

46° North Resort

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE OCTOBER 27, 2010



The central clubhouse at the new 46° North Resort has a salt-water pool and a fireplace lounge.

Photograph by: 46° North Resorts, Inc.

Scroll down for Rochelle's column.

Editor's note: Some of the details might have changed since the original publication date. Please check with the establishment before heading out!

Original publication date: July 17, 2010

La Macaza and Labelle are a two-hour drive from Montreal. Take Highway 15 north past Ste. Agathe and continue on Route 117 to Labelle. Continue for four kilometres.

46° North Resort: 514-396-9313 (vacation rentals), 819-275-5255 (conciierge), 888-378-3246 (sales), www.resort46n.com; 10 Chemin Du Lac-Caché, La Macaza. The price, a minimum two nights, is \$450 to \$900 a night, for eight to 10 people, depending on the location and size of the house.

One of Quebec's newest vacation developments, the deluxe 46° North Resort, is bringing five-star country living to the Upper Laurentians, a 25-minute drive north of Mont Tremblant.

The 46° North Resort is one of the latest in the trend of non-hotel getaways that is sweeping the countryside. We know what a hotel is. What is a non-hotel? It might be a compact condo with a kitchen and bedrooms for everyone in a family, or an intimate B&B where strangers live in the same house as friends. Vacation choices also include yurts, youth hostels and campsites. Quebec Tourism, which rates lodgings in seven classifications, also has a category called "tourist homes," which it

defines as "furnished chalets with kitchenettes."

The 46° North Resort is a tourist home, and one that sets the gold standard. Named for its geographical latitude, 46° North is a cluster of luxurious houses on a small, tranquil lake on a large forested estate. Sounds divine already, right? Along with the secluded setting, developers have ensured that guests will have the best of everything, like top-drawer construction, luxuriant landscaping and fine furnishings. Here, you will bubble your bath with exclusive toiletries from Molton Brown of England or toss a cashmere blanket over a leather sofa when you snuggle at the fireplace.

The houses look like log cabins, with folksy red window trim and the angled roofs of mountain chalets. But there is nothing homespun about the interiors. They are grand, expensive and decorated in a contemporary rustic style. That means stone floors, honey-coloured oak and pine walls, state-of-the-art kitchens, a bathroom for almost every bedroom and double-height windows opening onto forests and the lake.

"It's not only about having a beautiful house, it also is the service we provide," said Caroline Hudelet, the chief concierge. "We can fill your fridge, set up massages or yoga sessions, plan a cycling tour or shuttle you to golf. "

The mini-resort is built around a clubhouse where guests can use the outdoor salt-water swimming pool, hot tub, sauna, gym and living room. It's laid-back living. Take a pedal boat, a kayak or an electric fishing boat on tiny and tranquil Lake Mitchell, which has no motorized craft.

The resort also has cut beginner, intermediate and advanced hiking trails through the hilly forests. The Linear Parc of the P'tit Train du Nord, the Laurentians' popular cycling path, runs nearby. Although the path's surface is fine, sandy gravel between St. Jérôme and Labelle, it is paved for the 94 kilometres from Labelle to Mont Laurier, so it also is popular with in-line skaters.

After a day in the outdoors, guests come home to 46° North and roast marshmallows at the lakeside bonfire or simply stargaze far from the city lights.

"It's all about nature, not nightlife," Hudelet said. "Our owners' lodge and the pool are the centre of communal life, both day and evening. And, of course, the lake is there, under the moonlight."

"Our shuttle buses enable families to go their own way for a few hours. Mom can golf, dad can go fishing on our lake with the kids and the teens can hang out at the pool until 8 at night. They'll all be back together for meals and a life at home after dark."

If you fall in love with your vacation getaway, you can buy into the lifestyle. The three- to five-bedroom houses sell for between \$429,000 and \$1.15 million, plus a maintenance fee. If you prefer part-time country living, a fractional ownership program is available in the largest dwelling, starting at \$239,000 for eight weeks of use per year. Owners can earn revenue by putting the house into a rental pool.

"It's worry-free ownership," said Luc Corneli, vice-president of 46° North Resorts, Inc.

"We maintain the property, the grass gets cut, the snow is shovelled and the hot tub is hot when you arrive for your vacation. People work hard all week, and we have created an environment where they simply can enjoy life in the countryside."

So far, 46° North is a small resort with four luxurious country houses. However, 150 more are planned. With the current expansion of the runway and terminal at Mont Tremblant International Airport, 15 minutes away, the tourism community is anticipating major air carriers flying larger planes from Europe and Mexico.

For now, the Upper Laurentians still has a country ambience. The pop series of the Festival de la Rouge will unfold under a big top from Friday to Aug. 8 at Nominique, less than a half-hour north of Labelle. The lineup of mostly Quebec performers includes Boom Desjardins, The Lost Fingers, Kaïn, La compagnie créole, Annie Villeneuve and Éric Lapointe. For more details, call 877-530-4653 or go to www.festivaldelarouge.com.

rochelleink@aol.com

© Copyright (c) The Montreal Gazette