

THE PARTY OF THE YEAR AT THE FMG

September ————— 20
5th ————— 22

Gatineau - Huge, smiling crowds packed the FMG festival grounds on each of the five days of the event. The 35th edition of the Festival stood out with its large number of spectators on the first night, an unexpectedly high attendance on Sunday night and the busiest Monday in several years.

The turnout of 135,000 attendees is very satisfactory and even beyond our expectations in the current context of recovery. For this edition, we can estimate that we will be able to match our 2019 economic impact for our region, and this with significantly less financial resources. The Festival also served as a reunion for many out-of-town visitors. While the RV Park was fully booked, tourists were numerous on the site. Eighteen percent of festivalgoers came from outside Quebec, mostly from Ontario, and took the opportunity to discover the region during their visit to the FMG.

The festivities kicked off on the Casino Lac-Leamy Stage with a one of a kind show at the FMG by Les Trois Accords to celebrate the 10th anniversary of their album *J'aime ta grand-mère*. Koriass & Souldia and Wyclef Jean, both offering powerful performances for an ecstatic audience, crowned the closing night of the Festival. The late afternoon and early evening shows on the Hydro-Québec stage were also impressively well attended, notably those by Guylaine Tanguay and Annie Villeneuve and her guests. Regional artists gave amazing performances, as they were an important part of the program.

For this 35th edition, no less than one hundred activities and shows for all generations were presented during the Labour Day weekend. In particular, family activities were back in full force at the Parc de la Baie in the afternoons. The Desjardins Family Zone activities, including the new pedal boat zone, as well as the Amusement Park, were very popular with young and old alike. Among the new activities, Gatineau Pro Wrestling presented a huge wrestling gala. Festival spokesperson Patrice Bélanger even joined in the battle royale in front of a large and enthusiastic crowd!

The hot air balloon, an emblematic element of the Festival, was celebrated every day, as part of the stage programming and activities offered on site. Whether it was through the 3 flights that took place from Thursday to Monday or the Night Glow, festival-goers had the opportunity to discover or re-acquaint themselves with hot-air balloons. The pilots were happy to share their passion by answering questions from people curious about hot-air balloons or by allowing several families to fly a few metres above the ground on board a hot-air balloon during the captive flights. The end of each evening was also punctuated by fireworks, much to the delight of festivalgoers!

It was also a reunion for nearly 1,000 volunteers who joined forces with dozens of partners and suppliers to deliver this edition of the FMG. "At the outset, we had conservative expectations as to the number of visitors, not knowing the context in which the event would take place. We were pleasantly surprised and our expectations have been surpassed. We can feel how much people wanted to come and party with us. The public had stars in their eyes and many stopped to thank the volunteers. This enthusiasm was also felt during the storm on Saturday evening which forced the evacuation of the site. More than 10,000 people returned to listen to the comedy gala and enjoy the lively music offered by Salebarbes. It

was simply phenomenal! I tip my hat to the resilience of our festivalgoers and our passionate team," concludes the event's Executive Director, Sandra Cloutier.

It's already time to say see you next year for the 36th edition of the Gatineau Hot Air Balloon Festival presented by Loto-Québec in collaboration with Desjardins, which will take place from August 31st to September 4th 2023!

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Source: FMG

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