



Farouche is a glamping domain with A-frame cabins in Lac-Supérieur — the quieter, less developed side of Tremblant. There is also a café offering cell service, Wi-Fi and farm-to-table fare. **RAPHAËL THIBODEAU**

Cabins at Farouche can tame the Tremblant wilds — just a little



ROCHELLE LASH

Geneviève Côté and Jonathan Casaubon have gone back to nature and are inviting you to join them at Farouche, their new Laurentian glamping startup.

Farouche is a cabin getaway in the near-wilderness of Lac-Supérieur, which is the quieter, less known and less developed side of Tremblant.

Farouche loosely means untamed or wild, and although this vacation spot is a bit of an adventure, it has tamed the wilderness with comforts. There is no bushwhacking required, the accommodations are pleasant and well designed, and a convivial café offers cell service, Wi-Fi and casual farm-to-table fare like sandwiches, soups and salads.

The term glamping is short for glamorous camping, but that's just cute wordplay. Farouche isn't glamorous in the same way as a hotel with crystal chandeliers in the dining room and soaking tubs in a fancy suite, but it has plentiful charms for lovers of the outdoors. The views of the sunset over Mont Tremblant are marvellous, the silence is restorative and you are steeped in nature and far from crowds.

Reflecting its earthy ethos, Farouche runs a WWOOF program, which stands for Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms (wwof.net). Participants volunteer as farmhands in any one of 130 countries. Farouche offers these workers a specialized camping hammock with a waterproof roof and/or free RV parking, as well as vegetables from the farm.

Côté and Casaubon were city folk until recently — she's a lawyer and he's an urban planner — but decided to head for the hills with their three children. Now they live on the banks of the Rivière du Diable and have their own Nordic vegetable farm, which supplies Farouche's café.

"We were tired of being behind computer screens," said Casaubon. "We wanted to be close to the outdoors and involved in ecotourism."

"Now we have something that we can share with people. We like to say we're 'wild by choice.'"

In short, these two urbanites want to be more "farouche." So do I. I resolved to spend as much time as possible in the bracing fresh air of the great Laurentian landscape.

The bathrooms are part of the outdoor escapade. Each cabin has a private bathhouse with a shower, towels, flush toilet and sink. They're well thought out and well maintained, but are outside home base.

Lodging: Farouche's cabins are minimalist wooden A-frames that are set up for sleeping and lounging. They're comfortable and compact, and there will be seven by Christmas.

Each cabin has a king bed with bedding supplied, an L-shaped sofa, a mini-fridge and electricity that powers a lamp. A gas stove provides heat and the ambi-



Farouche's interiors are compact, but comfortable. Each cabin has a king bed, a sofa and a gas stove for heat that doubles as a fireplace. **FAROUCHE**

IF YOU GO

Farouche: 514-812-7127, farouche.ca; 3633 Lac-Supérieur Rd., Lac-Supérieur (Tremblant North).

Price: \$220 per night Fri-Sat. (two-night minimum); \$180 Sun.-Thurs. Linens and towels are supplied. Guests should bring seasonal clothing and food/drinks (or purchase from the café). Camping equipment, tents and cooking utensils are available for rent, and the boutique sells some dehydrated camping food.

Café: Hours vary. Currently open afternoons and evenings Sat.-Sun. Open for breakfast for cabin guests Mon.-Sun.

Laurentian tourism: 800-561-6673, laurentides.com.

ence of a fireplace. There is just enough space for a youngster to sleep on the sofa. The floors are ceramic and heated. Outside each unit, there is a small private patio with two Adirondack chairs and a wood-fired stove for cooking.

Café: If you don't want to cook at your cabin, Farouche's café prepares breakfast, lunch and early suppers, as well as takeout meals. Wine and beer are available. It's a warm and sociable meeting place where people share stories about the day's adventures.

The exceptional aspect is that many of the herbs and vegetables — such as kale, basil, garlic, eggplant and carrots — were grown from ancestral seeds at Farouche's farm right across the street. Casaubon explains that Farouche's farm is bio-intensive, which means it is designed to get maximum yield from small surfaces, and that it uses mostly hand tools rather than large machinery.

The café serves Quebec cheeses, focaccia, soups, charcuterie, fruit, and salads and crudités from the barista coffee. Breakfast features barista coffee, granola and smoothie bowls, overnight chia with berries, and baked goods.

What to do: The new domain is near the entrance to a SÉPAQ national park that has superb trails for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and hiking. It's also close to Versant Nord, the so-called "north side" ski lifts of Mont Tremblant, which is the insider area for easier parking and lift access.

In winter, Hok skis will be available for rent. They're shorter than downhill skis, easily manoeuvred and designed for trekking uphill and gliding downhill.

In summer, Farouche rents Taiga paddle boards for use on the Rivière du Diable, which winds gently through different landscapes and past beaches.

Special to Montreal Gazette

Going Back in Time in Switzerland's Appenzell

Amid the rolling green hills of country's northeast corner, **Rick Steves** writes, traditions live on amid bucolic beauty.

The memory of one of my earliest visits to Appenzell is a vivid one. I was joining the local crowd in their Saturday evening get-together, huddled around small tables in a tiny mountain hut that hangs off a cliff at about 5,000 feet. A spry grandpa in a sweater as worn as his face pulled a wide-eyed child onto his lap to teach him to drum with old wooden spoons, while the old-timer next to them pumped out hearty melodies on his squeezebox. Tall, sloppy mugs of beer stoked the commotion. I was immersed in the conviviality, but eventually climbed upstairs to my bunk.

Hours later, unable to sleep, I poked my head out of my tiny window and looked wearily down on the raging party, which had spilled out onto the small deck. Finally, the gang packed up their rucksacks and hiked out, disappearing over the ledge and into the moonlit forest. When their singing voices finally faded, it was finally quiet, and I fell asleep marvelling at how the Swiss are so good at making mountains fun.

Appenzell, in Switzerland's northeast corner, has none of the better-known or particularly high mountains, but it does have some of Europe's most bucolic landscapes, and the best cow culture in the Alps. Appenzell is Switzerland's most traditional region — and long the butt of jokes because of it. They say you should set your watch back 10 years when you cross the cantonal border. Villages meet in town squares to vote. Until 1990, the women of Inner Appenzell couldn't vote on local issues and the canton remains stubbornly conservative.

The region's lush, gentle hills are dotted with huts and cows against a backdrop of a snowy ridge that culminates in a peak called Säntis. While farmers' daughters make hay, old ladies with scythes walk the steep roads, looking as if they'd just pushed the Grim Reaper down

the hill. When locals are asked about Appenzell cheese, they clench their fists as they answer, "It's the best." It is, without a doubt, Switzerland's smelliest.

The dairy heritage is a point of local pride. Folk museums feature old-fashioned cheese-making demonstrations, peasant houses, fascinating embroidering machinery, cow art, and folk-craft demonstrations.

Appenzell's highlight is that quaint old hut I'd overnighed in long ago, just below the ridge of the Ebenalp plateau. It's more accessible than it feels — just a short hike down from the top of the Wasserauen cable car (five miles south of Appenzell town).

From where the lift leaves you atop the Ebenalp, savour the 360-degree alpine view and then head downhill. The trail leads through a damp and dimly lit prehistoric cave and the 400-year-old Wildkirchli cave church — where hermit monks lived and worshipped for two centuries, until 1853 — to Berggasthaus Aescher, the guest house built precariously into the cliff. Originally a hut housing farmers, goats, and cows, in the mid-1800s Berggasthaus Aescher evolved into a guest house for pilgrims coming to the Wildkirchli monks for spiritual guidance.

In the distance, nestled below Säntis' peak, is the isolated lake called Seealpsee (Lakealp Lake). Sip your coffee on the deck, sheltered from cliff run-off by the gnarly overhang 100 feet above.

Those hermit monks may be long gone, but I can't think of a better place to commune with nature while immersed in traditional Swiss alpine culture than in a mountain hut clinging to a cliff in Appenzell.

Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) writes European guidebooks, hosts travel shows on public TV and radio, and organizes European tours. You can email Rick at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.



Below Appenzell's plateau of Ebenalp, you can overnight in this cliffside guest house and enjoy stunning mountain scenery. **CAMERON HEWITT**

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