

LA POMMERIE HAS BARE ESSENTIALS – AND MORE



ROCHELLE LASH
Checking In

Full disclosure: To get the naked truth for this story, I conformed to the customs of the naturist community, a.k.a. nudists.

Gilles Beauchamp invited me to visit his picturesque vacation centre La Pommerie, near Ormstown. An architect in Montreal, he is a gracious and generous host who offered me carte blanche to enjoy everything — meals, sports and cocktails.

It sounded idyllic. I would enjoy a day in the rolling hills of the southern Quebec countryside amid the aromatic pink blossoms of an apple orchard. I could play a rousing tennis match, then chill on the shore of a tranquil lake. And I could almost taste the perky white wine from La Pommerie’s own vineyard.

One tiny detail: La Pommerie is a Garden of Eden where, like the Bible’s Adam and Eve, no one wears clothes. Not even a fig leaf. It is a naturist camp.

Yup. I would be working on my tennis strokes bare-bottomed, skinny-dipping in the swimming pools, dining in my birthday suit and disco-dancing in the buff. In short, I would be stripped of my pretensions — and everything else.

Beauchamp’s invitation sounded intriguing and adventurous, but I decided to get the bare facts before deciding whether to go au naturel in the company of hundreds of my new best friends.

“When you are naked, you are in your natural state,” said Beauchamp, who opened La Pommerie 40 years ago. “No artifice, no play-acting. Yes, it takes time to break the ice, but sometimes as little as 15 minutes until you get comfortable in your own skin.

“When people hear the word ‘nudist,’ they often think of something sexual,” Beauchamp said. “But our naturist philosophy is not about sex, it is about being in harmony with nature and with other people.”

Well, I do enjoy frolicking in the fresh air and soaking up sunshine amid beautiful landscapes — so maybe I am a candidate. That would be most pleasurable at La Pommerie. It is a former farm with beautiful grassy grounds, a new three-kilometre nature path, three swimming pools, and a small lake with a private beach. Guests have



Life at La Pommerie is clothing-free for adults and children, and includes a small lake with a private beach. *PHOTOS: LA POMMERIE*



The idyllic resort is a former farm with beautiful grassy grounds, a three-kilometre nature path, three swimming pools and indoor activities.

a communal garden and everyone is welcome to play softball, tennis, volleyball and archery. All you need is sunscreen.

For indoor pastimes, the property’s old barns have been transformed into various leisure pavilions housing a children’s playroom, a wine-tasting lounge, a massage area, a licensed restaurant, a disco and a fitness room.

La Pommerie welcomes as many as 500 visitors who are on day trips and it also can lodge about 500 more in chalets, trailers and campgrounds spread throughout the woods, the orchards and the fields. Many vacationers are regulars who are

there for the summer; others rent chalets in the woods, trailers or dormitory beds. It’s no-frills accommodations, but it is well-maintained and well-priced.

La Pommerie rarely feels crowded because there might be 10 people at volleyball, 20 at a swimming pool and 30 at the beach. La Pommerie also is very strong on family life, so there are lots of children cavorting around, especially at the swimming pools

It sounds as though you can simply let it all hang out, but La Pommerie has rules. Cameras and clothes are forbidden. You can tote around a towel to sit on, but cover-ups are permitted only in cold or

IF YOU GO

La Pommerie: 450-826-4723, pommerie.com, 2914 Route 209, St-Antoine-Abbé. Open until Sept. 27.

Price: A one-day pass to La Pommerie costs about \$16, plus \$17-25 for campsite with water and electricity for RVs or campers. Rentals available in chalets, rooms in a small lodge or trailers, \$88 for one or \$100 for two, per night; per week it’s \$470 for one or \$550 for two. Dorm rooms (sleeping bag required) cost about \$19 per night or \$118 per week, plus access fees. Children under 18 with their parents are admitted for free. The beach, the lake and swimming pools and activities like baseball, tennis, volleyball and archery are free.

More information at: Fédération québécoise de naturisme: vivreenu.ca,

which has an online calendar of activities like clothes-free yoga, indoor sports and swimming pools, bowling, spa life and brunch.

Also Federation of Canadian Naturists: fcn.ca; 416-410-6833, 888-512-NUDE (6833); American Association for Nude Recreation (AANR): 800-TRY-NUDE (879-6833); aanr.com. In Ontario, the Lakesun Club (www.lakesun.net) and Bare Oaks (bareoaks.ca). In Florida, there is Cypress Cove Nudist Resort & Spa (cypresscoveresort.com); Hawaii (hanginloose.com); California (lagunadelosol.com).

International naturist destinations: cluborient.com (Caribbean); sunsportgardens.com and paradiselakes.com (Florida); chm-montalivet.com (France); elportus.com (Spain).

rainy weather. The exceptions are the restaurant and cooking staff who do their jobs fully dressed.

If you like this idea of baring it all, you are not alone. The American Association for Nude Recreation (AANR) counts more than 200 resorts in Canada, the U.S. and the Caribbean and estimates that there are 52 million people who enjoy Nakatoning, skinny-dipping and family friendly, clothing-optional recreation.

The World Record Skinny-Dip

will take place at participating affiliated clubs and resorts and nude beaches throughout North America on July 11, at 3 p.m.

THE BOTTOM LINE: I did meet with Beauchamp at La Pommerie and followed the house rules about clothing. It was a chilly, rainy day in May, and naturists do wear clothes in inclement weather. Decision made — and I am still a virgin at strip softball.

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