



PIERRE OBENDRAUF THE GAZETTE

Hugo Gervais enjoys one of seven Quebec-brewed beers available on tap at Vices and Versa, which specializes in local fare.

T'CHA DUNLEVY
THE GAZETTE

Club: Vices & Versa, Bistro du Terroir

Address: 6631 St. Laurent Blvd. (corner St. Zotique)

Phone: (514) 272-2498

Web: www.vicesetversa.com

Hours: Sunday to Wednesday, 3 p.m. to 1 a.m. Thursday to Saturday, 3 p.m. to 3 a.m.

Opened: Feb. 5, 2004 by friends Sébastien Gagnon and Nathalie Magny.

Capacity: 75, plus outdoor patio which seats 40 in summer.

Ambience: Relaxed, open, arty pub atmosphere. Place for conversation and tasting Quebec-made beers, wines, cheeses and meats.

The place stands out on the rundown strip between the train tracks at Van Horne and Little Italy, which starts at St. Zotique.

"Finding the space took time," said Gagnon. "We wanted something in Little Italy, near Jean-Talon market. There's nothing up here, but there are a lot of young people moving in. It's cheaper than the Plateau and Mile End.

"From the beginning, customers thanked us, and said it

was cool to have something like this in the neighbourhood."

Background: Gagnon made the business proposal with a teacher while studying business management at Université de Québec à Trois Rivières.

He took care of the business side of things while Magny, who worked a stint at Laurier St. brew pub Dieu du Ciel, took care of product research and selection.

"We complement each other well," Gagnon said.

Beer: A choice of seven beers on tap, all produced by Quebec city brewery co-op La Barberie. Three beers - the Mistigris, Barbe Rousse and Blanche Miel de Bleuets - are always on the menu and are exclusive in the Montreal area. The other four change every week or two.

"La Barberie has 100-150 recipes which they rotate over the year. We always have a fruit beer, a stout, a bitter, a blond, a red and a strong beer available,"

Gagnon said.

"McAuslan and Boréale are great, but they're everywhere. We can't offer our own beer yet, but we can offer interesting, Quebec-produced beers that are fun to taste."

Wines: Also all made in Quebec, including two reds, two whites, three fortified, porto-style wines, three hydromel (honey-based) wines and three cidres (2 bottled and one on tap), plus mistelles (strawberry wines).

Snacks: An array of Quebec-made cheeses and sausages, which Gagnon recommends highly as accompaniment to the beers, and pâtés.

Also sandwiches, salads, pizzas, and nachos.

Desserts: Ice cream, truffles and sorbet, with or without alcohol, raspberry cream or chocolate.

Taste test: Curious patrons can try the beer carousel - six four-ounce glasses for \$7.50. Cheese platters offer three to seven choices ("vices") for \$8.25-\$12.25.

Sausage plate for \$7.75.

Decor: Wood tables (commissioned) and chairs. Wood bar and shelves handmade by owners and friends. Entire room was renovated and restored over four months, beginning last October.

"This was the sales office for the condos in the church at the corner (of St. Zotique)," Gagnon said. "We saw the potential, the structure, the molded tiles in the ceiling, the old windows. It's all cachet that makes it a warm space."

Art on walls, by local artists, changes every three weeks.

Photos at front of bar showing renovation process.

Special nights: Traditional music nights, the first Saturday of each month, beginning at 9 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5.

Soirées contes et légendes, the first Monday of each month, beginning at 9 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5.

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NIGHTCLUB

Located on a rundown stretch of St. Laurent Blvd. just south of Little Italy, Vices & Versa brings an arty-pub ambience to an up-and-coming neighbourhood

A taste of Quebec

THE
NUTCRACKER