

HOTEL INTEL

Movable glamping village pitches its tents in Mont-Tremblant



ROCHELLE LASH

Hôtel UNIQ does not simply have a gorgeous countryside location. It has a different gorgeous countryside location every year. UNIQ stands for Unique, Nomadic, Isolated and born in Quebec, and the concept is all of those.

Hôtel UNIQ is a movable glamping domain that sets up seasonal villages of approximately 20 tents around a communal cooking pavilion. In previous years, it has alit in Baie-de-Beauport outside Quebec City, Jardin de Métis in Gaspésie, Taureau Lake in Lanaudière, Coaticook in the Eastern Townships and Domaine St-Bernard in Mont-Tremblant.

Hôtel UNIQ is returning May 19 to Domaine St-Bernard, a scenic outdoor sports and recreation centre and conservation area halfway between Mont-Tremblant (the mountain) and downtown Mont-Tremblant (formerly St-Jovite).

This is a picturesque, peaceful valley estate on the grounds of a former monastery.

If you wake up early, you'll see deer feeding at the edge of the forest and if you go to bed late, you'll enjoy the stars twinkling in the night sky.

"We chose beautiful, green destinations where extra lodging is needed in high season, perhaps for visitors who want to attend a festival or simply enjoy the countryside," said Myriam Corbeil, who operates Hôtel UNIQ. She is an avid outdoor traveller and backpacker who was inspired by youth hostels around the world, as well as nomadic tent life in Morocco.



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"Hôtel UNIQ is the ideal fusion. At its heart, it is camping that offers the privileged experience of being close to nature. We add traditional hospitality at the simplest level, with functional design, a few amenities and a communal pavilion for making friends."

Lodging: Hôtel UNIQ's 20 tents can each accommodate two to four people in a combination of king, double and single beds. You'll also have a small table, two chairs and a battery-operated lamp. That's quite basic, but you can upgrade your power by requesting an electrical connection (\$25 per night), and add a heated blanket or heater (\$15 per night).

It's part of camping life that you have to tiptoe to the showers and bathrooms, which are in a separate cabin, although UNIQ furnishes natural bath and shower products in each tent.

Dining: Most guests bring their

own provisions and cook in Hôtel UNIQ's communal tent. It's fully equipped, from coffee-makers to corkscrews, and has four propane stoves, two barbecues, cooking gear, dining utensils and a dishwashing space.

If you'd rather have it all done for you, Claudia Côté of Côté Bouffe frequently caters at UNIQ. Her cuisine is made from scratch and the ingredients are local.

The menu features gourmet sandwiches, smoothies, salads, BBQ chicken lunchboxes and cheese from Mont-Laurier (819-717-4113, cotebouffe.com, closed Sundays).

For weddings and corporate groups — yes, even in tent villages there are celebrations and business meetings — Corbeil calls in Seb's, the catering component of the upscale restaurant in downtown Tremblant (819-681-0021, seblartisansculinaire.com).

If you choose to go out, you cannot beat Ocafé Vieux-Tremblant for barista coffee, soups and made-on-the-spot breakfast and lunch sandwiches. (819-808-7725, ocafevieux Tremblant.ca).

What to do: Free of charge, guests can use 37 kilometres of hiking trails that link up with those that climb to the summit of Mont-Tremblant; 29 kilometres of trails for mountain biking; a playground; a beach on motor-free Raynaud Lake, or exercise classes. Visitors can explore nature in many other ways, such as bee-keeping at La Miellerie Manitonga and gardens with 80 species of medicinal plants, all nurtured by volunteers of Club ornithologique des Hautes-Laurentides.

For a fee, one of Domaine St-Bernard's best-known features is the Velan Pavilion astronomy observatory. There also are yoga classes (donation

IF YOU GO

Hôtel UNIQ: 514-601-6747, hotel-uniq.com; Domaine St-Bernard, 539 St-Bernard Rd., Mont-Tremblant.

Price: May 19-Oct. 9, approximately \$149-\$219 (two to four people), per night, minimum two nights, including welcome cocktail, coffee, cooking tent, bedding, lake activities, evening bonfire entertainment, Wi-Fi in reception area.

Tourism: Laurentians: 800-561-6673, laurentides.com. Mont-Tremblant (region): 877-425-2434, mont-tremblant.ca; Tremblant (mountain resort): 888-738-1777, tremblant.ca. Domaine St-Bernard: 819-425-3588, domainesaintbernard.org.

requested) and rentals for mountain bikes, street bikes, paddleboards and canoes.

Off-site, visitors can experience Mont-Tremblant's scenic gondola to the summit for lunch and spectacular views at the Grand Manitou chalet. Nearby, Scandinave Spa offers a complete Nordic experience with hot and cold baths, relaxation areas, massages and refreshing dips in the Diable River.

Tremblant's busy summer calendar includes Miracles, La Grande Retraite, a festival of yoga, meditation and wellness, June 2-4; Les Rythmes Tremblant New Music, a free family festival of Quebec and Canadian artists, July 6-9; Tremblant International Blues Festival, July 12-16; Les Rythmes Tremblant New Country, July 20-22; BMX show, an exhibition by extreme athletes, July 28-30; Les Rythmes Tremblant Latin Music, Aug. 10-12; Folk Weekend (acoustic), Aug. 24-26; and Ironman Mont-Tremblant, part of the VinFast North America Series, Aug. 20.



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