

HOTEL INTEL

UTTER CALMNESS ON TOP OF THE WORLD

North of Tremblant, 'the woods are wilder, the snowfall is more pure and it's quieter'



ROCHELLE LASH

Imagine a backcountry getaway, just you and Mother Nature. If that sounds like a match made in heaven, Les Toits du Monde in the Upper Laurentians would be your paradise.

Les Toits du Monde (roofs of the world) offers glamping par excellence, a beautiful mix of creativity and the great outdoors. You'll bed down in magical huts like the Hobbit House, an authentic Mongolian yurt or the Enchanted Treehouse, and relax in a snowy, secluded landscape of maples, birches and firs.

"We're 60 kilometres north of Tremblant and the environment truly is different," said Sylvain Neuenschwander, who operates Les Toits du Monde with his wife, Dior Fall. "The woods are wilder, the snowfall is more pure and it's quieter and less commercial. Utterly tranquil, in fact."

Fall, originally from Senegal, and Neuenschwander, from France, are computer engineers who met when they were students in Europe. Both yearned for a back-to-nature lifestyle and they fulfilled their dream to the max in Quebec, developing a rustic vacation domain outside the town of Nominuingue.

The huts are tiny, eco-conscious architectural wonders.

The couple hired a master carpenter to help with construction and an engineer for the structural plans, but otherwise designed and crafted their huts and furniture by themselves, by hand.

IF YOU GO

Nominuingue is about two hours north of Montreal, or about 45 minutes north of downtown Tremblant (formerly Saint-Jovite).

Les Toits du Monde: 819-278-0483, lestoitsdumonde.ca; 1777 chemin des Faucons, Nominuingue; \$85-\$150 for two; additional adults, \$20; children under 16 stay free. Some age restrictions. Pet-friendly. Cellular service available in lodges; Wi-Fi and electricity at reception pavilion.

Upper Laurentians tourism: 888-560-9988; upper-laurentians.com; Laurentians: 800-561-NORD (800-561-6673), 450 224-7007, laurentides.com.

"The lodges each give off a special energy," said Neuenschwander. "They're flights of fantasy that transport visitors to dreams of adventure, discovery and sharing. We put in a lot of love and time and we used wood from our forest and natural materials like straw for insulation."

The scene: Guests check in at a welcome pavilion housed in a prospectors' tent, and that's as far as cars go at this pristine site.

Les Toits du Monde is a bring-your-own-almost-everything place — food, bedding and



The five woosy lodgings at Les Toits du Monde in the Upper Laurentians include The Enchanted Treehouse.

LES TOITS DU MONDE

camping accessories — so be prepared to haul your baggage by sledge between 300 and 900 metres from the parking lot to the accommodation.

The site supplies mattresses, pillows, cooking utensils, drinking water, firewood for heating and propane for cooking. If you want to cook on an open fire, there are logs for sale.

To take your adventure up a notch and polish your outdoor skills, Neuenschwander offers a two-hour forest survival course (\$40, \$30, \$25 p.p., for two, three, four or more people).

The lodging: There are five unusual lodgings of different styles and comfort levels for two to four people. They're scattered in the woods, far enough apart that guests do not see their neighbours and hear only trees rustling and the birds singing. The boréale chickadee will peck seeds from your hand.

The Enchanted Treehouse,

the Perched Treehouse and the Hobbit House have the most comforts, including indoor bathrooms, showers, solar panels for battery-powered lighting and substantial insulation for warmth. They all have a fairy-tale quality. To reach the Enchanted Treehouse, guests negotiate a hanging footbridge tucked up in the treetops. Inside there are sloped ceilings and asymmetrical walls so everything is kind of crooked and fun.

The earthy Hobbit House has a roof of sod, straw insulation and round windows that recall Lord of the Rings. The interior tree trunks, wood-carved kitchen worktop and round pine table are singular examples of organic, artisan design. Kids love the Hobbit's bunk beds.

The Native American Tipi and the Mongolian Yurt are the most primitive choices, with propane stoves for cooking, outhouses and LED lanterns. The wood

stoves used for heat need to be stoked every few hours, all night.

The yurt was imported from Mongolia, and its brightly coloured furniture and decorations are exactly as they would be on the steppes of East Asia. The yurt is so authentic, it is wrapped in woollen felt for insulation, and horsehair and leather knots hold it together.

What to do: Les Toits has little communal space, except for two benches in the pavilion where you can log onto Wi-Fi. There is a playground with picnic tables.

Most guests want to cocoon in their wooded hideaways, but there is one snowshoe trail on site that climbs through the forest to a towering cliff and then down to Nominuingue Lake. Other activities — dogsledding, skating, cross-country skiing, fat-biking, more snowshoeing and (in summer) river tubing and canoeing — are available within a 10- to 20-minute drive.

✓ Best price guarantee

✓ Top-rated resorts and excursions

✓ Award-winning service

✓ With you every step of the way

Blue Monday Buster Sale

They say mid-January is the bluest time of the year.

Get outta the blues and into the sun with these great deals!

Vacation Better Save up to 40%

🕒 Book by Jan 25

Vacation Better Tip #424

Escape the winter blues by booking a tropical all inclusive vacation

World-class entertainment	Cancun, Mexico Melody Maker Cancun ★★★★★PLUS Superior Deluxe Lagoonview Room Feb 18, 19 & 25 7 Nts - All Inclusive	\$1315	Great Value
Family-friendly amenities	Varadero, Cuba Occidental Arenas Blancas ★★★★★	\$895	Lively beach parties
Superior Room Feb 1, 3, 5, 6 & 7 7 Nts - All Inclusive	Mazatlán, Mexico Riu Emerald Bay ★★★★★	\$1195	Ocean View Room Jan 29 & Feb 5 7 Nts - All Inclusive
On site water park	Punta Cana, D.R. Grand Memories Punta Cana ★★★★★	\$1495	AAA Three Diamond award-winner
Deluxe Room Jan 31, Feb 7 & 14 7 Nts - All Inclusive	Jamaica Riu Ocho Rios ★★★★★	\$1795	Garden View Room Feb 15 & 22 7 Nts - All Inclusive

For a full list of resorts and for tips on how to vacation better, contact your travel agent or [visit Sunwing.ca](http://Sunwing.ca)

Featured Destination

Cayo Coco • Cayo Largo
Cayo Santa María • Havana • Varadero

Cuba

Montreal departures. "Blue Monday Buster Sale" is a limited time offer applicable to new bookings while supplies last for select packages and departure dates. All prices above are per person based on double occupancy for 7 nights on all inclusive vacations (unless otherwise specified) and include taxes and transportation fees. Savings of up to 40% were calculated comparing current price to originally published rate applicable to Melody Maker Cancun, Mexico, for departures February 18, 19 & 25, 2019. All savings are reflected in advertised prices. Seats are subject to availability and are capacity controlled. Local taxes payable at the destination are extra (D.R. \$20US). Flights are with Sunwing Airlines or TUI Airways. Prices exclude the contribution to the offer. Offer is subject to change or can be withdrawn at any time without prior notice. For details on Best Price Guarantee and full booking terms and conditions visit Sunwing.ca. Quebec license holder #702928 | 19012019