

HOTEL INTEL

CANNABIS-CENTRIC SPA LETS YOU EXPERIENCE BLISS WITHOUT THE HIGH

Treatments are only part of the appeal at Ste. Anne’s, a deluxe country estate



ROCHELLE LASH

Are you in the market for a blissed out cannabis experience? I have the perfect place. You can chill all day in your bathrobe. And, if you get the munchies, there are homemade chocolate chip cookies and banana bread. Plus, you’ll be relaxed to the max. But this trip is not about getting stoned on pot.

It’s about a sojourn to Ste. Anne’s Spa, the epitome of a gracious getaway. It’s a deluxe country estate in central Ontario, embracing picturesque meadows and gently rolling hills. At its core is an 1800s castle-like manor with country-chic decor and fine dining. No wacky weed here — more like an Old World aura with a new cannabis angle.

“We’re traditional, but we have a very progressive spa,” says Natalie Koshowski, spa director. “We stay in the vanguard with our products and services.”

To that end, Ste. Anne’s recently added products infused with CBD, a cannabis hemp extract that has anti-inflammatory properties. It’s not the same as the THC in marijuana that people smoke, but it’s derived from the same plant.

A cannabis-centric spa treatment is only one modest attraction. Ste. Anne’s has been one of Canada’s most prominent destination spas for more than 35 years.

It’s intimate, personal and friendly, but it also is a big operation with magnificent grounds, comprehensive wellness facilities, fine cuisine and mini-vacations with golf or yoga. There are extras that you won’t find everywhere, including walking trails, a bakery that creates gluten-free goodies like basil focaccia, horse stables and a cattle farm, a meditation labyrinth and boutiques for resort wear and gourmet fare.

IF YOU GO

Ste. Anne’s Spa
Phone: 888-346-6772, 905-349-2493
Website: steannes.com
Address: 1009 Massey Rd., Grafton, Ont.
Restrictions: For ages 19 and over, with some exceptions in the cottages.
Price: Sept.-Nov. and March-May, from \$400 per person, double occupancy, in the Main Inn; shared cottages, some with kitchenettes, from \$349 per person, double occupancy. Prices are lower Dec.-Feb. and higher June-Aug. Singles add \$100. All-inclusive, with meals/tea daily, \$120 spa credit per person per visit, some wellness classes, spa facilities, outdoor heated pool through Sept., walking trails, gardens, Wi-Fi, signature botanical toiletries. Art classes, \$50 per person, for small groups. Ontario Tourism, live chats at: ontariotravel.net

Ste-Anne’s is about a five-hour drive west of Montreal, and about 90 minutes east of downtown Toronto. The hotel will arrange pickup at the Via Rail station in Cobourg, Ont.

The scene: Ste. Anne’s two defining factors are its all-inclusive formula and its splendid setting. You can cruise around all day without reaching for your wallet. Meals, afternoon tea, a wealth of facilities and \$120 worth of spa treatments, per person, per visit, are included, and tipping is not expected.

Life centres around the Main Inn, with 14 guest rooms, the dining room and spa. If you would like more privacy, you



The genteel Ste. Anne’s Spa in central Ontario is a deluxe, all-inclusive wellness resort. PHOTOS: STE. ANNE’S SPA



Ste. Anne’s Spa has a full roster of facilities and treatments, including a new cannabis-centric massage.

can rent all or part of eight cottages, which are between 500 metres and 1.5 kilometres from the main inn (a shuttle is available).

Each guest room and suite is unique and elegantly appointed with furnishings like four-poster canopy beds, antiques and fireplaces. Even the bathrooms are loaded with character. Ste. Anne’s is a rambling vintage property, so they range in size, but some have claw-foot tubs and heated floors. With relaxation in mind, the guest rooms don’t have phones or TVs — the idea is to unplug.

In addition to spa treatments, the outdoor experience is so exceptional here.

Wellness: Ste. Anne’s has extensive indoor and outdoor spa facilities: sauna, steam, hot and

cold pools, a heated swimming pool and such special features as an underwater treadmill for extra resistance.

It’s creative, too. One of the wellness excursions includes a visit to the resort’s farm to muck out stables and groom horses (two activities that are super relaxing), although the horses are not available for riding.

“We offer pampering treatments like the milk-and-sesame stone wrap and the aqua body polish,” said Koshowski, “but we go well beyond that with sports and pre-natal massages, chakra awareness and the new Healing with Hemp series.”

The new botanical potions are infused with CBD, which Ste. Anne’s uses to for skin care, pain relief and treating headaches.

The food: You might be in your

bathrobe in the dining room, but Ste. Anne’s keeps up standards with fine food. No liquor is served, but you are welcome to bring your own to the table or anywhere on the property.

Specialty dishes include hormone-free Angus beef from Ste. Anne’s Farm, and vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free and dairy-free options.

For breakfast, you can go lean with smoothies or poached eggs, or indulge with crème brûlée French toast or eggs Benedict. Lunch might be curries, salads, burgers or a VLT (with veggies). Dinner features include duck confit, chicken fricassee, ratatouille or the daily beef special. Afternoon tea is a treat with sandwiches, cheeses and gluten-free baked goods like blueberry scones and butter tarts.

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