

# Auberge des Gallant fetes its 40th anniversary

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE AUGUST 13, 2012



Auberge des Gallant is marking its 40th year in 2012 with a series of celebrations and special deals for clients, old and new. One is a generous gift certificate for couples who were married there.

**Photograph by:** Auberge des Gallant, Auberge des Gallant

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Auberge des Gallant wants to share.

The revered inn hidden in the forests of Mont Rigaud is planning a year of special events to mark its 40th anniversary in 2012, including a Facebook album that will cover decades of celebrations, and gift certificates for couples who got married there. Gallant also will organize a monthly draw for coveted tickets to five Canadiens' hockey games at the Bell Centre. There are no strings attached or expenses involved. You can register in person on your next visit to the inn or online at [gallant.ca](http://gallant.ca), or at [Facebook.com/auberge](https://www.facebook.com/auberge)

[desgallant](https://www.facebook.com/auberge). Winners will be announced on the first of every month on Facebook.

Tucked deep into the woods with deer feeding outside, Auberge des Gallant has perfected romance. Chef Gérard Gallant founded the auberge in 1972, a bold venture, because the remote roads were barely passable in winter. His wife, Linda, joined him 10 years later to run the lodging and the marketing. It became even more of a family affair when their son, Neil, became the executive chef and his wife, Sonia Fréchette, opened Spa Gallant.

As always, the inn also is known for fine dining: leisurely lunches and dinners in the countryside, sociable Sunday brunches and, in late winter, its cabane à sucre feasts.

To mark its 40th anniversary, it will present an evening table d'hôte pegged at \$40, starting in December and running through 2012.

The regular dinner menu changes with the seasons. The current post-harvest choices are butternut squash risotto, roasted vegetables, guinea fowl and rack of lamb as well as house specialties like duck foie gras and smoked salmon. In sugaring-off season, there will be maple-glazed salmon, braised beef with a soupçon of maple and maple-flavoured crème brûlée.

In autumn, the apple is king and Neil prepares salad with apple vinaigrette, pork with apple and ginger sauce and a tart of mascarpone cheese with apples.

"I don't have a name for my cuisine," said Neil. "It has French and Italian references and I concentrate on regional produce. It is what cooking is today – to me, we have a good, local kitchen."

What Neil is doing with food that is sourced locally, maitre d'hôtel Mario Ménard and sommelier Tomas Le Guilly are doing with wines and spirits. The house cocktails are made with Quebec-

produced maple, apple and raspberry liqueurs and such potent potables as Sortilège, a maple-flavour whisky made in Montreal, and Pur vodka, which is distilled in Rougemont at the Cidrerie Michel Jodoin.

Auberge des Gallant is surrounded by its own maple forests, and with 10,000 tree taps, maple is a big part of the business. At the Sucrierie des Gallant, the private-label syrup and candy are for sale, and in late winter, the inn's cabane à sucre will serve traditional sugar-shack fare, including maple-glazed ham, pea soup, tourtière, meatball stew and sugar pie. All that calls for a maple-spiked beer from the Ferme Brasserie Schoune in St. Polycarpe, which is just down the road.

Even Spa Gallant uses food-based treatments, massaging and scrubbing with chocolate, wine and maple syrup, whose properties are said to be soothing for mind and body. The Délice Musquée is a body treatment that uses extracts of squash, tomato, artichokes and beets to nourish the skin.

For its 40th, the inn is planning to reward couples who have held their wedding reception there, offering a gift certificate of \$10 for every year of marriage, with a minimum of \$50. That is a very generous offer, considering that Gallant has been the host of up to 100 weddings a year and Linda herself has presided over nearly 2,500. So, if you tied the knot at Auberge des Gallant eight years ago, you will have \$80 of celebratory cash to spend on a guest room, at the spa, in the dining room or at the bar. If your wedded bliss has lasted 25 years, your silver anniversary Gallant gift will be \$250.

What if the formerly happy Gallant-wed couple is divorced?

"The deal isn't valid if you have split up, so it's a bonus if our couples have stayed married." says Linda. "And you have to bring us a photo of your reception or the invitation so that we can determine that it took place here. Then we'll create an album on Facebook of the photos through the years."

Gallant has grown to 26 guest rooms. The ones in back of the hotel with the forest view and

traditional decor are the favourites, but I liked the front rooms which have been newly renovated with modern decor. It's true they have a view of the parking lot below, but just beyond is Gallant's pond, the forest and the fields of the valley of Mont Rigaud.

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## **If You Go**

Ste. Marthe and Rigaud are a one-hour drive from Montreal via Highway 40 west and exit 17 to Highway 201 south.

Auberge des Gallant: 800- 641-4241, [gallant.ca](http://gallant.ca); 1171 Chemin St. Henri, Ste. Marthe. Closed Jan. 2-12. Dining room is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner daily; Spa Gallant's five treatment rooms are open daily; reservations are required.

Price: Three categories of rooms, all include wireless Internet, access to sauna, exercise rooms, outdoor hot tub and walking trails. In summer, there is a heated pool. A one-night package, Sun.-Fri., with breakfast and dinner, ranges from \$250 for two (semi-basement, renovated room with whirlpool tub) up to \$290 (whirlpool bath, fireplace, balcony). On Saturday, that's \$300-340, including dinner and Sunday brunch. Without a package, Sunday brunch costs \$25.95 p.p.

Other packages: New Year's Eve with live entertainment, Christmas with all the trimmings and inn-to-inn hiking or skiing on a six-kilometre trail to Le Point de Vue B&B in Rigaud. The Galloping Gourmet features wine cellar tours and tasting menus.

Sucrerie des Gallant: Wed.-Sun., Feb. 25-April 30; \$18-25 for adults, \$7.50-15 for children. Reservations required.

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