

# Laurentian resort offers log houses with deluxe trimmings

## SPACE APLENTY INSIDE AND OUT

Blueberry Lake guests come for activities around Mont Tremblant, owner says

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SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

**LABELLE** – It's said that there's no place like home for the holidays, and the new Blueberry Lake cottages have made it possible to set up family and friends in a stylish home away from home.

Blueberry Lake is a development of deluxe log houses in a secluded spot in the Laurentians outside Labelle, a 25-minute drive northwest of Mont Tremblant.

Vacationing in a country cottage isn't new, but modern devel-

opments like Blueberry have added convenient services, stunning accoutrements and some resort facilities.

The most precious commodity at Blueberry is its wide-open spaces. Indoors the houses are huge; outdoors they're perched on a mountainside in a relatively unspoiled setting.

"We call it seclusion without isolation," said Alex Porritt, co-owner of the compound with his father. "We have built 25 houses on 120 hectares, so there is lots of space around the buildings."

It's country living, yes, but in great comfort. Your view from a panoramic living-room window might be the snowy Laurentian forests, but turn around and you're facing a 42-inch plasma television.

Each house has a mud room, or entranceway, for sporting equipment, boots and coats, as well as a large stainless-steel kitchen, a dining area with a table large enough for 10 people and a spacious living room with a fireplace. Some have outdoor hot tubs and indoor game rooms with billiard tables.

Blueberry's prices are competitive, too. If a group of four crams into a one-bedroom condominium, or if two people bed down in a guest room at a B&B or basic hotel, they will likely pay \$40 to \$50 per person, per

night, during regular season. If a gang of family or friends fills a three- to five-bedroom house to capacity at Blueberry, with two people per bedroom, the price is about the same, but there's a lot more elbow room, indoors and out. However, travellers can expect prices everywhere to increase from Dec. 23 to Jan. 2.

The Blueberry Lake houses officially open this month, but the building of resort facilities still is under way. A restaurant is opening for Christmas and will serve brunch on weekends and French cuisine dinners nightly. Chef Jean-Michel Potie, formerly of the Restaurant Patrick Barmand in Tremblant, also is prepared to cater dinners at the Blueberry chalets.

Blueberry's tennis courts have been turned into a skating rink,

and there will be 12 kilometres of groomed cross-country and snowshoe trails through the woods. The development is set up so that guests do not have to leave the property except to replenish supplies in Labelle, but most come for the activities around Mont Tremblant, Porritt said. Blueberry's spa is scheduled to open in February, and an outdoor heated pool next summer.

"We also offer delivery service and an online concierge," said Porritt. "Every Blueberry house has a computer with high-speed Internet, and guests can contact the concierge to stock the pantry before they arrive, or if someone realizes that they need milk for the next morning, they can order before 8 o'clock the night before."

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## If you go

Blueberry Lake is 1¼-hour drive north of Montreal. Take Highway 15 north past St. Jovite on Highway 117 to the centre of Labelle. Turn left on Chemin Lac Labelle and right on Chemin St. Cyr.

Blueberry Lake Resort: 1-800-908-1413, [www.blueberrylake.com](http://www.blueberrylake.com). Three different-size luxury log homes are available (prices valid until Dec. 22): La Minerve three-bedroom model costs \$285 per night for up to six people; the four-bedroom Papineau model, which sleeps eight to 10, costs \$375; the five-bedroom Iroquois model, which sleeps 10 people, costs \$425. Holiday prices are \$500, \$618 and \$750 per night, Dec. 23-Jan. 3.