

HOTEL INTEL

# MANOIR DAVIS OFFERS GRAND VACATION GETAWAY

*Lavish heritage gem in Ste-Agathe-des-Monts rented out for exclusive stays in idyllic setting*



ROCHELLE LASH

They say you can't go home again. After visiting Manoir Davis in Ste-Agathe-des-Monts, you won't want to. This splendid mansion offers a rare opportunity to live like the elite of 100 years ago. Manoir Davis is the former country home of Sir Mortimer B. Davis (1866-1928), the rich and prominent president of the Imperial Tobacco Company of Canada Ltd., and a philanthropist who was instrumental in the development of the Young Men's Hebrew Association, the Mount Sinai Sanatorium near Ste-Agathe and what would become Montreal's Jewish General Hospital. In 1917, he became the first Jewish-Canadian to be knighted. Davis divided his time among three resplendent properties. His European playground was Les Gla'euls, an ornate villa in Cannes, France, where he kept a renowned stable of racehorses and frequented the Cannes Casino. (It's believed he died playing baccarat and was honoured with a huge funeral in Montreal.) His Montreal abode was a grand 1907 French beaux-arts-style residence on des Pins Ave., now known as Purvis Hall. And his

Laurentian getaway was the majestic Château Belvoir, now called Manoir Davis, which overlooks Lac des Sables. **Manoir Davis:** The neoclassical beauty has gone through many changes since it was built between 1908 and 1916, and has been designated a Quebec heritage site. The lavish villa was bought and remodelled by the Poissant-Lespérance and Major-Lespérance families of Montreal, and it's now rented out for exclusive sleepover gatherings of up to 16 people. Summer plans include an idyllic, 300-square-metre pavilion in the forest for large receptions. "Our mission is to breathe new life into this gem so that more people can appreciate it," said Louis Lespérance, a lawyer and president of Belvoir, which owns Manoir Davis and the Eastern Townships' Manoir Maplewood, another grand vacation getaway. "We also believe that it can be an economic driver for Ste-Agathe-des-Monts." Offering the ultimate in privacy, Manoir Davis is perched high up a steep, winding road and is surrounded by old-growth forests. Soon, extensive gardens will bloom. It's an architectural standout, remarkable for its sturdy stone exterior, elegant arched windows and a beguiling spiral staircase. That's just the beginning of this magazine-worthy mansion. Guests enjoy a formal dining



Once the country home of Sir Mortimer B. Davis, Manoir Davis in Ste-Agathe-des-Monts is an architectural standout that has opened its guest rooms and formal salons for business or leisure gatherings.



Manoir Davis is a magazine-worthy mansion. PHOTOS: MANOIR DAVIS

room, a double-size living room with two fireplaces and a 65-inch TV, a conservatory for small gatherings, and a stone terrace with a breathtaking vista of the lake, trees and mountains. There are heated marble floors throughout. Lespérance's mother, Louise Poissant, and his aunt, Lucie Major, decorated as befits an aristocratic dwelling, with richly patterned rugs, chinoiserie and fine furniture — some antique, some reproduction — in the Hepplewhite, Empire and Queen Anne styles. Maison Davis has eight luxurious bedrooms, seven with private bathrooms featuring L'Occitane en Provence toiletries, eye-catching black and white tiling, heated floors and superior bath fixtures. The second-floor master bedroom is a sensation, with wraparound views, a gas fireplace and a large oval tub. My favourite is the third-floor king room, a simple hideaway with

dormer windows, vaulted ceiling and wooden beams creating a countryside backdrop for the timeless decor. **Dining:** The state-of-the-art kitchen is a joy for passionate cooks. Surrounded by windows and modernized to the max, it has a breakfast table, two refrigerators, two dishwashers, two ovens, an induction stovetop and a large starter set of condiments, oils and spices. More than 30 kitchen cupboards and two dining room cabinets are filled with fine tableware, utensils, gold service plates and Limoges espresso cups. You can bring your own provisions or order in. One possibility is Chez Bernard, a catering company that specializes in French cuisine such as starters of foie gras and duck confit and main courses of salmon, filet mignon, veal chops, lamb and shrimp, all followed by excellent cheeses or desserts of lemon meringue and

**IF YOU GO**  
**Manoir Davis:** 450-920-1500, manoirdavis.com; 92 Sir Mortimer B. Davis Rd., Ste-Agathe-des-Monts. **Price:** Eight bedrooms from \$1,500 per night Sun.-Thurs. to \$4,000 per night on holidays; including exterior hot tub, barbecue, Wi-Fi, parking, trails, fireplace logs, lake access via a pathway. Netflix and Amazon Prime Video will soon be free. Meals not included. Housekeeping on request. **Laurentian tourism:** 800-561-6673, laurentides.com

chocolate mousse. Chez Bernard has privately imported wines and cocktail-party hors d'oeuvres, and family fare including meat for barbecues, tourtière and lasagna. **What to do:** Belvoir's team aims to provide anything guests want, such as private chefs, wine tastings, massages, boat rides, audiovisual equipment, helicopter rides and trappings for parties and conferences. Guests can walk the trails, mountain bike or snowshoe. The P'tit Train du Nord Linear Park, for cycling or cross-country skiing, is less than two kilometres away, and Mont Tremblant is a 40-minute drive.



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