

CHECKING IN

LA CACHE RESORT
ADDS PANACHE ON
LAKE CHAMPLAIN



ROCHELLE LASH

The new all-suite La Cache du Lac Champlain resort is part of an exciting tourism revival in Venise-en-Québec, a waterfront leisure community south of Montreal.

Open since August, La Cache is built on the picturesque shore of the northern tip of Lake Champlain, not far from the U.S. border. Venise-en-Québec has been a popular summer destination since the 1950s for beach, beer and family life, but La Cache is adding panache and an upscale swing.

La Cache is a stylish but affordable getaway. A dynamic young chef, Christopher Groleau, is cooking terrific bistro and banquet cuisine. In summer, guests enjoy lake sports and golf right outside the door. And year-round prospects include spa life, winter adventures, conferences and photo-worthy weddings. The views also are star attractions, either of Lake Champlain with Mont Sutton in the distance, or the golf course and its foliage.

La Cache is close enough to Montreal for a day trip and appealing enough for a visit of a few days.

The look: La Cache's interior design is pure, practical and polished.

Anne Paquet Design of Quebec City has crafted an airy, fresh look in soft tones of vanilla and sand with lots of natural light.

The lobby is a striking vision with white brick walls and a water-inspired mural, a long modern fireplace and a stunning white epoxy floor. Moving into the hotel, the bistro has a sensual air, with blue suede seating against charcoal walls.

The suites all have glass-front balconies, soothing contemporary decor in white and blond wood. Everything is new-new, so there are handy HDMI plugs and charging outlets.

IF YOU GO

Venise-en-Québec is a 50-minute drive south of Montreal via Highway 10 east to Exit 22.

La Cache du Lac Champlain: 844-683-5999, 450-390-1538, cachelacchamplain.com; 325 Venise Ve. W., Venise-en-Québec.

Price: Rates fluctuate. Best-rate guarantee. Rate include in-room Nespresso and Le Gym access. Opening special on availability until Dec. 31, approximately \$159-\$239, for two, adding welcome cocktail, breakfast and tips on meals. Packages with lake activities, Noah Spa (opening in autumn), Golf du Lac Champlain, and Parc Safari Hemmingford, 34 km away. Pre-paid visits and CAA members get discounts.

Golf du Lac Champlain: 450-244-5932, 800-363-1420; golfacchamplain.com; 323 Venise Ave. W.; \$25-\$57, cart optional.

Le Greg Bistro & Bar: breakfast, lunch, dinner daily. Golf Bistro: sandwiches, beverages.

Noah Spa: noah-spa.com; ranges from \$35 on Thurs., after 5 p.m. to \$60 on Sat.-Sun.; or packaged with lodging.

Tourism: 450-346-4260, venise-en-quebec.ca; Montérégie Tourism: 450-466-4666, tourisme-monteregie.qc.ca; St-Jean-sur-Richelieu/Haut Richelieu: 450-542-9090, 888-781-9999.

The 52 junior suites have flat-screen TVs that flip around to face the salon and the bed. The four executive suites are impressive, spacious hideaways with white leather sofas, gas fireplac-



The Noah Spa at La Cache à Maxime resort uses the Spa Eaunergique water system. LA CACHE À MAXIME

es, two televisions, soaking tubs and tables for six people.

Food/drink: Chef Groleau is only 24 years old and already a graduate of the gastronomic kitchens of Jérôme Ferrer, a Grand Chef of Relais & Châteaux in Montreal. Groleau has imported some of that cutting-edge culinary experience, but he has added his own clever twists on classics, plus artful presentations and perky flavourings.

The bruschetta bursts with cherry tomatoes confit and herbed cheese. The steak tartare is a succulent mound of spiced beef with a poached egg and crunchy "straw potatoes." Fish goes modern with taste treats of tiny croutons of squid ink, corn foam, buttered edamame or crispy chorizo.

Groleau's favourite main courses include beef short ribs, Brome Lake duck, filet mignon and lamb shank, braised for seven hours with thyme and rosemary.

Desserts are divine, from the creamy simplicity of the lemon parfait to the show-stopping display called Ecstasy for Two: a creative crumble of meringue, brownies and berries.

Even breakfast is inspirational, especially for golfers: The Birdie updates eggs Benedict with duck confit; the Ninth Hole is a grilled cheese with prosciutto; and the Lost Ball is a winning French toast with a hint of espresso, caramelized pears and maple.

What to do: Baie de Venise is an inlet of Baie de Missisquoi and both are part of the larger Lake Champlain. On Google Maps, Baie de Venise looks tiny, but it's a vast horseshoe-shaped expanse of brisk winds and



Golf is outside the door at the new La Cache du Lac Champlain in Venise-en-Québec. LA CACHE DU LAC CHAMPLAIN

clear water. There is a small municipal beach, and outfitters organize lake cruises, paddle boarding and kayaking, as well as thrills like kite surfing and sailing.

And golf is right outside the door of La Cache. The hotel took over the 18-hole Golf Mis-sisquoi course, renamed it Golf du Lac Champlain and invested \$250,000 to improve the fair-ways and greens and add a practice green, clubhouse facilities and a 19th-hole lunch spot.

In the region, families can head for Parc Safari Hemmingford, and foodies can check out agro-tourism stops and wineries.

In winter, La Cache will attract outdoors fans for ice fishing,

parasailing and skating on Lake Champlain, as well as ATV and snowmobile excursions.

Noah Spa: La Cache's distinctive year-round indoor feature will be the Noah Spa, opening in autumn.

The signature Spa Eaunergique is a circuit of 14 water basins with massage jets and temperatures ranging from a bracing 10C to a steaming 39C. If you experience all the hot and cold baths, your muscles will feel as melted as if you had had a massage.

If you want to go deeper with hands-on relaxation, Noah Spa will offer beauty and body services.

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Not valid with any other discounts and may not be available on certain week-ends. Rates effective May 1, 2017 to the end of October 2017.

Take Exit 13 off I-89, left on Rt 7/Shelburne Rd. for 1.5 miles.
Same entrance as Holiday Inn Express.