

***Heated Rivalry*: Tourisme Montréal highlights impact on the city's appeal**

Montréal, February 9, 2026 – Tourisme Montréal is delighted to see that the television series *Heated Rivalry* is elevating Montréal's profile as an inclusive, sports-focused and emotionally engaging destination. While its direct tourism impacts cannot be quantified in the short term, the series, which features a Canadian player with the Montréal Métros, is already creating strong momentum that enhances the city's medium-term appeal as a destination.

"In tourism, the impact of cultural productions is rarely felt in real time. Their influence builds over the long term, shaping visitors' perceptions, affinities, and imagination. In the case of *Heated Rivalry*, we are seeing a particularly strong image effect that reinforces Montréal's positioning as a vibrant and dynamic city," said Yves Lalumière, president and chief executive officer of Tourisme Montréal.

On social media, the *Heated Rivalry* effect is clearly being felt. Tourisme Montréal is seeing a growing number of videos and posts from people saying they want to visit Montréal after watching the series.

In one scene, actress Sophie Nélisse wears a St-Viateur Bagel sweatshirt, a subtle but evocative nod to an iconic Mile End business, which has helped spark increased interest in the brand since the series aired. Even without comprehensive data, tangible signals are beginning to emerge.

"We have never sold as much branded merchandise as we have since our products appeared in the series, both in store and through our online platform. Before, most customers came in mainly for bagels, but many now arrive specifically to pick up the show's T-shirt. And the reverse is also true: some who had no plans to buy bagels are stopping by solely to get the shirt. We are also seeing a strong uptick in customers from Ontario," said Benjamin Choquette, marketing manager at St-Viateur Bagel.

Montréal as a vibrant setting

Heated Rivalry serves as a powerful cultural showcase for Montréal, highlighting several defining elements of the city:

- An authentic and eclectic food and nightlife scene, shaped by trendy bars and clubs, intimate restaurants, and spaces that encourage genuine connection;
- A legendary hockey culture, which lends depth and credibility to the characters' athletic journeys in a city already iconic for the sport;
- A well-established openness to LGBTQ+ communities, woven into the storyline with sensitivity and emotion.

The series does not rely on iconic landmarks but instead showcases lived-in spaces where intense moments unfold, offering a richly authentic take on the Montréal experience.

About Tourisme Montréal

Tourisme Montréal is a 100-year-old private, non-profit organization that works to position Montréal as an international-calibre leisure and business travel destination. To this end, the organization is piloting innovative hospitality strategies with a two-fold objective: ensuring that visitors enjoy a memorable experience and maximizing tourism economic spin-offs in a sustainable way with long-term impacts for the city. Uniting more than 1,000 businesses and organizations working directly or indirectly in tourism, Tourisme Montréal plays a leading role in the management and development of Montréal's tourism business, and makes recommendations on issues surrounding the city's economic, urban and cultural development. For more information, go to www.mtl.org.

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