

Contrasts in the Laurentians

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE JANUARY 6, 2011



The Air de Glace Nordic spa in St. Hippolyte is a small private tranquil destination in the Laurentians.

Photograph by: Air de Glace

Imagine two different Nordic spas. They embrace the same concept - hot, cold and bliss in a complex of indoor and outdoor baths - but they have remarkably contrasting styles. One is a spectacular million-dollar facility with a capacity of more than 180 people. The other is homespun and limited to 20 visitors, but also rich in priceless qualities.

The swish Amérispa Station Baltique in Morin Heights and the earthy Air de Glace in St. Hippolyte are among the latest in the trend of Scandinavian-style spas that has been sweeping Quebec. There are about 30 Nordic spas flourishing north, south, east and west of Montreal.

The pioneer was the Polar Bear's Club, which opened in Piedmont about 25 years ago, followed 14

