



The regal Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu is part of the history and landscape of Charlevoix. PHOTOS: FAIRMONT HOTELS & RESORTS

IF YOU GO

Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu: 800-441-1414, 418-665-3703, fairmont.com/richelieu-charlevoix. Prices include indoor-outdoor swimming pools, hot tubs, steam/sauna, in-room Nespresso and bottled water. Rates fluctuate and start at about \$159, Nov.-June, (or \$129 with non-refundable Fairmont Savers Advance Purchase). From July-Oct, rates start at \$249 (\$199 with advance purchase). Resort fee of \$20 per room covers Wi-Fi with Press Reader, hotel tours (with reservation), fitness centre, self-parking, ice fishing, snowshoeing, skating oval, hockey rink/sticks, broom-ball, tubing, bonfires, horse-drawn carriage ride, board games. In summer, bicycles, tennis, mini-golf, fishing, lawn games, volleyball, visits to stables, group jogging/walks. **For children:** cinema, playgrounds, game room with Wi-Fi. Fitness classes, yoga can be customized. **Extra:** valet parking, snowmobiling, dog sledding, winter kayaking, skiing. In summer, golf, whale-watching. **Le Spa du Manoir Richelieu:** 866-263-7477, 418-202-0722, amerispamanoirrichelieu@amerispa.ca **Charlevoix Tourism:** 800-667-2276, tourisme-charlevoix.com

FAIRMONT EMBODIES SPIRIT OF CHARLEVOIX



ROCHELLE LASH
Checking In

The landmark Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu in Charlevoix has two personalities.

It is a fairy tale castle for children, with oodles of activities, from chilly snow tubing to heated outdoor swimming.

Le Manoir also is a regal chateau for bon vivants, known for its award-winning cuisine and outstanding spa life.

"The hotel is grand, but it also has the spirit and warmth of a country cottage," said Le Manoir's director Jean-Jacques Etcheberrigaray. "About 80 per cent of our guests during school holidays are returning families. Vacationing here has been a tradition for many generations."

THE SCENE

Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu personifies the splendid region of Charlevoix with great local food and drink, a robust lifestyle and mesmerizing landscapes of pastel skies, impressive mountains and the commanding St. Lawrence River. "There is an almost spiritual attraction to this magnificent region, and winter here is a quintessential experience," Etcheberrigaray said.

Once an elite summer-only resort, Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu has evolved to become



The all-season outdoor pool is an irresistible attraction.

a sophisticated family getaway that also happens to be great value because so much is included in a visit.

"Operationally, the hotel is at its best — the 405 rooms have been renovated, the updated spa sparkles and we have several restaurants in full swing."

THE CUISINE

"Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu likely is the top resort in Quebec for terroir," executive chef Patrick Turcot said.

"About 75 per cent of our ingredients are produced within a radius of 50 kilometres," said the maestro, who is both an international culinary ambassador and president of the Charlevoix agro-tourism trail, La route des Saveurs.

"Charlevoix is famous for delectable pork, veal, duck, beef and cheese, plus we have cider, microbrews and liqueurs."

Creative cocktails at La Brise lobby lounge are shaken and

stirred with such unique products as apple mistelle from the Cidrerie Vergers Pedneault on nearby L'Isle-aux-Coudres, or Omerto, the perky tomato wine from Le Domaine de la Vallée du Bras in Baie St-Paul.

Table et Terroir is the Fairmont's newly reimagined bistro where the signature dish is a hefty, juicy 30-ounce Galloway Tomahawk steak from La Ferme l'Oiseau Bleu, also in Baie-St-Paul. That's the big-ticket item. Other Quebec delicacies include smoked trout and salmon, organic sausages and creme de gourganes (bean) soup.

At Le Charlevoix Restaurant, Turcot's ode to gastronomy, the most indulgent dish is silky foie gras from La Ferme Basque in St-Urbain. Other regional treats include emu, scallops, crab bisque, duck breast, lamb, pheasant, cod and lobster. When Turcot cooks at home, his family's top choice is his wild mushroom risotto.

If you're an Iron Chef at

heart, Le Manoir Richelieu runs friendly competitions, plus culinary workshops and tasting tours at local producers throughout the countryside.

SPA LIFE

All hotel guests have access to the eucalyptus steam room and sauna in the indoor pool area, so everyone can fashion a spa day, paired with outdoor swimming and hot tubbing.

You can take the experience to full spa immersion. The in-house Le Spa du Manoir run by Amerispa has been totally redecorated with new mani-pedi stations and 13 treatment rooms for such services as a body exfoliation with essence of Labrador tea, facials with prestigious products by Valmont or Sothys and several types of massages, including those for couples and moms-to-be.

FOR FAMILIES

The Fairmont represents significant family value. Kids stay for free in their parents' room, and until March 31, a second room for children 18 and under will cost half-price. Youngsters age five and under eat for free and those six to 12 pay half-price from regular menus.

The big draw for everyone is the exceptional pool and whirlpool system. Juniors paddle and frolic; teens socialize; grown-ups unwind. There is a complete indoor pool setup, but to me, the special feature is the outdoor installation, under an open sky and surrounded by snow banks.

The Fairmont's vast activity roster ranges from hotel tours to

horse-drawn carriage rides, plus an array of sports like ice-fishing, hockey, snowshoeing and, for a romantic touch, skating on a large oval overlooking the river.

The Charlevoix Family Ski Experience features downhill at Le Massif de Charlevoix or Le Mont Grand-Fonds. Insider tip: Mont Grand-Fonds also has an outstanding cross-country network with heated cabins.

Grown-up gastronomy aside, the children's corner at the St Laurent buffet has mini-tourtières and chocolate chip French toast, and Table et Terroir features homemade chips, crispy veggies, mac 'n' cheese, milk shakes and brownies.

The magical close to the day at Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu is an evening bonfire, complete with marshmallows. Another quintessential tradition. Rochelle@rochellelash.com twitter.com/rochellelash

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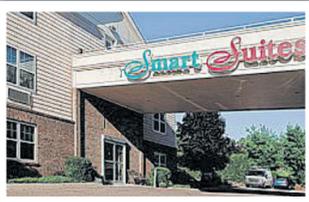


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