

VILLÉA OFFERS MELLOW SPA LIFE IN BEAUPRÉ

Oasis in sports paradise the perfect spot to relax in any season



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Hotel Intel

Villéa Hébergement Nature and the Nordique Spa Mont Ste-Anne combine to create a mellow oasis in the heart of the action-packed sports paradise of the Beaurpré coast.

About 40 minutes northeast of Quebec City, Villéa is a romantic and restorative place to pause and reboot, slow the pace and enjoy the countryside in all seasons.

“People come to rest, to stop the whirl of life,” said Sacha Hinse, Villéa’s owner. “Leisure vacationers want to unwind and foster togetherness and business groups can cultivate ideas and camaraderie.

“The spa is the most popular feature, but our property is part of the natural environment of Mont-Ste-Anne Park, so it offers a sense of freedom with open spaces where children can play.”

Villéa’s summertime activities include paddleboarding and pedal-boating on its private lake. There are relaxation yurts on the edge of the forest, as well as a meditative walking trail around the grounds.

Taking the activity level up a big notch, Villéa also rents mountain bikes. Mont-Ste-Anne’s trails are almost next door.

Lodging: The first phase of Villéa’s nine chalets is called the Toro model, suitable for a couple



The chalets of the Villéa Hébergement Nature plus its Nordique Spa Mont Ste-Anne combine to make a tranquil, year-round getaway, with skiing and snowboarding in the winter and paddleboarding and pedal-boating on a private lake during the summer. TOURISME CÔTE-DE-BEAUPRÉ

that wants privacy or for a family of four with small children.

A larger model of Kodiak chalets, for up to eight people, will launch soon.

It’s the simple life. The chalets sport contemporary country decor, with pine-panelled walls and dark slate doors that slide on barn-style hardware. A gas-fired iron stove provides ambience and heat and there is individual climate control, plus TV streaming (though no cable channels).

The open kitchen has a microwave, refrigerator and induction stovetop (I had to Google a how-to), but no oven or dishwasher.

The chalets’ crowning feature is that each has a patio that looks onto a lawn and the lake, all surrounded by maple and pine trees. There will be landscaping in spring, but for now there still are huge snowbanks, which make outdoor dips quite an adventure.

Spa life: Villéa’s beautifully designed main pavilion houses the spa’s reception desk, changing

rooms and a steam and sauna. The full Nordic spa experience involves alternating between hot baths and a cold plunge and finally restoring the body temperature to normal in the relaxation lounge.

It’s recommended to do the circuit a few times to increase the feeling of exhilaration and well-being based on increased blood circulation.

Massage service will start soon.

Food and drink: The Villéa chalets are set up for light cooking, so bring your own provisions, especially for breakfast. A good stop is Les Bonyeuses, a Beaurpré bakery with fancy breads, pastries and local products like jam and cheese (closed Monday).

Villéa’s Bistro — a cheery solarium with plants and wood-topped tables — serves nachos, pizza and panini and soup along with wine, beer from Brasseur de Montréal and cocktails with Kamouraska vodka and cucumber gin by the Artist in Residence

Distillery in Gatineau.

From Villéa, it’s a five-minute drive to the St-Bernard Resto-Pub which has a varied menu of house-smoked salmon, Charlevoix cheeses, Quebec onion soup, burgers, pizza, club sandwiches and main courses. restaurantstbernard.com

Its affiliate, Le Brez Restaurant, at the base of Mont-Ste-Anne, has a Swiss-Quebec choice of 15 types of fondue, as well as boudin noir, braised lamb, pizza and beef tartare. Reservations recommended. Hours vary. lebrez.com

Outdoors: Mont-Ste-Anne is a hub for outstanding, exhilarating sports. It’s the second-largest downhill ski area in Quebec and one of North America’s largest Nordic networks. It’s also in a bountiful snow belt and the ski-snowboard season is scheduled to run until April 23.

Cut to summer: The thrills continue with paragliding from the mountain’s summit and

IF YOU GO

Quebec City: 877-783-1608, quebec-cite.com. St-Ferréol-les-Neiges is a three-hour, 20-minute drive from Montreal. It is two kilometres from Mont-Ste-Anne’s cross-country; five km from downhill.

Mont-Ste-Anne: 888-827-4579, mont-sainte-anne.com; Beaurpré. Part of Resorts of the Canadian Rockies (RCR). Partner of Vail Resorts/Epic Passes (epicpass.com) in winter. Bike lift tickets available daily in summer; some Mont-Ste-Anne season passes valid.

Villéa Hébergement Nature & Nordique Spa Mont Ste-Anne: 418-826-2000, villeanature.com; 186 Rang St-Julien, St-Ferréol-les-Neiges. Pet-friendly.

Price: Toro chalets from \$195, weekdays; Fri.-Sat. \$229-\$239. Kodiak chalets opening soon. Spa: \$49 per person for guests, for the entire stay. For non-guests, \$35-\$49 per visit.

rappelling near the magnificent Jean-Larose waterfalls (Canyoning-Québec; equipment and guides provided).

Mont-Ste-Anne is an international mountain biking centre, with a 170-kilometre network of banks, steepes and beginner runs, some along the Nordic ski trails and some lift-accessed. A full competition calendar of downhill, cross-country, enduro and marathon races runs from June until October’s UCI Mountain Bike World Cup, the tour’s only stop in Canada.

The Beaurpré region is renowned for hiking at Cap Tourmente, Sentiers des Caps and, more easygoing for youngsters, the engaging Mestachibo trail that starts in St-Ferréol-les-Neiges (near Villéa) and meanders to Mont-Ste-Anne.

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