

# Small spa near St. Jerome is tranquil and secluded

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE JANUARY 27, 2012 1:06 PM



Well off the beaten path outside of St. Jérôme, Spa St. Andrews is a pretty stucco manor house nestled in the woods and rolling hills of the Lower Laurentians. It offers two exceptional guest suites.

**Photograph by:** Spa St. Andrews, Spa St. Andrews

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Spa St. Andrews reopened recently with a splashy cocktail party and a new direction under the ownership of Julie Radicioni, who has plans to expand the tiny, attractive getaway into a wellness centre.

Well off the beaten path outside of St. Jérôme, Spa St. Andrews is a pretty stucco manor house nestled in the woods and rolling hills of the Lower Laurentians. It's tranquil and secluded; its neighbours are horse ranches and farms. When you leave the sprawl of shopping centres and parking lots around Highway 15, you drive about 10 minutes west and turn right at a sheep fold. It's a much prettier world.

For now, St. Andrews has two exceptional guest suites, a dining room, walking trails through the woods and a spa with four treatment rooms, a small cluster of hot and cold baths on an outdoor deck and a locker room where day clients can shower and change.

All patrons – day spa-goers or overnight guests – can roam in their bathrobes, so you might see someone sipping green tea in the relaxation lounge or having a glass of cabernet beside the fireplace

in the living room. Public spaces are snug, with such typical spa characteristics as subdued lighting, perfumed aromas and a generally quiet air.

“Some spas have grown so big, crowding 50 people in a hot tub,” said Radicioni. “We want to stay intimate, with no more than 20 people on site at one time. Our guests say they love that peacefulness and privacy.”

Everyone’s favourite spa treatment is a massage, so Radicioni developed rubdowns tailored to meet everyone’s needs – stressed-out city folk, pregnant women, men and couples who want to share some quiet time. With about 25 treatments on the roster, you also can be scrubbed and smoothed with body masks made from green tea, algae, vanilla, cacao or ice cider, which have skin-care properties that are said to work on anti-aging, smoothing, hydrating or firming.

St. Andrews’s spa signature service is called Le Monde de Bacchus and involves both work on the body and the face with potions made with the essence of Pinot Noir grapes, also valued for their anti-oxidants and rejuvenating action. You’ll start with a “satinage,” or exfoliation, and follow with a light hot-oil massage and mask.

St. Andrews’s decor mixes the styles of a country lodge with a dash of contemporary chic. The living room is a cosy collection of chocolate-coloured leather sofas set around a warm stone-framed fireplace. The dining room has a formal, modern look with its all-white tables and fresh flowers, but it is countrified with knotty pine window frames and leafy landscapes by region artist François Lacas.

The most distinctive part of St. Andrews is its accommodations. It has two overnight suites that are deluxe hideaways meant for lounging, making love or simply private time.

“We wanted a ‘wow’ effect,” said Julie, “so we went for dramatic decor and lots of extras.”

The Camillia Suite’s king-sized bed is set imperially on a platform and swathed in fresh white cotton pique. There is a small salon with a plasma television, a private chamber especially for couples’ massages and a double tub equipped with air jets. The more spacious St. Andrews Suite adds such Zen-style touches as a soaking tub set in a tiny garden of rocks and tiny pots of grass plants.

In the spring, Radicioni plans to introduce Ayurvedic treatments, yoga, meditation and life-coaching as she broadens St. Andrews into a wellness centre where patrons can improve their lifestyles.

Radicioni also owns Inovacure Brand, a line of high-protein food products and nutritional supplements which are geared toward weight loss. They’re for sale at the spa boutique and part of a new weight-loss program that costs \$999 per person, for three nights and days with lodging, meals and diet and wellness activities. St. Andrews plans to expand its lodging with eight more suites in an annex. For now, the spa directs guests to a nearby Super 8 hotel.

Dieting aside, Spa St. Andrews serves lunch and dinner for both day and overnight guests. It would be impractical to have a permanent chef for an inn of only two rooms, so gourmet caterer Bernard Minguy has stepped in with fancy prepared dishes that are finished on the spot by a spa staffer. The menu features starters such as crab cakes or duck spring rolls and main courses including duck confit, osso bucco, grilled salmon or rack of lamb.

Minguy also has a gourmet shop in St. Sauveur des Monts where he sells cooked dishes, cheeses, chocolates, ice-creams, sorbets and such delicacies as foie gras and smoked salmon. He also has a special section with privately imported wine, especially from Spain, and accessories.

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## **IF YOU GO**

St. Jérôme is a 45-minute drive from downtown Montreal. Take Highway 15 north to the exit for Boul. de la Salette W., and then right on Chemin St. Camille.

Spa St. Andrews: 450-431-7443, [spastandrews.com](http://spastandrews.com); 1331 rue St. Camille, St. Jérôme. Open for lodging, spa baths, treatments, lunch and dinner, Mon.-Sun.

Price: Suites cost \$250-\$285 per night for two on Fri.-Sun. or \$230-\$250 on Mon.-Thurs., per night, including continental breakfast and access to baths and sauna, but not spa treatments. Dinner, four courses, \$60 p.p. Spa baths (without treatment or lodging), \$40-\$45. Valentine Packages (Feb. 10-14): \$260 for two, without lodging, but with couple's massage, baths, dinner and extras. Add lodging, continental breakfast and one Pinot Noir facial, \$520 for two.

Sample spa treatments (incl. baths): Swedish massage, \$110; paraffin hand treatment, \$25; Le Monde de Bacchus vino-therapy, \$155-\$225.

Chez Bernard: 450-240-0000, [chezbernard.com](http://chezbernard.com); 407 rue Principale, St. Sauveur des Monts. Open Mon-Sun.

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