

Hip and healthy pursuits

Yogis, foodies, music-lovers head to Tremblant for wellness fest

ROCHELLE LASH
SPECIAL TO MONTREAL GAZETTE

The pursuit of wellness for mind and body will hit new heights at the exciting and creative festival Wanderlust, taking place Aug. 20 to 23 at Tremblant.

Wanderlust is a four-day, new-age extravaganza that is expected to attract more than 6,000 yogis, foodies, music-lovers and outdoors fans.

“Wanderlust will make you feel invigorated,” said renowned yoga teacher Geneviève Guérard, a TV personality, yoga teacher and former principal dancer with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, who will be one of the participants. “This festival in the Laurentian Mountains is like a breath of fresh air.”

Wanderlust organizes a cutting-edge choice of hip and healthy pursuits, ranging from classic yoga high atop the summit of Tremblant, with views of lakes and

mountains; to acro-jam suspended in the trees, set to music; as well as guided hikes, photo excursions, lectures and a sunset lake cruise with wine and canapés. Wanderlust is a movable feast with international reach and festivals in the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

This month, the activities will take place all around the Tremblant resort, including at the Centre du Congrès, at Mont Tremblant's summit, on stage at Place St-Bernard, at the historic Chapel, at Place des Voyageurs at the mountain's base and, nearby, at the Tremblant Beach and Tennis Club. The Kula Market will feature kiosks set up by artisans and food producers throughout Tremblant.

One of the most magical experiences at Wanderlust will be an epicurean cruise at sunset on Lac Tremblant called Le Bateau Uncorked. A 40-passenger boat will cruise Lac Tremblant, Aug. 21 and

22, and will feature wine and beer tastings, artisan cheeses and hors d'oeuvres.

Some of the other marquee events are:

Yoga: Top local and international instructors including Guérard, Seane Corn, Sri Dharma Mittra, Janet Stone, Lyne St-Roch and Dina Tsouluhas will lead sessions in relaxing yin classes, challenging vinyasa and yoga on paddleboards.

The larger outdoor yoga classes held at Tremblant's summit or at the Tremblant Beach and Tennis Club generate the extraordinary energy of hundreds of yogis moving together. Live musicians or DJs accompany some of more intimate indoor sessions.

Wanderlust also presents innovative disciplines such as aerial yoga, Suspension Yoga and Om-Gym Suspension, in which participants hang upside down for their movements.

Lectures & workshops: Speakers at Wanderlust's Speakeasy series will include explorer and filmmaker Céline Cousteau; celebrity chef Hugh Acheson, who specializes in Southern U.S. cuisine; and Olympic snowboarder Caroline Calvé. The calendar of more than 25 lectures and workshops includes authors, filmmakers and musicians.

Music: Free concerts by The High and Mighty Brass Band, the soul folkies of Rising Appalachia and MC Yogi's hip-hop will rock the outdoor stage at Place St-Bernard in the Tremblant village. The main street of Tremblant's village will be renamed Rue Bohème and will feature all-day entertainment as well as informal dance parties. Aspiring musicians also can join workshops in drumming, guitar and other instruments.

Details: 855-926-3375, wanderlust.com; prices include access to four activities per day, concerts and

Tremblant summit gondola; one-day tickets, \$95 to \$155; three-day ticket, \$400, and four-day ticket, \$500. Certain events have extra fees, such as hiking expeditions, concerts. The cruise, Le Bateau Uncorked, costs \$55, and reservations are required.

Lodging (tremblant.ca): Here are sample lodging deals at Tremblant for Aug. 21 to Aug. 23. At the four-star Homewood Suites by Hilton, a studio with kitchenette, queen and sofa beds starts at about \$398 for two nights (or \$99.50 per person, per night, double occ.). This includes Wi-Fi, breakfast buffet, afternoon snacks, outdoor whirlpool, outdoor heated pool and sauna. The Lodge de la Montagne is less expensive, starting at about \$90 p.p., per night, double occ.; and in the luxury sector, The Westin, with a swimming pool and spa, starts at \$140 p.p. per night, on a two-night stay.



Yoga at the Tremblant Beach and Tennis Club is part of Wanderlust, a four-day wellness festival from Aug. 20 to 23, at the slopeside Tremblant mountain resort. **WANDERLUST FESTIVAL**

Go outside to be an insider in Europe

Cultural carnival offers tourists opportunity to mix it up with locals

RICK STEVES
FOR POSTMEDIA NEWS

After spending the springs and summers of the last several decades in Europe, it seems to me that, more and more, the culture is celebrated outdoors. Cities and towns everywhere are competing to attract tourists; there is more than enough music, drink, theatre, and fun to keep these concerts and festivals going and growing. Make a point in your travels to enjoy the scene outdoors — by day and by night. Here are a few examples of how to put this cultural sparkle into your next trip.

FLORENCE

I don't build my travel itineraries around festivals, but I'm constantly happening upon fun events. When I check into a hotel, I always ask, “What's happening tonight?” This spring I was in Florence the night before May Day during a huge blowout called “Notte Bianca” (White Night). All the museums had free admission and were open late, restaurants were hopping, music and dancing filled the streets, and everyone was outside. Over the years I've learned that when you hit an unexpected festival, rather than stay in your hotel room and complain about the noise, the best response is to get out in the streets and make them even noisier.

BARCELONA

It's easy to join in the hubbub in Barcelona, where neighbourhood festivals jam the calendar. People congregate on the central “Times Square” of the city, Plaça de Catalunya, to watch soccer matches on the big screen, to demonstrate, to celebrate, and to enjoy outdoor concerts and festivals. When you visit, make it a point to watch or participate in the patriotic sardana dance, held in front of the cathedral on Sundays at noon (except in August). Gathering in circles and holding hands, dancers raise their arms — slow-motion, Zorba the Greek-style — as they hop and sway gracefully to the music. The band consists of a long flute, tenor and soprano oboes, strange-looking brass instruments, and a tiny bongo-like drum called a tambori. For some, the sardana is a highly symbolic, politically charged action representing Catalan unity — but for most, it's just a fun chance to kick up their heels.

KENMORE, SCOTLAND

During my last visit to Scotland, I was lucky enough to catch a Highland Games festival in the Perthshire village of Kenmore on the one day a year it takes place (others happen across Scotland every summer weekend; see Visit Scotland's Highland Games Guide). On the banks of Loch Tay, the open field was filled with families having a de-



In Barcelona, locals still join hands and dance the sardana in front of the cathedral almost every Sunday. **CAMERON HEWITT**

lightful time watching games of tug of war, gunny sack races, marching bands of kilted pipers, and Highland dancing. While dancers impatiently and anxiously awaited their time with the bagpiper on stage, the big boys took turns tossing big things:

stones, hammers, and cabers — logs the size of small telephone poles — were sent end-over-end, to the delight of those gathered.

BERLIN

One of my new favourite out-

door sights is the Mauerpark (“Wall Park”) in Berlin, where a large stretch of the Berlin Wall has been preserved as a memorial to the victims of the Cold War. Last summer, on a sunny Sunday afternoon, I watched as people enthusiastically spray-painted wild and crazy graffiti art onto the concrete barricade — once a “death strip” patrolled by border guards determined to keep communist East Germany separate from the West. Now, hundreds gather, everyone from children gleefully swinging on playground equipment, to flea market shoppers, to a would-be Sinatra singing New York, New York, at a huge karaoke party.

On the remains of a horrible wall, freedom is dancing — and it feels like a celebration of life.

VIENNA

In Vienna, the crowd is a little more refined, but no less enthusiastic. Every spring and fall you can enjoy opera and ballet performances under the stars via live broadcasts on a huge LED screen outside the Vienna State Opera. In July and August, opera-related films are projected in front of the neo-Gothic facade of City Hall. At twilight, the park in front fills with thousands of people enjoying a food circus of 24 simple stalls. There's not a paper plate or plastic cup anywhere — just real plates and glasses, as Vienna wants the quality of eating to be as refined as its music. A kid on a tiny green truck toddles by, reminding me this is a multi-generational scene. These events are free, with the purpose of developing people's appreciation of classical music and high culture — both of which city officials want to keep entwined with Vienna's image.

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