



The Ottawa Citizen (Ottawa, ON)

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# Stay aloft

The first of a new global brand of **hotel** opens at Montreal's airport

BY LAURA ROBIN

A new **hotel** that opened this week marks not just a place to stay before your early-morning flight from Montreal, but a whole new brand of **hotel**. "We're so excited, it's absolutely gorgeous," Cynthia Bond, a spokesperson for **Starwood Hotels and Resorts**, said Thursday.

**Starwood** (the company that owns Sheraton, **Westin**, **Le Meridien**, **W** and other **hotel** brands) unveiled aloft, a 136-room **hotel**, at Montreal's Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport at Dorval, just in time for the Grand Prix this weekend. Reservations are already being taken for aloft **hotels** at five more locations, including Lexington, Massachusetts and at airports in Philadelphia and Charleston, South Carolina. **Aloft hotels** are also to open soon in Toronto, Laval, Chicago (at O'Hare Airport), Beijing and Las Vegas.

"The aloft brand has already announced more than 80 development projects, in more than 10 countries," said Bond. **Starwood** plans to have as many 500 aloft **hotels** around the world by 2012.

About half of the new **hotels** will be built at airports "because that's a market that has always been neglected in most cities," says Stéphane Jasmin, general manager of the new Montreal **hotel**. "There's never anything trendy at the airport; you always have to go downtown."

**Starwood** hopes to set the aloft brand apart from regular — often dreary — airport hotels with high design at low cost.

"It's the new twist in travel," said Jasmin. "If you know **W** hotels, you know the sense of style,

but this is more affordable and less complicated."

The aloft at the Montreal airport, for example, has a lounge area where you can get a drink and appetizers, but there's no sit-down restaurant. At a food-and-beverage area called re:fuel, you can buy snacks and drinks, including Starbucks coffee, to go, 24 hours a day.

"Public spaces are designed to draw guests from their rooms to socialize and make friends,"

says Bond. "Guests can read the paper, work on their laptops via **hotel**-wide wireless Internet access, play a game of pool or grab a drink with friends at the communal lobby area called re:mix and in the hip bar **W xyz**."

She says the **hotel** "offers a total sensory experience, with guest rooms featuring loft-like nine-foot ceilings and oversized windows, creating a bright, airy environment." Beds are plush and platform style and the showers are walk-in models. Toiletries are from Bliss.

In addition to wireless Internet access, **hotel** rooms have something **Starwood** is calling plug & play: you can plug your electronic devices such as iPods, cellphones, BlackBerry and laptops into a flat-screen high-definition TV, to use the larger screen or to recharge your devices. You can also select your room and print out boarding passes at kiosks in the lobby.

The **hotel** also has a fitness centre, called re:charge, and a swimming pool.

"They will give travellers options to de-stress and re-energize," says Bond.

The **hotel** offers a free shuttle to the airport and Dorval train station. "It takes like five minutes," says Jasmin. "Not even that — two and a half."

Arriving from Ottawa, you can also take advantage of a storage room for winter coats and boots, Park n' Fly packages and a do-it-yourself car wash with free eco-friendly supplies.





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### if you go ...

**Where:** 500 McMillan Blvd., at Montreal's Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport, in Dorval

**Cost:** Opening promotional rates start at \$109 on weekends, but the regular rate is set at \$219

**Contacts:** 1-877-go-aloft or 1-514-633-0900 or [www.alofthotels.com](http://www.alofthotels.com)



BRUCE BUCK, STARWOOD HOTELS

The lobby of the new aloft hotel is called re:mix and is designed to get guests to mingle.