



Hôtel Lac Carling is a year-round tranquil escape nestled in the countryside of the lower Laurentians, near Lachute. *HÔTEL LAC CARLING*

HÔTEL LAC CARLING GETS BACK INTO SWING OF THINGS

Relaunched picturesque resort features one of Quebec's most distinctive golf courses



ROCHELLE LASH

Hôtel Lac Carling, one of Quebec's most picturesque country resorts, has reopened after a five-year hiatus.

Lac Carling is nestled in the forests and rolling hills of the lower Laurentians, near Lachute. It has an Old World look, complete with a turret, crystal chandeliers and stone fireplaces.

It was a five-star country lodge when it was built about 25 years ago, then slipped to four-star status on Quebec Tourism's rating system, and it has not yet been evaluated since the relaunch.

Blessed with good bones and floor-to-ceiling windows open-

ing onto serene views of nature, Lac Carling has a dining room, a lunch bistro and a sports-style bar, so guests can cocoon without leaving the property.

And the resort is somewhat weatherproof, thanks to indoor features including parking, a small pool and spa on the lower level, and tennis and squash courts.

Above all, Lac Carling is known for its scenic and tricky 18-hole golf course that embodies the rugged Laurentian foothills. The fairways meander down into valleys, along the side of a small mountain, through the woods and near natural lakes.

OLD & NEW

For its relaunch a few months ago, Lac Carling invested about \$6 million in renovations, including some behind-the-scenes upgrades such as a new computer reservations system,

water and waste management system, air-conditioning system and drainage for the golf course.

The resort kept its traditional air with stucco-look walls, wood panelling, wrought iron trim and beige marble.

In the front of the house, Lac Carling updated the dining room with new art and furniture; white tablecloths and a stone fireplace create a sense of romance.

Most of the 100 guest rooms and suites have been renovated (the rest are expected to be by July).

The dark maple furniture stayed, so the look hasn't changed a lot, but there are new bedding, mattresses, curtains and carpets, plus improved lighting and mini-fridges. The ground-floor rooms have patios opening onto Carling's beautiful grounds.

The nine suites are two-storey, family-friendly hideaways with bedrooms upstairs and main floors with kitchenettes, natural fireplaces, whirlpool tubs, two televisions and two bathrooms.

THE SCENE

Lac Carling still is getting its new mojo going, but it already is popular with families on weekends and with corporate groups on weekdays. In summer, it will be a coveted wedding destination.

The hotel holds free activities on holidays, and it's a great destination for a special occasion.

The new-ish Highway 50 makes it an easier drive from Montreal than in the old days, as well as a good meeting place for Ottawa visitors.

Mostly, Hôtel Lac Carling is a relaxing escape because it is secluded and tranquil, deep in the countryside.

FOUR SEASONS

Lac Carling's strength is that it is a year-round destination. The indoor sports facilities are appealing in good weather or bad. The spa has seven treatment rooms, and offers massages, reflexology and acupuncture.

Snowmobiling, snowshoeing, skating and cross-country skiing are the big draws during winter, while golf is the marquee attraction in spring, summer and fall.

Lac Carling Golf is one of Quebec's most distinctive and exacting courses. The narrow mountainside fairways, deep valleys and wicked bunkers will test any player's power, accuracy, stamina and finesse. This scenic

IF YOU GO

Hôtel Lac Carling, in Grenville-sur-la-Rouge, is approximately 80 minutes from Montreal via Highway 15 north, Highway 50 west and Route 327 north. From the West Island, take Highway 40 west and Route 17 through Hawkesbury to Routes 34, 344 and 327.

Hôtel Lac Carling: 844-922-7546, 450-533-5468, hotel-laccarling.com. Pet-friendly, \$35 per visit.

Price: Prices fluctuate. Four categories of rooms and suites, until Oct. 9, start at \$99, \$109, \$129 and \$149 per person, double occupancy, without meals, but including in-room coffee, Wi-Fi, indoor parking, and sports complex with tennis, squash, gym, indoor pool, whirlpool, children's activities (holidays).

Extra: yoga, \$15; spa treatments; and on the lake, pedal boats, kayaks canoes, \$8 an hour. Sunday brunch buffet (without a meal package): approximately \$24.99, half-price for children 6 to 12; free for 5 and under.

Lac Carling Golf: 844-522-7546, 450-533-5333. May 7-Oct. 30, weather permitting. Greens fees (including mandatory cart) until June 11: \$39 on weekdays (except holidays), \$45 on weekends. From June 12-closing: \$48/\$55. September: \$28. Discounts apply after 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., and on ladies' day, seniors' day and for juniors.

Laurentian regional tourism: 800-561-NORD (6673), laurentides.com.

course is considered an essential experience on any golfer's scorecard. (Note: The course was fully operational during the years that Hôtel Lac Carling was closed, so it is in good shape.)

FOOD & DRINK

A high point is the list of mostly privately imported wines. The table d'hôte, \$45 for three courses and \$49 for four courses, features starters of beef tartare, salmon gravlax, eggplant Parmesan and crab cakes, as well as main dishes such as cod, osso bucco, duck confit, Angus beef tenderloin or veal chops (\$15 extra), followed by fruit, cheese or crème brûlée.

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