

Chilly at Hôtel de Glace, cosy at Paradox Lodge



ROCHELLE LASH
Checking In

Winter is in full swing, and you have choices: you can embrace the cold and snow, or you can cosy up to the fireplace. Here are two ways to survive the blustery season:

HÔTEL DE GLACE
The amazing Hôtel de Glace is a phenomenon that keeps evolving as it is rebuilt from year to year, transforming the chill of winter into a thrilling adventure. This year, that adventure includes a rockin’ dance party on March 11. Now in its 16th incarnation, Hôtel de Glace is a major tourist attraction that has welcomed 1.25 million visitors and 55,000 overnight guests. There are ice hotels in Japan and Europe, but Hôtel de Glace, located about 15 minutes north of Quebec City, is unique in the Americas. (Montreal had an ice hotel on Parc Jean-Drapeau in 2012-2013, but it didn’t last.)

You really have to see Hôtel de Glace to understand its wonder. Everything — walls, platform beds, furniture, artwork, the new wedding chapel and bars — is crafted of ice and snow by an expert team of architects, designers and artists.

Guests get an orientation session and manual upon arrival that explain how the hotel works. Starting with the essentials, the heated Celsius Pavilion has showers and bathrooms, and Café Celsius serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Inside the all-ice hotel, the temperature ranges from -3 C to -5 C, so you’ll be wearing your parka, boots and mittens everywhere except in bed, and maybe on the dance floor.

But you’ll be toasty when you hit the sack — or slab. The hotel supplies Nordic sleeping bags, so you can sleep in your PJs, and there are mattresses and blankets over the ice-bed platforms. There are touches of luxury: some of the 44 guest rooms have fireplaces that have been customized to burn eco-logs that don’t emit heat, and the honeymoon suite has its own sauna and hot tub.

Hôtel de Glace is so romantic and enchanting that it is hosting around 24 weddings this winter in a new chapel. Many of



The décor theme for 2016 at Hôtel de Glace, near Quebec City, is Rivers. The room shown is inspired by Africa and features an ice sculpture of a hippopotamus and other intricate wall carvings. *PHILIPPE RENAUD*



The cosy Paradox Lodge in Lake Placid, which will host a women’s wellness weekend from March 18 to 20, has hand-carved furniture and a waterfront setting. *SELECT SOTHEBY’S INTERNATIONAL REALTY / ELEANOR LINDA PHOTOGRAPHY*

the brides wear white fur capes for warmth, and the guests are seated on pews of ice.

There’s a lot to do indoors, and out. Kids love the Ice Slide, and the hotel has snowshoe rentals and off-site dogsledding excursions. The new Heineken Bar is the place for ice games and sports

on a large-screen TV. Open to non-guests, the Ice Bar Party on March 11 will feature dancing, a DJ and cocktails blended with Amarula cream liqueur.

And until March 4, spring-break family fun will rule, with ice games, skating, tubing, a sugar shack and face-painting.

PARADOX LODGE
In contrast to Hôtel de Glace, the quirky and cosy Paradox Lodge in Lake Placid, N.Y., radiates warmth and history. The eight-room B&B, built in 1890 and modernized throughout, is a great place to relax by the fireplace or to enjoy the spectacular Adirondack Mountains.

Life at Paradox will take a gentle turn to wellness during the Spring Renewal Women’s Retreat, March 18 to 20. The getaway, organized by Paradox co-owner Nan LaFontaine, is designed to encourage women to bond, de-stress and discover the body’s inner healing power.

Amy Kohanski, a holistic nutritionist, Kripalu yoga instructor and folk herbalist, will lead activities both sociable and solitary, including a 90-minute yoga session, seasonal food and cooking tips and workshops on herbal medicine and Ayurvedic practices.

Participants can self-discover by writing journals, sharing experiences and meditating.

They’ll commune with nature while “forest bathing” — a Japanese-inspired walk in the woods, leading to increased awareness

IF YOU GO

Hôtel de Glace: 877-505-0423, hoteldeglace-canada.com. Open until March 28; visits for non-guests, 10 a.m. to midnight daily, \$14.25-\$18.25 (with discounts for seniors, families and students), including access to bar, chapel and Ice Slide.

Price: Overnight from \$199 p.p., double occupancy; adds Nordic sleeping bag, whirlpools and sauna. Snowshoeing costs \$6. Packages available with weddings, and also with Four Points by Sheraton and Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations.

Paradox Lodge: 518-523-9078; paradoxlodge.com; 2169 Saranac Ave., Lake Placid, New York. Open to guests age 13 and over, unless a family takes the entire inn or dining room.

Price: Spring Renewal Women’s Retreat, US\$395 p.p. (single or double), including two nights with two breakfasts, two dinners, one lunch and activities. Regular rates, including gourmet breakfast, Wi-Fi, summer kayaks and canoes: US\$145 to US\$255. Discounts for Canadians possible in March and April. Dinner: US\$40 to US\$65, without wine, with a reservation for six or more.

of the countryside around Lake Placid.

Paradox Lodge is a very comfortable inn filled with hand-carved twig-and-branch furniture, plush beds and scads of cute collectibles, including old cocktail shakers and vintage photographs.

Co-owner Red LaFontaine is a passionate chef whose French-inspired cuisine will incorporate herbs from Kohanski’s health repertoire.

He does wonders with vegetables, and dinner will be halibut poached in lemongrass and white wine with fennel, ginger, parsley and a lemon-lime sauce; and roasted organic chicken with ginger, turmeric and garlic.

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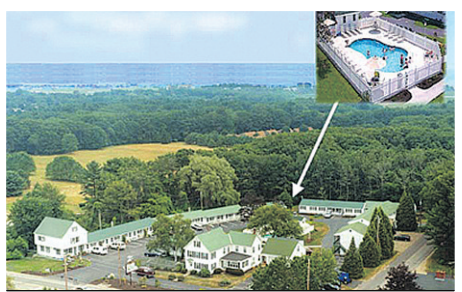
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