

Disconnect at lakes of Mauricie fishing lodge

Remote location means no TV signal, cells or car access



ROCHELLE LASH
COUNTRY ROADS

The trophy trout in the lakes of Mauricie weigh up to two or three kilos. Need I say more?

For an angler, that's as irresistible as a glistening lure for a hungry fish.

La Seigneurie du Triton, a historic hunting and fishing lodge that opens for the speckled trout season next month, is the gateway to fishing nirvana. It's also total immersion in a gloriously pure and rugged wilderness setting of lakes and mountains.

Back in the day, Triton attracted adventuresome travellers such as Theodore Roosevelt and Winston Churchill (but not when they were heads of state) and several Rockefellers and Molsons. Today, Triton has the burnished, authentic patina of that once-exclusive lodge.

This outpost is so remote that there is no cellphone service, no television signal, no car access, and electricity is provided by generator. Guests can reach the village of Lac Édouard by car or on VIA Rail, which takes a scenic route to a stop called Triton Club Station.

From here, travellers are ferried on a pontoon boat across Lac à la Croix to the lodge.

I'll be honest with you: I don't fish. I have dabbled and I do get the beauty of the pastime. Fishermen are passionate about the meditative relaxation of spending hours in nature, the subtle art of casting and spinning a rod, the craft of fly-fishing and the nobility of catch-and-release.

Annie Tremblay, who runs Triton with her husband, Nicolas Bernard, and her parents, Gilles and Annette Tremblay, previews an ideal day geared to fishing, although outdoor fans also come for hiking and canoeing and hunting at the nearby Réserve Faunique des Laurentides Territory.

6 a.m.: The Dawn Patrol: stroll down to the lakeshore



Some of the furnishings at La Seigneurie du Triton date from the original hunting and fishing lodge.

PHOTOS: LA SEIGNEURIE DU TRITON

with a café au lait to see the mist rising;

7 a.m.: Fishermen's Breakfast: Fuel up for a long morning on the lake with a heaping platter of eggs, bacon, sausages, pancakes and French toast.

7:30 a.m.: Bait 'n' Tackle: Triton's guides at its lakeside fishing cabin will set you up with a 14-foot runabout with a three-horsepower motor, and equip you with water, snacks, bait, rods, flies and lures and protection against blackflies.

Fishermen can set out on their own, and consult with guides who roam the lakes in boats pointing out where the fish are biting. There also are private guides for hire.

12 p.m.: The Shore Lunch: camaraderie and the chef's hearty specialties such as BBQ ribs or elk sausages. Or, you can dine on your own fresh catch. Wild trout are richer and more flavourful than those caught in an artificially stocked pond.

2 p.m.: The Great Outdoors, Part II: Guests can return to the lake, relax back at the inn or take a hike. There is a bear-observation site only a canoe ride away.

5 p.m.: Sunset: Enthusiasts will want to set out for an hour or so of night-fishing, now set to the music of frogs and birds.



La Seigneurie du Triton, in the wilderness of Mauricie, dates to the late 1880s.

8 p.m.: Dinner: You'll dine well. The choices might be pork spiced with maple syrup or roast capon with cranberries, followed by sugar pie. A six-service menu, which carries an extra fee, adds a platter of smoked fish and duck, caribou with berries and wild mushrooms plus sorbet, Quebec cheeses and chocolate fondant.

Triton was created in the 1860s, when railway engineer Alexander Luders Light was seduced by the plentiful lakes and impenetrable forests of the untamed region of Mauricie, all rich fishing and hunting grounds. He leased a vast

territory and set up camp.

This manly outpost became so popular with Light's gentlemen friends that he upgraded during the 1890s, creating the posh Triton Fish and Game Club, built of B.C. fir and decorated with leather sofas and stylish Victorian furniture. (Originally, La Seigneurie had its own signature china and flatware, but that has disappeared, although occasionally antique foragers call Annie Tremblay to say they have discovered some Triton heirlooms.)

The truly special aspect of Triton is that the building is intact, and that a lot of the fur-

niture and fittings have been preserved. The bedrooms (29 in the Club House, 21 in an annex — the Faunique, nine in the Batiscan Lodge and nine more in four chalets), have knotty pine walls and cotton comforters on the beds. The living room and dining rooms are treasures of another time.

You might not find La Seigneurie du Triton on a list of hotels. Quebec Tourism categorizes it as a "pourvoirie," which translates as "hunting and fishing camp," or outdoor outfitter. Pourvoiries range from rudimentary cabins up to country inns with private

IF YOU GO

La Seigneurie du Triton is a 4.5-hour drive from Montreal, east on Highway 40 and north at Trois-Rivières on Route 155. VIA Rail takes 5.5 hours, running three times a week from Montreal's Central Station to Triton Club Station.

La Seigneurie du Triton and La Pourvoirie Baie Johan-Beetz: 877-393-0557, 418-648-0557, www.seigneuriedutriton.com; www.villageinnusit.com; www.baiejohanbeetz.com. Open May 9 to Oct. 7, with fishing until Sept. 7. Hunting seasons vary, May to October, for black bear, hare and grouse.

Fishing Package: Until June 19 (high season for fishing), all-inclusive, \$230-\$260 p.p., double occ., in the main inn; June 20-Sept. 7, it's \$175 p.p.-\$205, including three meals, guest computer with Internet, fishing excursions and outdoor activities (canoes, kayak, playground, nature trails, pedalos, black-bear observation); some rooms have shared bathrooms. Four chalets are available for two to 10 people (self-cooking). Extras: wireless Internet (\$5), gastronomic menu, private guides. Lodging without fishing are available. Children age 3 and under stay for free; four to 15 have a 50 per cent discount, and 14 to 17 have a 30 per cent reduction.

Fédération des pourvoiries du Québec: 800-567-9009, www.fpq.com.

Mauricie regional tourism: 800-567-7603, www.tourismemauricie.com

bathrooms, fine cuisine and winter snow sports.

The owners have done their best to protect Triton and its environment. Some guest rooms still have shared bathrooms because they did not want to break down walls. Outdoors, they have added a small playground and sandbox for children, but have avoided hydroelectric poles, solar panels and windmills. Just the way Roosevelt and Churchill liked it.

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