



Tremblant's only French bistro, the new Choux Gras Brasserie Culinaire, boasts a 1930s Parisian air.

# NON-HOTEL VIBE ATTRACTS COOL CROWD OF OUTSIDERS

*Fairmont Tremblant's dining rooms, bars no longer exclusive to the guests*



ROCHELLE LASH

When people ask me what my favourite hotels are, the Fairmont Tremblant is always in my top few, whether we're talking about the rest of Canada or the rest of the world.

It's easy to pin down why. The Fairmont Tremblant delivers exceptional experiences, notably 314 well-appointed rooms and suites, a solicitous staff, an unparalleled pool and spa system and ski-in/ski-out convenience, complete with equipment valet. All that adds up to five stars.

But now, having aced a top hotel rating, the Fairmont is going for a non-hotel vibe.

**NON-HOTEL, YOU ASK?** Yes. Tremblant's largest lodging establishment and a landmark of luxury recently invested \$5.5 million to integrate a "non-hotel" identity.

Dining at Fairmont Tremblant is no longer hotel formal. It is non-hotel cool at the all-new Axe

Bar-Lounge, the bubbly Choux Gras Brasserie Culinaire and the darling Le Comptoir Cuisine du Marché.

"In the past, hotel dining rooms and bars were amenities for guests," said Fairmont Tremblant's general manager, Matthew Blackmore. "The new vision — the non-hotel vision — aims to attract patrons from outside."

"We haven't changed favourite and essential core elements, we have simply added an exciting aspect to food and beverage."

**EAT/DRINK** Tremblant's only French bistro, the new Choux Gras Brasserie Culinaire, has a 1930s Parisian air, with royal blue velvet booths and studded leather chairs. The concept is non-hotel, but the view is all-Fairmont, a lively resort panorama that fans out to the snowy mountains of the Laurentians.

Choux Gras' menu features such bistro classics as charcuterie, croque monsieur, moules marinières, foie gras and potato purée with duck fat (the non-fattening fat, my server said).

Main courses include walleye, duck confit and AAA beef, and among standouts are the surf 'n' turf burger and the shared

30-ounce Tomahawk steak.

The desserts table changes daily, but you might luck into a tarte Tatin or chocolate ganache pie.

The new Axe Bar-Lounge is just off the lobby, and when you enter the hotel, you can feel the energy. The newly redone entrance is lighter and brighter, and you can hear music and the tinkle of cocktails from the other side of the fireplace.

Axe features drinks blended with Quebec spirits like gin by St-Laurent and Pur vodka, plus an après-ski menu of tartares, seafood chowder, oysters, burgers and casual suppers of pan-seared salmon or flank steak.

Also all new, Le Comptoir Cuisine du Marché is a delightful makeover of the Fairmont Tremblant's copious breakfast buffet. The redone space has a fresh kitchen-market look, with white tiled walls and a display of gourmet goodies like olive oils and spices.

The buffet has been streamlined, so it's more elegant, but it still features all the requisites — an omelette station, fresh-from-the-oven baked goods, smoked salmon, charcuterie and fruit.

Le Comptoir also is the new venue for Fairmont's famed Friday night Italian buffet dinner, Saturday surf 'n' turf feast and Sunday brunch.

The Ricochet Café is a Tremblant insiders' place.

It's a ski-in/ski-out spot for

breakfast or lunch with a new choice of vitamin-spiked juices, smoothies, sandwiches, soup, good coffee and pastries.

**WELLNESS NEWS** There's enough going on here to make a full spa-wellness day, in case you're not keen to hit the slopes.

Fairmont Tremblant has introduced free yoga classes at 10.30 a.m. on Saturdays. That's a perfect wellness pairing with the hotel's outstanding spa-pool system — indoor and outdoor swimming pools and hot tubs, heated all year-round, as well as steam baths and a sauna.

You'll be well marinated by the time you get to the new Moment Spa, which has undergone a \$650,000 renovation and now glows with white marble walls and a new fireplace.

The updated spa embraces a mani-pedi salon and 15 treatment rooms where signature services include the Moment Massage, which uses hibiscus oil and forearm techniques.

For men, the new triple-action facial soothes, hydrates and tones sensitive skin.

New Neurospa therapeutic chairs sync gentle electrical pulses to relieve tension with chromo therapy (coloured lights for mood) and new-age music. It's free with a spa treatment.

**TREMBLANT** The lifts are scheduled to roll Nov. 23 and among early-season events are the 24 hours of Tremblant from Dec. 8-10 and the FIS Freestyle Ski World Cup on Jan. 20-21.

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## IF YOU GO

**Fairmont Tremblant:** 819-681-7000; 866-540-4415; [fairmont.com/tremblant](http://fairmont.com/tremblant). Rates fluctuate and are approximate: Rooms and suites start at \$249 in low season (until Dec. 20 and April 2-June 2, 2018), \$399 in high season (Jan. 7-April 1, and June 21-Oct. 31), \$799 in holiday season (Dec. 21-Jan. 6). Rates include indoor/outdoor pools, Wi-Fi in public spaces, game room, yoga class. Fairmont Gold rooms (pre-Christmas to March 31) come with lounge access. President's Club members get free in-room Wi-Fi, Fairmont Fit workout gear by Reebok. Pet-friendly, \$40 per night, per dog.

**The Fairmont Flex Ski Package:** When available, starts at \$459 per night and includes a \$200 credit toward rentals, lessons and/or lifts.

**Moment Spa:** 866-263-7477, 819-681-7680, [momentspa.ca](http://momentspa.ca)

**Tremblant resort/ski:** [tremblant.ca](http://tremblant.ca), 888-738-1777. On-resort hotels, Fairmont included, offer Free First Tracks skiing, snow tubing, skate rentals/rink.

**Extra:** Lift tickets, Alpine touring (\$9.99) and gear, Kids' Club, babysitting, Activity Centre (sleigh rides, dog sledding, ice-climbing, helicopter rides, snowmobiling, snowshoeing.)



The Fairmont Tremblant boasts well-appointed rooms with a cozy Canadiana look. FAIRMONT HOTELS & RESORTS.

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