



The new Club Med Québec Charlevoix will have more than 300 Four-Trident rooms, shown, and some Five-Trident suites. PHOTOS: CLUB MED

CLUB MED CHARLEVOIX RESORT TO OFFER FOUR-SEASON, ALL-INCLUSIVE GETAWAYS



ROCHELLE LASH
Hotel Intel

Hands up ... and heads up! Club Med, the international all-inclusive resort group, will open its first vacation getaway in Canada in 2020.

It will be directly on the slopes of Le Massif de Charlevoix, about a four-hour drive northeast of Montreal, or one hour past Québec City.

The ski-and-snowboard area has the highest vertical drop in Eastern Canada and it is prized for exceptional snowfall and its spectacular views of the St Lawrence River. Club Med Québec Charlevoix will operate year-round and, to build all-season appeal, Le Massif is adding summer facilities such as mountain biking.

The new resort, now under construction, is a partnership of two world-class developers: Club Med, which is owned by the Chinese conglomerate Fosun International, and Le Massif, which is owned by Daniel Gauthier, chairman of the board of Groupe Le Massif.



A sketch of the Club Med village that is scheduled to open on the slopes of Le Massif de Charlevoix in December 2020.

Gauthier previously had tried to put Le Massif on the global ski map with the Winter Olympics, but Games' officials ruled that the trails were not long enough for the men's downhill, in spite of multiple attempts to rebuild one of the slopes.

Fun formula: Club Med operates nearly 60 resorts and one cruise ship in 26 countries, attracting about 1.4 million visitors each year, and employing about 23,000 "gentils organisateurs"

(aka G.O.s) who represent an astounding 110 nationalities.

Nearly 40,000 Canadians vacation at Club Med annually, mostly in the Caribbean, Mexico and Florida, but also at more than 20 snow-centric clubs in Europe, China and Japan. A winter club in Colorado has closed, but two more mountain resorts are planned for North America by 2025.

"The biggest difference between a Club Med and a hotel

or condo ski vacation is the all-inclusive factor," said Carlyne Doyon, senior vice-president of Club Med Canada and Mexico.

"And Club Meds stand out among all-inclusives, because of the spirit of our G.O.s, but also because of the activities, from sports to wellness, and the broad appeal to solo adventurers, couples and families."

Club Med's price includes almost everything except outside excursions: ski lift tickets, lessons or group skiing, Kids Clubs, on-site summer activities, evening entertainment, dining, an open bar and tips.

Club Med Charlevoix will be a 4T resort (or four tridents out of five, for the deluxe factor), so it will have spa life and superior dining and accommodations (more than 300 rooms, plus a 5T section of suites).

All-season: With Charlevoix's exceptional average snowfall of more than six metres, Club Med will offer skiing, tubing, snowshoeing, sledding and skating.

Le Massif already is highly developed, but will make \$6 million in improvements, including high-tech snow-making and a slide sports learning centre with beginner terrain.

In summer, Club Med will offer mountain biking and guided hiking, as well as outside excursions

IF YOU GO

Club Med, opening December 2020: 800-CLUB-MED (800-258-2633). www.clubmed.ca/1/quebec-charlevoix
Le Massif de Charlevoix: 877-536-2774, 418-632-5876, lemassif.com

for whale watching and kayaking on the St. Lawrence. Children will have nature walks, and the Club will have an indoor pool and spa.

Le Massif and Vélosolutions Canada are carving 20 kilometres of mountain-biking trails and more are planned.

"We will be a truly year-round destination, with outstanding sports and leisure," said Frédéric Sujobert, Le Massif's general manager.

All-inclusive: Club Med launched in the 1950s and developed from basic camping to deluxe resorts. It was the first all-inclusive to go global, but it was not the first to exist.

All-inclusive inns and resorts operated in the Laurentian Mountains, New York State and New England during the early 20th century.

The prestigious Grey Rocks (circa 1905) in Saint-Jovite is credited with North America's first ski and golf/tennis weeks, plus airplane service for hunting and fishing.

Chalet Cochand (circa 1915) in Sainte-Marguerite had ski hills and served fondue. La Sapinière (1936) and Far Hills Inn (circa 1940) added gastronomy.

Only Hôtel Mont Gabriel (1937) still operates. It offers umpteen year-round activities, but is no longer all-inclusive.

Club Med survived and thrived in part by taking socializing to a new level, with wanton nude picnics, non-stop salsa on the beach and charming, international G.O.s adding mystique and conviviality.

In an interview with the Montreal Gazette published in January 2016, Henri Giscard d'Estaing, now president of Club Med, said: "We are in tune with the times. The sexual revolution of the 1970s was a major phenomenon and freedom is one of our core values. Today, we are very focused on families — and ensuring they also have unbridled fun."

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