

Le Massif has big plans

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE NOVEMBER 18, 2010

Le Massif de Charlevoix is continuing to expand. With a \$16-million investment set for this season, the ski resort in the Charlevoix known for its stunning views of the St. Lawrence River has added four new trails, two of them in the beginners' area, and an eight-passenger gondola.

At one time, Le Massif was a remote mountain without skier services or lifts. In eight years, former Cirque du Soleil executive Daniel Gauthier has created a user-friendly ski and snowboard area with cheerful base chalets, lively après-ski and dining, and wide, well-groomed trails for all levels.

However, Le Massif has not forgotten its roots as a tough downhill adventure. This year, it is doubling its off-trail skiable terrain.

If you want to pair a Le Massif visit with skiing and riding at Mont Ste. Anne, or a stop in Quebec City or Baie St. Paul, shuttle buses connect all points. (The Mont Ste. Anne-Baie St. Paul shuttles are free).

Le Massif Express bus service runs from Montreal with departures from Parc Jarry, the Laval Centropolis and Complexe 20-20 in Boucherville.

With a total investment of \$230 million between now and 2013, the tourism project called Le Massif de Charlevoix is positioning itself to be a four-season resort. The most dynamic boost to the region's tourism will be a new train due the start service next June along the 140-kilometre route from Quebec City to La Malbaie. Included in the sweeping development will be The Farm, a new mini-village adjacent to the Baie St. Paul train station and encompassing a spa, restaurants, bars and boutiques, and an indoor market showcasing Charlevoix foods. A 150-room hotel is scheduled to open in December 2011, and there will be accommodations for another 400 people in new chalets, loft apartments and unusual lodging, like tree homes. A 500-seat performing arts and convention centre also is planned as part of the project.

More information: 877-536-2774 or www.lemassif.com/en.

© Copyright (c) The Montreal Gazette