can be very helpful," says Truax.

"We try and correct these casting faults before you ever get a hook on the end of the line."

Students learn the forward cast, roll cast, side cast and roll-cast pickup. They study how to false cast and shoot line. They also learn the essential knots for tying flies.

Students find out which flies to choose for trout, salmon, bass, steelhead and saltwater fish. They're taught to read a stream to identify where the fish live and to wade without disturbing the fish or tripping and falling in.

Students begin by casting on two

Orvis-property ponds. Then they graduate to the banks of the Battellkill River, one of Vermont's best-known trout streams.

"I look out at those ponds when a new class is there, and I see people barely able to get their line out," Truax says. "After a couple of days there's 20 lines laying out there the way they were meant to."

Classes are no larger than 30 students. The ratio of students to instructors is four to one.

"About 25 percent of our students are women," Truax says.

"And we recently ran two classes just for kids age 11 and up. They were both filled."

The tuition is \$300 per person. This includes two and a half days of instruction, a three-day Vermont fishing license, daily lunch at the famed Equinox Hotel in Manchester and use of Orvis equipment. Transportation and lodging are extra.

Students can stay at the Equinox for approximately \$100 per night (double occupancy) or can be accommodated at local inns or motels for about \$50 a night and up.

And now for the big question:

■ 'When you're finished you should be able to fish a stream on your own — tie knots, make a decision about which fly to use and cast your line with a certain amount of skill.'

Doug Truax
spokesman for Orvis

Can this sport really be taught?

"When you're finished you should be able to fish a stream on your own — tie knots, make a decision about which fly to use and cast your line with a certain amount of skill," says Truax.

"But it will take you a lifetime to refine that skill. That's the nature of the sport."

The Orvis Fly Fishing School is also offered by selected dealers in the following states, with variations on the basic program to suit each locale: California, Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

For more information on specific programs contact Orvis, Manchester, Vt. 05254 or call (800) 221-2763. For a free copy of Orvis' latest fishing catalog call (800) 548-9540.

L.L. Bean, also a major New England purveyor of outdoor gear, offers fly-fishing instruction near its home base of Freeport, Maine.

Bean's Introductory Fly Fishing Skills is a full three-day course held on selected weekends.

A \$385 per-person fee includes instruction, use of equipment and daily lunches. Accommodations can be arranged at nearby inns or hotels.

For further information contact L.L. Bean, Outdoor Discovery Program, Freeport, Maine 04035 or call (800) 341-4341, ext. 3100. For a free copy of L.L. Bean's Fly Fishing 1992 catalog call (800) 221-4221.



PHOTO COURTESY OF L.L. BEAN

Schools of fishing: It is possible to teach the sport of fly-fishing, even to adventurers who had bad luck when they tried it on their own.