

Country Roads: Ways to thank mom, dad on their special days

A quiet getaway is the perfect present for your parents

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE APRIL 30, 2013 2:51 PM



Paradox Lodge in Lake Placid, N.Y., specializes in fine French cuisine and Adirondack-style lodging.

Photograph by: Jake Sporn Photography

Whether you are thanking mom, dad, wife, husband or partner, nothing's too good for Mother's Day (May 12) and Father's Day (June 16).

You might get deeply inspired to thank Mom for those first nine months, for the years of laundry and cooking, and Dad for the keys to the car, coaching your hockey slap shot or that leg up in business. Of course, it might have been the other way around with mom suiting up to go to the office and dad doing the domestic thing. Either way, here are some gift ideas along country roads.

Paradox Lodge in Lake Placid, N.Y., has fashioned indulgent getaways with fine French cuisine and spa treatments, plus the attractions of outdoor life on the lake and in the Adirondack Mountains, as well as shopping, shopping, shopping.

Paradox Lodge is so-named because it's on Paradox Bay, an inlet of Lake Placid, where currents sometimes flow two ways at the same time, depending on the water levels.

Now, wasn't that simple? And there I was, always thinking that the inn got its handle because of its two facets. Its decor is steeped in New York State's Adirondack style, with artisanal furniture fashioned of bark, branches and tree trunks. But its cuisine is très français, featuring classics like escargots Provençale, foie gras, duck confit, veal with morels, cognac and cream and filet mignon au poivre, magret of duck with flageolets or pasta with lobster, shrimp and Andouille sausage.

Moses "Red" LaFontaine, an accomplished chef with a passion for French cooking, and his wife, Nan, run the inn. Guests have a choice of four folksy rooms in the original century-old Paradox Lodge or four deluxe suites in the newer, adjacent Cedar Lodge. Either way, you'll sleep well on feather beds covered in flannel sheets and heavy comforters.

For their Mother's and Father's Day Weekend Packages, the LaFontaines are incorporating a gift, bubbly and spa life. They have partnered with Healing Elements, a massage clinic that specializes in therapeutic treatments and acupuncture.

Healing Elements has an impressive roster of services, including a few techniques that are new to me. I know about Swedish, deep-tissue, sports massages and more. But owner Gretchen Lansing also explained the fine points of cupping, an ancient Eastern technique that "vacuums" the skin and underlying tissues, sucking upward instead of pressing down, as most massages do. This relieves muscle tension, increases blood flow and eliminates toxins such as lactic acid. In another exotic treatment, guasha releases tight fascia (connective tissue) and scar tissue using the force of porcelain spoons from China.

Spa Eastman in the Eastern Townships also takes wellness seriously, offering inventive programs and progressive lifestyle suggestions.

Eastman's director, Jocelyna Dubuc, suggests the Mother-Daughter Package, which often becomes a three-generation vacation.

"The camaraderie and bonding are so strong," Dubuc said. "When someone shares massages with a person they love, they take the relationship to a new level. Often it is a discovery for each woman.

"It can cure a lot of things."

The Mother-Daughter getaway includes mostly vegetarian meals, spa services, workshops, activities and access to Eastman-les-Bains, a thermo-therapy complex of pools, hot tubs, steam bath, infra-red and Finnish saunas and a trademarked Kneipp circuit of cold water dips for improving circulation.

If you have only a few hours for a Mother-Daughter spa sojourn, Eastman has a quickie option in downtown Montreal with manicures and facials for the little one plus dual massages and pedicures.

For the haute monde, there is nothing like an extravagant gesture for Mother's and Father's Day. The unique hotels of Relais & Châteaux have created the Silver Lys Gift for one divine night, including gourmet meals with wine and on-site activities.

In Quebec, Silver Lys will be available at all three R & C hotels: La Pinsonnière, a tranquil, hilltop inn in Charlevoix with dramatic views of mountains and the St. Lawrence River; Manoir Hovey, a sociable country getaway with terrace dining, BBQs, pub gatherings, farm and wine tours, cycling and water sports on the shore of Lake Massawippi in the Eastern Townships; and Auberge St-Antoine, a superb boutique hotel with contemporary decor and a mini-museum of Old Quebec artifacts. All three hotels are known for their gastronomy.

Further afield, about half of Relais & Châteaux's 520 properties around the world are ramping up the gift packages with posh pastimes such as spa life, cooking classes and wine tastings. The Diamond Lys Gift involves Champagne and a luxurious suite.

Nothing's too good.

IF YOU GO

Paradox Lodge: 877-743-9078, 518-523-9078; www.paradoxlodge.com; Lake Placid, N.Y.; open to guests 13 and over. Price: including gourmet breakfast, bicycle storage and use of kayaks and canoes: \$145-\$255 for two per night. Dinner (outside of package), \$45-60, Thurs.-Sun. Mother's Day Weekend, May 10-12, & Father's Day Weekend, June 15-17: \$495-\$595, for two, incl. two nights, one dinner, breakfast daily, gift, sparkling wine, spa service at Healing Elements (518-523-7100, www.healingelementslp.com, 1996 Saranac Ave.).

Spa Eastman: 800-665-5272, 450-297-3009, www.spa-eastman.com; Eastman. With lodging, three organic buffet meals daily, workshops and activities, and Eastman-les-Bains, visits start at \$175 p.p., per night, double occ., or \$210 for singles. Spa treatments are extra. Mother-Daughter Package: three all-inclusive days and nights, from \$442 p.p., doub. occ., depending on the room category. Spa Eastman Montreal: Mother-Daughter Package, \$270 for two with minimum age of 3 years; or \$390 for two for children 16 and over: 514-845-8455, 666 Sherbrooke St. W., 16th floor.

Relais & Châteaux: 800-735-2478, www.relaischateaux.com/en/gift-shop; Regular rates for two people without meals start at approx. \$295 at La Pinsonnière (Silver Lys Gift Package from \$645), 800-387-4431, www.lapinsonniere.com (indoor pool, tennis); rates start at \$190 at Manoir Hovey (Silver Lys, \$635), 800-661-2421, www.manoirhovey.com (outdoor pool, tennis); and \$200 at Auberge Saint-Antoine (Silver Lys, \$520), 888-692-2211, www.saint-antoine.com.

Rochelle@rochellelash.com

Twitter: [rochellelash](https://twitter.com/rochellelash)