

Quebec resorts have world at fingertips

BY ROCHELLE LASH, POSTMEDIA NEWS FEBRUARY 5, 2011

Spa Villegia is more than a spa. It is a brand. So far, it is only a brand of two, but it likely will grow.

Les Hotels Villegia group in Quebec is made up of four establishments: Manoir des Sables and Hotel Cheribourg in Orford, Manoir St-Castin near Quebec City, and Hotel le Victorian in Victoriaville. Two hotels, des Sables and St-Castin, have terrific new spas.

Manoir des Sables is a large resort that successfully blends two worlds. It has all of the bells and whistles of a full-scale hotel, with a spa, a gift shop, indoor and outdoor swimming pools and extensive grounds. Elevators lead to 140 bright, well-kept rooms and suites, including the deluxe chateau wing with its balconies, fireplaces and rich decor.

But Manoir des Sables also is very much a country establishment, set back from Route 141 in Orford, surrounded by mountains and facing a lake. What it lacks in cozy charm, it makes up for with conveniences and facilities.

For spa-lovers, the new Villegia baths are a treat -a compact, but effective, setup. After a full day of fresh air and activities in sportsmad Orford, it's a great place for a recovery.

Wrap yourself in a terry bathrobe and tiptoe down to the hotel's indoor swimming pool for a few laps. Then on to an invigorating Scandinavian-style soak in a hot tub or a sweat in the steam room, followed by a bracing dousing under cold shower jets. Head to the outdoor hot tub for a final spot at sunset. The result is a tingly mix that relaxes the muscles and boosts circulation.

Villegia's beauty and body treatments are a world beat of spa experiences. The exotic Discover Morocco package features a skin scrub with the same black soap that is used in Middle Eastern rituals, and facials with Morjana products made with argon oil, rose water and honey. In the intense Hawaiian Lomi Lomi, the massotherapist uses his forearms and elbows for deep muscle relaxation. The Lavan Doux is a dreamy all-Quebec treatment with oils from Bleu Lavande, the lavender farm near Magog.

In Manoir des Sables' dining room, you can go spa-style or all out.

The breakfast buffet can be low-cal or highenergy. Health-conscious eaters can start with fruit and yogurt, followed by an egg-white vegetable omelette. The piece de resistance is chef Alain Ferraty's exceptional selection of organic granolas, including the Divine, a blend of oats, white chocolate, elderberries and macadamia nuts; the Aphrodisique, grains mixed with dark chocolate and ginseng; and l'Essential, a crumble of maple syrup, walnut and red elm tree powder, which some believe acts as a tonic for the digestive system. Going all out calorie-wise, you can dig into French toast in caramel syrup, sausages with maple flavour, chocolate pastries and croissants or cretons.

Ferraty originally is from Martinique, a heritage that emerges in his lush cooking at dinner. He uses fruit, coconut milk and other Caribbean twists on local ingredients like lamb, Brome Lake duck and

