



The cool Auberge Sutton Brouërie recently opened a micro-brasserie that is the latest hit on the main street. PHOTOS: AUBERGE SUTTON BROUËRIE

HIP SUTTON INN OFFERS BEDS, BOUFFE, BREWS



ROCHELLE LASH
Checking In

The historic town of Sutton in the Eastern Townships has hot new blood coursing through its main street.

The Auberge Sutton Brouërie is a hip micro-world that encompasses cool lodging in airy lofts, a fun brasserie serving modern pub food at accessible prices and a spanking new microbrewery that elevates beer to an art form.

You might know Auberge Sutton Brouërie as the former Auberge D & K, which opened several years ago across from the Info Sutton office. It is a contemporary industrial-rustic inn built of spruce and steel, overlooking the Sutton River that runs through the village.

Brouërie is owned by four new kids on the block who are popping with progressive ideas and youthful energy. Élise Bourduas, 33, is the general manager. Her partner, Martin Surprenant, 39, is in charge of operations. Amielle Doyon-Gilbert, 33, is the restaurant maître d'. And her partner, Patrick Roy, 41, formerly a brewer at La Brasserie Dunham, runs the microbrewery that opened a few weeks ago.



The industrial-rustic inn has eight two-level suites.

Not a partner, but a key member of the team, chef Maxime Pepin mans the kitchen. He has credentials in both bistro and formal cuisine, having been a sous-chef at the popular Les Enfants Terribles in Outremont and at Restaurant Europea on Mountain St. with Jérôme Ferrer, a Grand Chef of Relais & Châteaux.

Bouffe & beer: The Brouërie is a warm, appealing rustic-chic restaurant with rough barn wood, vintage sports photographs and artistic touches such as Doyon-

Gilbert's beer-tap wall, custom-crafted of old blowtorches.

The place is busy for lunch, après-ski, family suppers and dinner with friends. It's downright packed on weekends and for events such as piano nights, storytelling, Wednesday card games and political and sporting events on TV. The front room is a sociable scene with high-topped communal seating, a bar and traditional tables with leather tavern chairs. The back room is a stunner, with glass garage doors yielding a soothing country tab-

leau of trees, the little river, and in summer, a terrace.

But, which comes first at Brouërie — suds or supper? Both. Chef Pepin is preparing beer pairings with his favourite dishes, and brewmaster Roy is committed to his art, using 100-per-cent wild yeast (brett), indigenous herbs and aromatics such as berries, spruce and oak.

The microbrewery that opened a few weeks ago is a state-of-the-art installation with shiny stainless-steel tanks and a touch-screen computer to regulate fermentation and chilling. It's enclosed in glass, so you can gaze at beer-in-the-making.

The brasserie's blackboard lists about 15 kinds of beer — house brews as well as a curated selection of Quebec micro-brews. The bar also offers single-malt Scotches and regional potables such as cider from Les Vergers de la Colline and goodies from Domaine Pinnacle: Quartz vodka, Ungava gin, Chic-Choc rum and Coureur des Bois, a maple-laced whisky.

The aromas from the kitchen are seductive and the food presentations are pretty. The lunch menu (11 a.m.-5 p.m.) features onion soup laced with beer, fried calamari, duck wings, tartare of the day, Angus-beef burgers, poutine with duck confit, and pasta with truffle oil, peas and Parmesan.

The after-5 p.m. menu adds trout gravlax, bangers 'n' smash (the menu pitches this sausage dish as "comme chez les Anglais") and a dish of the night — could be veal T-bones, venison osso bucco, lamb, beer-beef stew or steak-frites.

Pepin's vegetables are so tasty — many are produced by Lisa Carrey of La Ferme Verte — and one exceptional dish is the warm grilled vegetable salad with a

IF YOU GO

Auberge Sutton Brouërie: 855-311-0005, 450-538-0005, aubergesuttonbrouerie.com; 25 rue Principale S., Sutton.

Lodging: \$139 on Sun.-Thurs., or \$149 on Fri.-Sat., for one person; or for two, it's \$149-\$159, in a two-bedroom unit, including breakfast, and ski/bike storage. Third and fourth adults pay extra. No charge for children under 13. Ski-Dodo-Ski Package at Mont Sutton (Mon.-Fri. only), with one night lodging, breakfast and 1.5 days of ski-ride, \$109 p.p., double occ. For two nights and 2.5 days, that's \$195 p.p., double occ.

Restaurant: Wed.-Sun., 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Starters, \$7-\$10; mains, \$15-\$22.

Mont Sutton: 866-538-2545, www.montsutton.com; ski, snowboard, Alpine touring. Tourism Sutton: 800-565-8455, www.infosutton.com.

pesto-herb dressing. Soon there will be a late-night bar menu, Sunday brunch and sugaring-off specials.

Two-bedroom lofts: All of Auberge Sutton Brouërie's eight lodging units are two storeys, with one king bed downstairs and a king or two twins on an open mezzanine. Compact and minimalist, they have good lighting, flat-screen TVs, pod coffee machines and just enough space for your sports gear. The bathrooms, one per unit, are ultra-modern, with rectangular sinks and walk-in glass showers. The lodging section is double-insulated, so life is quiet, even though there is a restaurant downstairs.

Hotel guests get a great start to the day with nourishing breakfast choices: overnight oats with fruit, chia seeds and yogurt; breakfast burritos with cheddar; or Martha Stewart's buttermilk waffles with berries and whipped cream.

Mont Sutton: Sutton has free ski demo days every weekend and animation in the snow park on Saturdays. The après-ski Bar Le Tucker serves micro-brews and presents live-music artists on Fridays and a music open-mic night on Thursdays. Easter activities will be the highlight on the mountain, March 25-28.

March 12 is dedicated to the cardio-busting sport of ski mountaineering, a.k.a. Alpine touring, which is becoming mainstream. There will be demos and excursions, plus the SkiMo Challenge (a friendly race open to everyone) and the magical Night Traverse, which is touring after-dark, with a buffet dinner (\$50) at the main chalet, Alt 400, at 8 p.m.

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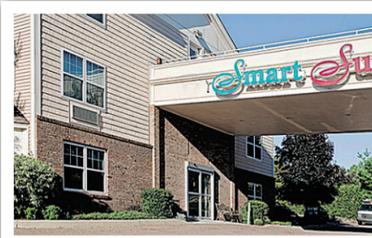
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