

'Glamping' Tolkien-Style in a forest hideaway

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE OCTOBER 20, 2011



The new cabin is Le Troglo, inspired by *The Hobbit*. Each of the cabins is rustic and luxurious at the same time.

Photograph by: Entre Cimes et Racines, Entre Cimes et Racines

The spirit of J.R.R. Tolkien and his 1930s novel *The Hobbit* lives on at an innovative lodging domain, Entre Cimes et Racines.

It is a domain of rustic four-season cabins, each tucked into its own clearing in the forest, on the outskirts of Eastman in the Eastern Townships.

Oh, it's not a Tolkien-esque enchanted ring or a wooded copse alive with dancing elves. The magic here is created by the "lords" of Entre Cimes et Racines, the remarkable, creative team of the Berger brothers, Mario, Michaël and René. The 11 cabins are so whimsical and charming that you almost think Hansel and Gretel or Little Red Riding Hood will step out onto the porch.

The newest cabin is called Le Troglo. Inspired by Tolkien's hobbit dwelling, this little eco-lodge has round doors and circular windows, and it is built under a mound of earth and rocks with a roof of grass and wildflowers that helps it blend into the woods.

The Bergers' father, Bernard, started it all during the 1970s. When his three enterprising and talented sons took over the property nearly 10 years ago, they decided to keep the spirit of the woods and build a vacation getaway.

The accommodations are attractive and comfortable. Even if you think you cannot live without a dishwasher, cable television or modern hotel amenities, you'll probably be very keen to snuggle in and enjoy the simple life. And it's only a short walk to the main reception pavilion where you can have a shower and log on to wireless Internet.

Formally classified by Quebec Tourism as a "vacation centre," it is a country domain of private chalets that has been recognized as the best in the province. Since the chalets have only "dry toilets" and wood-burning stoves for cooking and heating, Entre Cimes et Racines also is a bit like camping. But, factor in the carefully crafted rustic decor and you have "glamp-ing," the outdoorsy trend that blends a soupçon of "glamour" with camping.

Mario, the president of the company, is also the chief lumberjack, carpenter and cabinet-maker. He clears the land and transforms the wood on site, preparing pine, cherry, fir, cedar and maple for cabinetry and construction.

Mario, the president of the company, is also the chief lumberjack, carpenter and cabinet-maker. He clears the land and transforms the wood on site, preparing pine, cherry, fir, cedar and maple for cabinetry and construction.

The results are charming and very high-quality. They're all rustic, yet they have fancy trimmings like slate floors, granite kitchen counters, skylights and broad porches. Michel Paradis, a blacksmith who lives nearby, created wrought-iron chandeliers and ornamental work. The wooden dining tables and chairs, the bevelled kitchen cupboard doors and the window frames, were all handcrafted.

What you are supplied with to cope during your sojourn in the woods is: toilet paper, candles, dishcloths and a map of the estate. The chalets are equipped with ice, drinkable water from a well, logs for the stove and kitchen utensils, right down to wine openers and salad spinners. This is eco-living right from the get-go, and Entre Cimes et Racines follows through with biodegradable hand soap, made with citrus, eucalyptus and olive oil at Savonnerie des Diligences, just down the road in Eastman.

Rochelle@rochellelash.com

IF YOU GO

Eastman is a one-hour, 15-minute drive from Montreal via Highway 10 east to exit 106.

Entre Cimes et Racines: 866-297-0770, 450-297-0770 entrecimesetracines.com, 80 Chemin Simard, Eastman. Guests have to bring food and bedding. Propane stoves are available.

Price: Valid until Jan. 15, \$80-\$125 per night for one or two people; Le Troglo costs \$120 for two. Extra adult pays \$15; children 13 to 18 pay \$8, children 0-12 stay for free. Prices include parking adjacent to each cabin, use of a forest maze and trails for walking or snowshoeing. In summer, bicycles are available. A third night is free except during such holiday periods as June 24 to Labour Day, Dec. 20-Jan. 2 or the Feb.-March school break. Wireless Internet is available at the reception pavilion.

© Copyright (c) The Montreal Gazette