

# Bitcoin, home-baked bread at Charlevoix B&B

This homespun guest house comes with a modern touch: digital currency accepted

The Gîte TerreCiel in Baie-St-Paul, Charlevoix, is as revolutionary as a B&B can be in 2014, and it is also as homespun as any guest house of 1914. (TerreCiel is one word because it is a play on the synergy of Earth-sky and yin-yang.)

The revolution begins with the fact that TerreCiel is one of the few lodging establishments in North America that accepts payment in bitcoin, the new digital currency.

Why add this option in addition to good, hard cash and reliable credit cards? I asked the B&B's owner, David Mancini, who is a 30-year-old former computer programmer.

"I think it's the future of currency," he explained. "And bitcoin is better than credit cards because there are no transaction fees, in most cases."

"For my guests from other countries, it will mean convenience and savings. They can eliminate paying charges on currency exchanges and travellers' cheques and they don't have to carry cash."

TerreCiel hasn't had any bitcoin clients yet, possibly because most of the world is still trying to figure out how to use it. You can buy bitcoins at an ATM on St-Laurent Blvd. in Montreal or at such Web sources as [www.localbitcoins.com](http://www.localbitcoins.com) or [www.cointrader.net](http://www.cointrader.net).

You create an online "wallet" on your computer or cell-phone (but not an iPhone), and once you have deposited bitcoins (similar to filling a PayPal account with dollars), you do an e-transfer to Mancini's "wallet." If your B&B room costs about \$100, and one bitcoin equals \$700 Canadian (a recent exchange rate), you would pay about 15 per cent of a bitcoin. The value fluctuates wildly, but it has increased overall at about five-fold during the past six months.

TerreCiel operates on another revolutionary fiscal principle. The B&B has a price list for its accommodations during the high season, from June through October.

"The rest of the year, people pay what they want," Mancini said, "but only if they book through our web-



ROCHELLE LASH  
CHECKING IN

site, which 95 per cent of our clients do. If they come to us any other way, by phone or through Booking.com or Hotels.com, they pay the list price.

"It is a little crazy, but it works. Most people voluntarily pay a fair market price."

I wondered whether any cheapskate had proffered a measly \$20.

"It happens, but it evens out," Mancini said. "My goal is not to make money at the B&B; the goal is to welcome people to Baie-St-Paul, and it works."

Now, for the cosy and homespun style at TerreCiel: Mancini was inspired to open a B&B after visiting La Concièrgerie in Montreal, where he met his husband, Nicolas Pelletier.

He spent one year scouting locations and decided on Baie-St-Paul in Charlevoix because of the spectacular landscape of mountains and rivers. And after another year of searching for just the right house, he settled on a rambling 140-year-old red-brick family home with extensive grounds in a residential area.

The décor is in tune with a country style of long ago. Comforters and knotty pine walls create a woodsy cocoon. The family room, which has a private balcony, is good value for up to five people using a queen-sized bed and bunk beds. TerreCiel is no-frills, but it is friendly and well maintained.

"We want it to be like coming to your friend's house," Mancini said. "You kick off your shoes and relax."

There is lots of life throughout the house. The large windows let in light, plants flourish and Mancini has opened the kitchen, a library, a sun-room and dining room so that guests can relax and mingle. TerreCiel does not have any televisions. The idea is to enjoy Baie-St-Paul and foster friendships.

"Right now people are sitting around the fireplace — people who have never met



PHOTOS: BÉLOUP/GÎTE TERRECIEL

TerreCiel in Baie-St-Paul is in a rambling 140-year-old red-brick home with extensive grounds in a residential area. The B&B is no-frills, but it is well maintained and friendly. Because there are no TVs, guests sit around the fireplace and talk.



Comforters and knotty pine walls create a cosy feel at Gîte TerreCiel in Baie-St-Paul.

before — and they are having a conversation," Mancini said. "If there were a TV in the house, that would never happen."

TerreCiel backs onto the banks of the Rivière du Gouffre, so it's quiet, although it's only a few blocks from such local high spots as the Musée d'art contemporain de Baie-St-Paul. In summer, the ac-

tion is along the river, where people swim and kayak. Pelletier also runs Espace TerreCiel, where he gives classes in tai-chi, qigong and meditation, which are free for guests.

Mancini takes a locavore approach to breakfast, prepared with his neighbours' produce. He bakes his own bread and cooks pancakes,

french toast and waffles using flour from the historic 1827 mill Le Moulin de la La Rémy. He adds Charlevoix maple syrup, jams and such cheeses as Le Migneron and La Tomme de Brebis from Maison Maurice Dufour, and serves fair-trade coffee from Café Charlevoix Brûlerie, organic eggs from Joy-Oeufs and meat from Les Viandes

## IF YOU GO

Baie-St-Paul is a 3½-hour drive from Montreal via Highway 40 or Highway 20 east to Quebec City and Route 138 east.

Gîte TerreCiel: 418-435-0149, [www.terreciel.ca](http://www.terreciel.ca); 113 Ste-Anne St., Baie-St-Paul.

Price: Until May 31, the room fee is pay-as-you-wish with the promotional code at [www.terreciel.ca](http://www.terreciel.ca). From June to October, \$95-\$130 for two; the family room for up to five people is \$160; including breakfast, Wi-Fi, kitchen, guest computer, and tai chi, qigong and meditation.

Baie-St-Paul tourism: 418-435-4160, [www.baiestpaul.com](http://www.baiestpaul.com); Charlevoix region: 800-667-2276, [www.tourisme-charlevoix.com](http://www.tourisme-charlevoix.com).

Biologiques de Charlevoix. "I love our region, but my guests come from everywhere, so I do travel the world every morning when I serve breakfast," Mancini said.

[rochelle@rochellelash.com](mailto:rochelle@rochellelash.com)  
Twitter: rochellelash

# WHERE TO STAY

ALSO FIND US ON [montrealgazette.com/wheretostay](http://montrealgazette.com/wheretostay)

TO ADVERTISE please call 514-987-2350

## INTERNATIONAL

### FRANKLYN D. RESORT AND SPA

All Suites, All-Inclusive, Family Beach Resort. World Class Nannies assigned to every family on check-in. Terrific Kids Program, Nightly Entertainment and Free Wi-fi. Save 40% OFF-Call-**1-800-654-1337** or visit [www.fdrholidays.com](http://www.fdrholidays.com)

## NEW YORK

### RIVERSIDE TOWER HOTEL – NEW YORK CITY

Singles USD \$75. Doubles USD \$90. Suites USD \$100.-\$120. Lincoln Center area. Hudson River views, 18 floors, kitchenette, 5 minutes to midtown. Safe, quiet luxury area. Riverside Drive & 80<sup>th</sup> Street. For more info, call **800-724-3136** or visit [www.riversidetowerhotel.com](http://www.riversidetowerhotel.com)

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

### WHITE MOUNTAINS • NORTH CONWAY

Warmth & comfort surround you at our "country elegant" boutique hotel. Grand mountain views, fireplaced Library Lounge (après ski Cheese Fondue served on Winter Wknds!), renowned dining room. 25 guest rooms (8 w/frplcs) and some w/Jacuzzi. 5 alpine resorts & tax-free outlets nearby. Fr. \$73ppdo (US) incl. Full Bkfst & Dinner (off main menu) & use of XC ski/snowshoe trails from door. **800-525-9100**  
[www.StonehurstManor.com](http://www.StonehurstManor.com)

## VERMONT

### SMART SUITES

Winter Special. Come and enjoy our hospitality in either a studio efficiency at US \$72.95 or a more spacious one bedroom suite at US \$82.95/ night, including a deluxe continental breakfast and free WIFI. Call toll free **877.862.6800** and mention the Gazette special. Not valid with other discounts and subject to availability. Effective 05/02/13. 1700 Shelburne Rd., So. Burlington, Vt. Take Exit 13 off I-89, left on rt. 7 for 1.5 miles, same entrance as Holiday Inn Express.

### GREEN MOUNTAIN SUITES HOTEL

Experience all the Charm of a Boutique Vermont Country Inn Escape to beautiful Burlington, Vermont starting at \$119/night weekdays Luxurious One-Bedroom Suite Includes Vermont-style Hot Breakfast served each morning Includes Manager's Social with Beer, Wine and Dinner (Mon-Thurs evenings) Heated Indoor Pool/Jacuzzi & Exercise facility Walking distance to University Mall and close to Lake Champlain and the Church Street Marketplace. Promotional rate may not be available during select periods. Contact hotel for more information Toll-free reservations **866.337.1616**

### QUALITY INN

Special Rate for 2 night hotel stay for \$149.99 USD or 1 night for \$79.99 plus Tax. Park & Fly rate which includes 1 night stay with round trip transportation to BTV airport and up to 21 days parking for \$139.00 plus Tax. Rates based on double occupancy. Additional charge \$10/person/night. Pet charge

## VERMONT

\$20/pet/night. These rates also include Full Hot Breakfast, Indoor Heated Pool, Hot Tub, Sauna, Fitness center, Free wireless Internet and a Business center. Directions: I-89, Exit-13. Rates based on availability. Not valid on busy weekends. This promotion is available till 04/30/2014. Call **802-985-8037** or Toll Free: **855-547-2524** for reservation.

### TRAVELODGE

Close to downtown Burlington shopping malls and outlets. Enjoy a Free Full Hot Breakfast, High speed wireless internet and pets welcome. Special rates for 2 nights \$129.00 USD or 1 night for \$69.99 USD Plus Tax. Additional \$10 USD per person/night. Pet Charge \$10/pet/night. Rates based on availability and not valid on busy weekends. Promotion valid till 04/30/2014. Call **802-862-6421** for reservations.

### DAYS INN SHELBURNE

Our special winter rates are \$135 for 2 nights or \$69 for 1 night double or single occupancy. Newly remodeled rooms or suites available until 4/30/14. Call directly to book this special offer to our Canadian patrons. These rates include free wireless, deluxe continental breakfast and free use of Shelburne health and fitness club. There are a limited number of rooms available at this rate. Take 189 to exit 13 and make a left. We are 3 miles down on the left. Close to restaurants, shops and museums. Call **802-985-3334** or email [dianna@daysinnshelburne.com](mailto:dianna@daysinnshelburne.com)