

BOISÉ RIVIÈRE SURROUNDED BY NATURE IN TOWNSHIPS

Charming B&B is nestled on lush grounds with luxury amenities for guests



ROCHELLE LASH

The Eastern Townships became an orange zone on Monday, allowing for the opening of restaurant dining rooms and other businesses under certain conditions. See quebec.ca/coronavirus for information.

The picture-perfect Boisé Rivière, an 1880s cottage at the heart of a wooded estate, is one of the most delightful B&Bs in the Eastern Townships.

That's high praise — the historic Magog-Orford region is rife with graceful old houses turned into appealing inns. But it's tough to beat this charmer.

Boisé Rivière boasts an exceptional setting, with lots of land and a gentle, outdoorsy lifestyle. Its grounds include a lush forest of century-old maples, birches, firs and pines, with bursts of wildflowers such as tiny forget-me-nots, daisies and lupines.

A branch of the Missisquoi River runs through the property and guests have access to a swimming spot, as well as a one-kilometre walking path up and down a wooded hillside. If you wake at dawn, you might see the neighbours — wild turkeys, deer, raccoons and a variety of birds. To take it all in, there are benches in the woods and a furnished patio sheltered by a rock garden blooming with irises, hydrangeas and lavender.

No matter where you perch, you are serenaded by birdsong.

Besides being close to nature, Boisé Rivière is cheery and colourful.

It's a canary-yellow cottage with a large, inviting blue and white porch, and interiors in tasty hues like lemon, raspberry and blueberry. The B&B is decorated with antique country furniture, patterned bed quilts and lots of plants and collectibles.

New owners: You might know the place as L'Iris Bleu, which operated for 27 years, but it's been updated and renamed by husband and wife André Turcotte and Nathalie Paulin, Quebecers who had moved out west. She worked in finance and he was in law enforcement; they are both outdoorsy, so they have the energy to sustain a large estate. They have refreshed the interiors, changed the mattresses and bedding, and planted berry bushes, herbs, vegetables and trees that will bear apples, pears and plums.

Modernized and beautifully maintained, Boisé Rivière has three guest rooms, each with a private bathroom and a clawfoot tub.

Paulin and Turcotte are dedicated locavores. The bath products are from Oneka in Frelighsburg, and their micro-boutique of crafts carries soaps by SL Peau Skin of Eastman and beaded bracelets by Paulin, who multitasks as an artisan. The couple also tap their own trees for maple syrup and even try to stay within a 15-kilometre radius for their ingredients.

Breakfast: Paulin loves to cook, Turcotte is a meticulous sous-



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PHOTOS: BOISÉ RIVIÈRE

chef, and the solarium and garden dining areas are captivating, so breakfasts are truly special. You might start with barista coffee roasted by the nearby Fitch Bay Café, as well as juice or a smoothie, followed by overnight oats, yogurt, granola or La Vie en Rose, a refreshing smoothie fruit bowl.

Breakfast peaks with mains like French toast topped with oranges and berries, grilled vegetable frittata, omelettes with mushrooms and cheese from the nearby Abbaye de St-Benoît-du-Lac, or crêpes with strawberry compote.

Paulin and Turcotte understand flexibility, so they'll do gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian and lactose-free diets, with notice.

Paulin has foraged throughout the region for her ingredients. Bread comes from Owl's Bread in Mansonville; berries from Paradis des Fruits in Dunham; eggs from F785 Rhubarbe et Compagnie in Bolton East; and vegetables from Les Jardins Bolton, also in Bolton East.

Another indispensable source is Le Rucher Boltonnois, a non-profit group of producers that operates an online market as well as two summertime projects: the Bolton East Public Market and the outdoor Bistro du Marché (Saturdays, June 12 to Oct. 9, Terrio Park; check rucherboltonnois.net for hours;



The cheery, colourful Boisé Rivière cottage dates to the 1880s.

live music from 11:30 a.m.).

What to do: Spa Bolton, almost next door to the B&B, is a full-fledged Nordic spa, with beauty and body treatments, hot and cold thermotherapy pools and even dips in the chilly Missisquoi River (spabolton.com).

Parc national du Mont-Orford is a superlative area for hiking. The region is also mad for biking. Around Bolton, cyclists share the roads with cars, but there are bike paths around Magog and Eastman. To stock up on gifts, you can buy gourmet foods and cheeses of the Abbaye de St-Benoît-du-Lac, and aromatic products at Bleu Lavande (which has moved to Magog) and Savonnerie des Diligences in Eastman. The Route des vins Brome-Missisquoi and the Circuit de l'Abbaye are among several tourist trails.

For lunch and dinner, Paulin recommends Bistro Les

IF YOU GO

Bolton East is approximately 75 minutes from the Champlain Bridge via Highway 10 to Exit 106.

Boisé Rivière: 819-919-5554, boiseriviere.com; 895 Route Missisquoi (Route 245), Bolton East.

Price: \$115-\$130 for two, queen bed; or \$140 for two, king bed and sofa bed; \$25 for each additional guest; including breakfast, Wi-Fi, walking trail, river access, coffee/tea corner. Singles pay \$15 less.

Eastern Townships tourism: 800-355-5755, easterntownships.org.

Trois Grâces in Eastman (bistrotroisgraces.com) and the more casual Resto Le Bolton, especially for pizza. rochelle@rochellelash.com



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