

HOTEL INTEL

# CHALETS OFFER ESCAPE VIA ROADS LESS TRAVELLED



ROCHELLE LASH

In harmony with some of the best of Quebec's nature, the enchanting floating eco-chalets of Bora Boréal are both green and gorgeous.

The new-in-2023 Bora Boréal operates year-round in two locations, both in the boonies and accessible only via roads less travelled, and that's what makes them idyllic.

One set of chalets is in the Eastern Townships, about two hours from Montreal. That's 40 kilometres east of Sherbrooke, or 55 kilometres west of Mont-Mégantic national park. This site is ideal for the much-anticipated astronomical event of April 8: a total eclipse of the sun. The other development is more than three hours from Montreal, or 30 kilometres north of Quebec City, near Lac-Beauport.

Solitude, tranquillity and immersion in nature are the highlights of both, and the experience of living on the water is the main attraction.

Step aboard your vacation home and feel the gentle movement of a private lake lapping against the supporting floaters of each chalet. You are rocked to sleep by the waves. Even in winter when the surface freezes, there is motion down under. The closest neighbouring chalet is about 25 metres away and barely visible, and the only sounds are the rustlings and calls of the woods.

Bora Boréal offers restorative walks through the woods and across farmland, as well as seasonal pursuits like swimming and



Bora Boréal operates deluxe floating eco-chalets on remote private lakes in the Eastern Townships, as well as north of Quebec City. You can expect solitude, tranquillity and immersion in nature. BORA BORÉAL

skating. Equipment is supplied at no extra charge for kayaking, paddleboarding, snowshoeing and sledging.

Indoors, the décor is contemporary, with clean lines and an uncluttered look.

"We could call it light adventure because of the immersion in nature, but the chalets also are super-comfortable, with a high-end design and efficient amenities," said Nicolas Robitaille, president of Bora Boréal.

"Each chalet is a window to a magnificent landscape and we look forward to welcoming nature lovers."

**Two locations:** The concept in both Bora Boréal Eastern Townships and Bora Boréal Québec is similar. Two-storey floating chalets are moored to a lakeshore in a remote neck of the woods — but there are differences.

The chalets in both areas are heated with wood-burning fireplaces (firewood is supplied) with backup from a propane tank. They have kitchens with cooking utensils and tableware, plus propane stovetops, ovens in an iron stove and barbecues on the decks.

Solar panels generate electricity (but not heating) in all the chalets, so lighting and mini-fridges have power, but there is only enough juice to plug in cellphones, not laptops or TVs.

The Townships domain is built on an ancestral farm with a private lake and is the more developed destination. The design company Agence Spatiale has remodelled a vintage farmhouse into Espace Temps, a central pavilion that houses a relaxation area, showers and flush toilets. A big treat here is the mini-spa

experience at the three outdoor hot tubs. And there is Wi-Fi in each chalet.

Bora Boréal Québec is on a million-square-foot private estate. The chalets are the same as in the Townships, except that there is no Wi-Fi, so it's a total disconnect, and there is a much simpler central cabin with one shower and one toilet.

**Eco-venture:** Bora Boréal's environmentally sensitive ventures have been awarded three Green Keys out of five by the U.S.-based Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). The cottages are solar-powered and the operators are rigorous about controlling energy, waste and emissions.

Bora Boréal also wants help preserve Quebec's pristine lakes, so it provides a water tank and suggests consuming 18 litres per day for drinking, cooking and

IF YOU GO

**Bora Boréal:** 855-387-6243, boraboréal.com; Eastern Townships: 441 Batley Rd., Bury. Quebec City region: 405 St-Louis St., Ste-Brigitte-de-Laval. Pets \$100 per stay. Partially accessible.  
**Rates:** At Eastern Townships, from \$190 for up to four in a Mini-Bora or from \$260 in a BoraVilla for up to six, including bedding, towels, firewood, starter coffee. Between Lovers package adds \$149. Extra: massage, \$119-\$164. Quebec region rates slightly higher.  
**Eastern Townships tourism:** easterntownships.org  
**Haut St-François tourism:** tourismehsf.ca

washing dishes. The loos in the chalets are compost-style, without water.

The neighbourhood: The Townships Bora Boréal is in Haut-St-François, part of the Mont-Mégantic International Dark-Sky Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for a starry sky experience. To that end, each chalet has a skylight.

Bury, the closest community to Bora Boréal, is five kilometres away. It's a stop along the Townships' Trail that meanders through 31 towns with fine food and historic attractions. Bury also is known for the Pen-Y-Bryn golf course (1869), one of the oldest in North America.

Guests can cook in the chalets, but the catering company Oslo also can supply dinners using the best of Townships produce. Bora Boréal's menu features braised beef, pizza, mac'n'cheese, gourmet chili and ready-to-grill beef, salmon and poultry (oslotraiteur.com).

# There with you then. Here with you now.

As a critical part of the community for over 245 years, The Gazette continues to deliver trusted English-language news and coverage on issues that matter.

# The Gazette

montrealgazette.com

