



Maison Otis, a historic property in the Charlevoix region, has been updated with chic furnishings and contemporary art done by locals. MAISON OTIS

IF YOU GO

**Maison Otis:** 418-435-2255, maisonotis.com; 23 St-Jean-Baptiste St., Baie-St-Paul. **Price:** Rooms start at \$139 for two to four people; suites start at \$159; including continental breakfast if you book directly; mini-fridge; Nespresso; baby gear. Pet-friendly, \$25 per night. Prices are higher from June to mid-September.

**Le Diapason:** 418-435-2929, restolediapason.com; 1 Ste-Anne St., Baie-St-Paul. Three-course dinner, \$38-\$47. Kids' three courses, \$16. Vegan/vegetarian available. Winter, open Tues.-Sat., dinner only (more hours during holidays). Summer, open Mon.-Sun., 11 a.m.-10 p.m.

**Le Massif de Charlevoix:** 877-536-2774, 418-632-5876, lemassif.com; 23 kilometres from Baie-St-Paul.

**Charlevoix information:** 800-667-2276, tourisme-charlevoix.com.

HOTEL INTEL

# ART IS FOUNDATION FOR REBUILD AT MAISON OTIS IN BAIE-ST-PAUL

*Part boutique hotel, part traditional inn, it's been modernized into 17 accommodations*



ROCHELLE LASH

The quaint village of Baie-St-Paul in Charlevoix revolves around art, and the acclaimed Maison Otis has been renovated and reopened with art as its theme.

The renewed establishment is the lodging centrepiece of Baie-St-Paul's main street, St-Jean-Baptiste St., a walkable few blocks of cafés, art galleries and cute shops.

**Lodging:** Maison Otis is part boutique hotel and part traditional inn, operating in a nearly 200-year-old stone house. It recently modernized and transformed cosy lodgings into 17 chic hotel-style accommodations, with a lounge and breakfast room.

It's a jaw-dropping change. The guest rooms' colour scheme is

subdued white, black and pale grey, and the décor features black lacquered furniture, navy velvet headboards and brass lamps. All are very well-appointed.

The five rooms in the main house each are graced with an original mural by a Charlevoix artist. The works are contemporary, even avant-garde; they add colour and a modern zing to the genteel, historic establishment.

The guest rooms have different shapes and features, so it's all an adventure in architecture. Some have angled cathedral ceilings; two suites in the adjacent Pavilion Danais have tall, ornate windows. Most have original stone walls. All of the bathrooms are brand new, with white marble and glass showers, and some with tubs. And all rooms have new wooden floors and flat-screen TVs, and include bathrobes, organic toiletries and Nespresso coffee.

Maison Otis has a long and distinguished history. One corridor is decorated with vintage photos and a timeline that documents

the Otis family, going back to 1600s England and through their presence in Baie-St-Paul.

The hotel's Lounge Corp.O is open Thursdays through Saturdays from 5 p.m. for drinks, notably cocktails made with Quebec spirits. Pianist Renée Gagnon and singer-musician Annie Morin entertain on Fridays and Saturdays.

Maison Otis's plans include gardens, gazebos and terraces for summertime cocktails.

**Dining:** Le Diapason is run by a husband-and-wife couple — chef Steve Michel and maitre d' Eve Soulard. The charming French-Quebec restaurant, a rustic wooden cottage with wine-coloured walls, is part of the famed Charlevoix food trail La Route des saveurs.

Ingredients are fresh from farm and sea. Michel's starters include Galloway beef gravlax, mushroom confit with local Tomme cheese, croquettes of crab and cheddar, and smoked salmon from Fumoir St-Antoine. Main courses might be flank steak, salmon confit in fir-tree oil or duck magret from La Ferme Basque de Charlevoix.

Le Diapason also pays tribute to Michel's native land of

Alsace, France, presenting dishes such as pork from Les Viandes Biologiques de Charlevoix with sauerkraut, and flammekueche (like a thin pizza) with snails, cheese and crème fraîche.

Also from France is the hearty tartiflette, a casserole of potatoes, onions, lardons, cream and cheese.

**Le Massif:** The region's best-known outdoor escape is Le Massif de Charlevoix. The ski-and-snowboard area has the highest vertical drop in Eastern Canada, an exceptional snowfall and spectacular views of the St. Lawrence River. It's also a sociable

sporting area that holds amazing events, including competitions and parties.

Spring skiing gets wild and crazy. Le Massif Open features three days of festivities (March 27 to 29), including skiing and riding demos and vintage ski costumes. For snowboarders, the Epic Banked Slalom (April 11) is a rugged obstacle course tackled individually or in teams. The season closes with the adrenalin-packed Le Splash (April 18), in which brave skiers and snowboarders swoop into a basin of water.

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Steve Michel operates Le Diapason in Baie-St-Paul alongside his wife, Eve Soulard. Dishes often pay tribute to his native France. LOUIS LALIBERTÉ

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