



The elegant new Manoir Chamberland in Montebello has lush grounds with a pool and party pavilion. PHOTOS: JORDANN BROWN IMAGING

MONTEBELLO MANOIR OOZES ELEGANCE



ROCHELLE LASH

Manoir Chamberland in Montebello redefines the experience of an inn. This gorgeous new getaway is classy, not cosy, and professional, not homespun.

Opened in July, the Manoir is owned by Dominique Primeau, a gifted interior designer from Vancouver, and his partner, Ross Pattee, an official at the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. They had a near-religious epiphany when they saw this vintage 1937 church presbytery on a visit to Montebello, and immediately imagined its potential for luxe.

After two years of polishing, rebuilding, decorating and landscaping, they have transformed the cleric's sombre house into an exquisite petit bijou with glamour and gastronomy.

A new centrepiece of Montebello, Manoir Chamberland is arguably the best small lodging establishment between Montreal and Ottawa, and it's reserved for guests 18 and over.

The highlights are: eight luxurious, air-conditioned guest rooms with authentic antique decor; stunning new white marble bathrooms; superlative breakfasts prepared by a professional chef; lush grounds with a party pavilion; and a saline swimming pool so big and balmy it might as well be in Hollywood.

Here are some recent Facebook comments:

"Chamberland is elegant and refined."

"The hosts are impeccable and gracious."

Both true.

Restoration: Primeau and Pattee went all out, adding modern conveniences such as air-conditioning, flat-screen TVs and rain showers, as well as restoring intricate wainscoting, carved crown mouldings and fine woodwork.

The hosts have thought of a wide range of comforts: toiletries from Italy, Egyptian cotton bed linens, Nespresso machines and white terry cloth bathrobes and slippers. The bathrooms

have heated marble floors (except where original floors were saved), and some have large soaking tubs and double vanities.

The new Manoir features a curated collection of antique furniture, which includes shimmering chandeliers and family heirlooms. Each room is decorated in a different style, such as Biedermeier, Queen Anne, Sheraton, Art Deco, Louis XVI and Empire, all resplendent in brocades, satins, tapestries, velvets, silks and mohair.

Primeau's work reminds me of a quote by Oscar Wilde, author and esthete: "I have the simplest tastes. I am always satisfied with the best."

Social scene: Manoir Chamberland is generous. You'll have a welcome drink upon arrival and a free mini-bar that includes half-bottles of red and white wines. The hosts love to entertain, so you might luck into an intimate 5 à 7 on a weekend. Pattee will even drive guests along the main street to dinner in his 1982 Rolls-Royce Silver Spur. Now, that's style — and service.

The property is so distinctive that it is already booked for conferences and weddings into 2018. A landscaped lawn and Japanese maples surround the new neo-classical party pavilion. If you are planning nuptials, a gazebo awaits for photos ops and "I do's".

I lucked into a hot, sunny summer day. With the pool, a fountain, high-quality patio furniture, canopied pergolas and sun-brellas, this outdoor scenario is exceptional — both relaxing and ravishing.

Dining in: Manoir Chamberland stands out — once again. It has its own breakfast chef, Veronique Paré, who trained at Montreal's prestigious Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec.

The feast starts with fruit topped with crème anglaise, followed by mini-viennoiseries with chocolate, blueberries and praline. There are options for the main course: omelettes, sweet or savoury crepes or eggs Benedict with potatoes paillasson (grated potato pancakes) and bison-apple sausages. Even Paré's rich dishes seem light and delicate.

In fine weather, breakfast is served on the outdoor deck, overlooking the pool and gardens.



Breakfast is a gourmet affair fit for its fabulous setting.

IF YOU GO

Montebello is a 90-minute drive from Montreal via Highway 40 west to Hawkesbury, Ont., and Route 148 west. Or take Laurentian Highway 15 north to Mirabel and Highway 50 west.

Manoir Chamberland: 819-423-2222, manoirchamberland.com; 545 Notre-Dame St., Montebello. For guests aged 18 and over.

Price: \$275-\$400 for two, including breakfast, welcome drink, heated swimming pool/whirlpool, Wi-Fi, in-room wine/soft drinks/pod coffee. Fitness room will open soon. Prices will dip after Oct. 1. Lunch or dinner available for groups of six or more, with a reservation.

Fairmont Le Château Montebello: 819-423-6341, 800-441-1414; fairmont.com/montebello; 392 Notre-Dame St., Montebello.
Outaouais Tourism: 800-265-7822, 819-778-2222, outaouaistourism.ca

Dining out: Another vintage treasure, Fairmont Le Château Montebello has been the biggest deal in town since ... well, as long as anyone can remember. It is a fitting dinner match for Manoir Chamberland. In summer, there is a choice of indoor or outdoor dining, with all the frills.

The casual family-friendly barbecue, the most popular dinner choice in summer, is a buffet cookout on the picturesque terrace facing the Ottawa River. Chefs at the open grills cook a wide variety of meat and fish — plus, you can help yourself at a salad bar, cheese table and dessert spread (\$58 for adults, half-price for children six to 12 and free for five and under).

For personal service and a more formal style, Fairmont's Aux Chantignoles is a fine-dining spot with delectable three- and four-course menus and all the Montebello history and ambience you can imagine (\$58/\$68; discounts as above for kids).

The menu features lots of terroir dishes, such as smugger duck tartare, foie gras, rillettes of seafood and Quebec cheeses, as well as sweetbreads, Arctic char, venison, rack of lamb, beef tenderloin with wild mushrooms and pork chops with a local cheese called Tête à Papineau.

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