

# GLAMPING GOES UPSCALE WITH SCANDIK CHALETs

Mini-maisons built for max efficiency in cosy country style



ROCHELLE LASH  
Hotel Intel

Chalets Scandik is a new getaway that has removed the camping part of glamping.

On the outskirts of Ste-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson in the Laurentians, Scandik chalets are well-equipped with everything you would want in a cosy country cabin, including kitchens, bathrooms with showers, Wi-Fi, electricity and heated floors, which is a less expensive way to go than radiators.

Each chalet offers a summer-time life revolving around individual landscaped patios with barbecues, firepits and garden chairs. The glamping part comes in because guests bring their own bedding, towels, toiletries and food.

“It’s lower maintenance and more sanitary that way,” said Isabelle Jouin, an interior designer who has developed Scandik with her husband, Dominique Hamel, a construction contractor, and their children, Jacob, 10, and Maelie, 11.

“Our idea as a family was to leave the traffic behind, spend more time together and get closer to nature.”

The scope of Scandik is impressive. Jouin and Hamel have 10 substantial chalets — so far — carved into a large tract of boreal wilderness with walking trails and a large pond bordered by a small beach. Scandik provides paddleboards, a pedal boat and canoes. In winter, they rent out snowshoes.



The new eco-built Chalets Scandik, on the outskirts of Ste-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson in the Laurentians, use natural light, white decor and lots of wood for a cosy Scandinavian vibe. *CHALETs SCANDIK*

**Chalets:** Scandik chalets are compact and minimalist to the max. The kitchen is an open installation along one wall, the dining tables have sleek moulded plastic Eames chairs and the decor is white, warmed by panels of hemlock wood, which is part of the Scandinavian influence.

Each chalet is configured for one to six people with queen and double beds. Some have sofas, some have only armchairs and some have mezzanines. My favourite is the Pano, the smallest, a cosy hideaway for one or two people. Some of the large ones like Moderno have indoor hammocks, which are everyone’s favourite.

“Each chalet is a mini-maison built for maximum sustainability,” said Jouin. “We built upward to minimize the footprint and to cut as few trees as possible.

“And the heated concrete floors are really energy-savers.”

**Gastronomy:** Another enterprising couple, this time in gastronomy, has made a huge splash in Ste-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson.

Chef Etienne Demers, formerly of 400 Coups in Montreal, and accomplished sommelier Sophie Allaire run La Belle Histoire, an excellent, charming French restaurant that stands out in the Laurentians.

It has been recognized as one of the top 10 in Quebec, initially in its first year, 2020, and again in 2023, by Les Lauriers de Gastronomie Québécoise (lauriers.ca). It has been cited as having the best service in the province.

Allaire, who previously worked at Marconi and Joséphine restaurants as well as the SAQ, has been nominated as Sommelier de l’année by Les Lauriers. She oversees a cellar of 400 wines, many private imports.

The menu changes, but it’s devoutly regional. On my night,

Demers presented starters of cod fritters, plump oysters, seared beef and fiddleheads, plus main courses of spinach ravioli with shrimp, Gaspésie halibut, duck breast and the pièce de résistance — a sharing feast of dry-roast lamb or aged rib-eye.

The team does everything with panache, from signature cocktails and amuse-bouches to sweets like citrus tarts and sticky toffee.

La Belle Histoire comes with its own pedigree. It operates in the same cottage as did Bistro à Champlain, which was a linchpin of Laurentians gastronomy for many years.

**Café life:** Ste-Marguerite is a hotbed for exceptional casual fare, too. The dynamic Café O’Marguerites doubles as a lively meeting place and a co-operative selling regional organic products. It’s the place to be for breakfast, lunch, barista coffee, herbal tea

**IF YOU GO**

■ Chalets Scandik is four kilometres from the centre of Ste-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson, about 10 kilometres northeast of Ste-Adèle.

**Chalets Scandik:** 877-703-8770, 438-942-8770; chaletsscandik.ca; 20 du Guerrier St., Ste-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson. Some chalets are pet friendly (one of each model).

**Price:** Minimum two nights. June 1-Oct. 31, three styles of chalets start at around \$238-\$249-\$299 per night for one or two people. Children younger than 12 stay free; additional adults pay \$50 p.p. Weekends are higher. From Nov. 1-May 31, rates start at \$199-\$209-\$219. Discount for seventh night. Extra: firepit wood.

**La Belle Histoire:** 450-228-1595, labellehistoirerestaurant.com; 75 Masson Rd., Ste-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson. À la carte available. Tasting menu, \$110, plus wines, \$65. Open Wed.-Sun. until Labour Day; the schedule changes after.

**Café O’Marguerites:** 450-228-4888, cafeomarguerites.com; 100 Masson Rd., Ste-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson; 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Mon.-Thurs.; 8 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri.-Sun.

**Tourism:** Laurentians: 1-800-561-6673, laurentides.com. Local: lacmasson.com.

and smoothies. House favourites include the omelette croissant, the Margo salad, grilled cheese, classic club, waffles, BLT or PLT with chicken, as well as fruit plates, wraps, eggs and vegan options.

Café O’Marguerites is expanding its weekend hours to early evening, which will showcase a drinks list of cocktails, wine and beer. The landmark recently moved to a new, larger location around the corner.



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