

Country Roads: Kids are king at Ch eribourg resort in Orford

Features include special menu, club and children's spa

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE JUNE 5, 2013



Ch eribourg is a full-scale vacation village with accommodation built around lawns, gardens and resort facilities.

Photograph by: H tel Ch eribourg / Les H tels Villegia

Kids rule at H tel Ch eribourg in the Eastern Townships.

The resort near Mont Orford has long been a family favourite, and now it is boosting its kid cred with new features, both indoors and outdoors. To start, on arrival, families with youngsters get preferred parking for convenience, and then the real fun begins.

Ch eribourg is a full-scale vacation village with a hotel, chalets and condos built around a sprawl of lawns, summer gardens and resort facilities. It's not new, but the rooms were last renovated in 2010, so they're in good shape. But kids don't care about new curtains and carpets. Here is the real scoop for youngsters.

When Ch eri-Club gets into full swing this summer, children will be greeted with a surprise gift and given membership cards to join organized activities, such as feeding llamas, goats and rabbits at the

new petting zoo, arts and crafts, games of tag or treasure hunts.

Everything is planned according to the weather and the size and ages of the group. Chéri-Club exclusive members — they have to be 18 and under — get discounts on treats like juice drinks and treatments at Le Spa.

Chéribourg's chefs are also on the junior job. They have created a Kids' Discovery Menu that incorporates a few items to tantalize budding gourmets — crab cakes and tandoori salmon — plus familiar fare such as mac 'n' cheese and ribs, and playful dessert concoctions like caramel sundaes with Cracker Jacks.

On the weatherproof front, Chéri-Club's indoor playground and game room is about the size of a school gym and can entertain as many as 50 children at a time. It's open to babies, toddlers and teens, and it's filled with oversized inflatable toys, slides, a climbing apparatus, games, a movie theatre, video games with a giant screen and pool and ping-pong tables. The children can play on their own, but a parent has to be on the sidelines.

"We have one or two monitors who supervise, but it's not full daycare," Chéribourg's manager, Martin Pelletier, said. "At least one parent has to be in the room, particularly for the younger children.

"We do offer babysitting and daycare, but they're not the same thing."

At Le Spa Chéribourg, adults are taken care of in 14 treatment rooms with a wide range of services, such as paraffin dips to soften the hands and feet, air pressure therapy to relieve sore legs, reflexology, body wraps, massages and facials, all using prestigious potions by Laboratoires Payot of France and Éminence Organics from Hungary.

But Le Spa Chéribourg is truly distinctive for its children's services. It has been a pioneer in massages and treatments for youngsters for 10 years and recently added new child-friendly products for ages three and up.

Kids enjoy their spa sojourns in customized rooms done up with bright colours, posters of clowns, balloons and mini-bathrobes. They can choose from a short menu of services for good grooming, skin care and relaxation.

And it's not simply adult spa life pared down in size. The massages are done with specialized products under the label Le Concept Spa Enfants Gom-Mee made by Inspa Cosmétiques in Quebec. The lotions and oils even carry the tagline: "Not allowed for grown-ups." Gom-Mee creams have the faint aroma of bubble gum — a guaranteed crowd-pleaser — and are made with aloe and oatmeal to be extra-sensitive for young skin.

"Parents ask so much of their children that the youngsters are stressed," Doris Bissonette, director of Spa Chéribourg, said. "They have to excel at everything from studies to soccer.

"I find they are suffering from mental stress and physical tension. On the massage table, they get so

relaxed and they are so exhausted, they often fall asleep.”

Le Spa asks that at least one parent stay in the room during a child’s treatment, or join in with tandem massages.

On the lighter side, Chéribourg also does manicures, pedicures and facials for young people.

“When the girls turn 12 or so, they start to need skin care,” Bissonnette said. “It’s a good time to learn helpful habits.”

Chéribourg is one of Les Hôtels Villegia, which also owns Le Manoir des Sables, another resort next door. Chéribourg’s guests may use Manoir des Sables’ pedalos, canoes and kayaks on its small private kid-sized lake.

IF YOU GO

Orford is a one-hour, 15-minute drive from Montreal via Eastern Townships Autoroute 10 to Exit 118 and Route 141 north.

Hôtel Chéribourg: 800-567-6132, www.cheribourg.com, 2603 chemin du Parc, Orford;

Price: Rates include indoor pool, sauna, hot tubs, gym, two tennis courts, bicycles, and in summer, a heated outdoor pool. Chéribourg has more than 10 levels of accommodations, incl. hotel rooms and two-storey suites with fireplaces and whirlpool tubs; bed and breakfast, \$69-\$129, p.p., double occ., per night. Children 17 and under stay for free. Children 13-17 pay full price for meals; 6-12 pay half price, kids under 5 eat for free. Packages available with spa, children’s activities, golf, meals, horseback riding and the waterpark at SkiBromont. Chalets and condos are on site.

Le Spa Chéribourg: 877-868-0101, www.spacheribourg.com. A 60-minute Swedish massage for adults, \$77; Gom-Mee 30-minute massage for children 3-11, \$39; Parent-Child Relaxation Package with lodging, breakfast, dinner and one hour of spa services for each (until May 31): one parent and one child \$295-\$312 (depending on the age); two parents and one child, \$441-\$458; second child, \$76-\$92.

Magog-Orford tourism: 800- 267-2744, www.tourismememphremagog.com.

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