

# Orford spa has a world at its fingertips

BY ROCHELLE LASH, FREELANCE    JANUARY 8, 2011

Spa Villegia is more than a spa. It is a brand. So far, it is only a brand of two, but it likely will grow.

Les Hotels Villegia group is made up of four establishments -Manoir des Sables and Hotel Cheribourg in Orford, Manoir St-Castin near Quebec City, and Hotel le Victorin in Victoriaville. Two hotels, des Sables and St-Castin, have terrific new spas.

Manoir des Sables is a large resort that successfully blends two worlds. It has all of the bells and whistles of a full-scale hotel, with a spa, a gift shop, indoor and outdoor swimming pools and extensive grounds. Elevators lead to 140 bright, well-kept rooms and suites, including the deluxe chateau wing with its balconies, fireplaces and rich decor.

But Manoir des Sables also is very much a country establishment, set back from Route 141 in Orford, surrounded by mountains and facing a lake. What it lacks in cozy charm, it makes up for with conveniences and facilities.

For spa-lovers, the new Villegia baths are a treat -a compact, but effective, set-up. After a full day of fresh air and activities in sports-mad Orford, it's a great place for a recovery. Wrap yourself in a terry bathrobe and tiptoe down to the hotel's indoor swimming pool for a few laps. Then on to an invigorating Scandinavian-style soak in a hot tub or a sweat in the steam room, followed by a bracing dousing under cold shower jets. Head to the outdoor hot tub for a final spot at sunset. The result is a tingly mix that relaxes the muscles and boosts circulation.

Villegia's beauty and body treatments are a world beat of spa experiences. The exotic Discover Morocco package features a skin scrub with the same black soap that is used in Middle Eastern rituals, and facials with Morjana products made with argon oil, rose water and honey. In the intense Hawaiian Lomi Lomi, the massotherapist uses his forearms and elbows for deep muscle relaxation. The Lavan Doux is a dreamy all-Quebec treatment with oils from Bleu Lavande, the lavender farm near Magog.

In Manoir des Sables' dining room, you can go spa-style or all out.

The breakfast buffet can be low-cal or high-energy. Healthconscious eaters can start with fruit and yogurt, followed by an egg-white vegetable omelette. The piece de resistance is chef Alain Ferraty's exceptional selection of organic granolas, including the Divine, a blend of oats, white chocolate, elderberries and macadamia nuts; the Aphrodisique, grains mixed with dark chocolate and ginseng; and l'Essential, a crumble of maple syrup, walnut and red elm tree powder, which some believe acts as a tonic for the digestive system.

Going all out calorie-wise, you can dig into French toast in caramel syrup, sausages with maple flavour, chocolate pastries and croissants or cretons.

Ferraty originally is from Martinique, a heritage that emerges in his lush cooking at dinner. He uses fruit, coconut milk and other Caribbean twists on Townships ingredients like lamb, Brome Lake duck and rabbit from Stanstead. In his version of surf and turf, beef is mixed with lime-marinated scallops and shrimp. He does breast of duck with roast peaches, sweetbreads with pineapple and cod with mango. It works, and the food has a zingy difference.

Manoir des Sables' new spa of hot and cold baths is restricted to guests 14 and older, although younger children can have massages with an adult present. However, the resort has not forgotten its mission as a family destination. The hotel has an indoor pool that children adore, kids' menus, free lodging for those 17 and younger and a winter playground with a skating rink, cross-country ski trails, snowshoeing and tubing, all at no extra charge.

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## IF YOU GO

Orford is an 80-minute drive from Montreal. Take Highway 10 east to Exit 118 and Route 141.

Manoir des Sables Hotel and Golf: 90 Ave. des Jardins, Orford, 819-847-4747, [www.hotelsvillegia.com](http://www.hotelsvillegia.com).

Spa Villegia: 800-663-9848; [www.spavillegia.com](http://www.spavillegia.com). Hotel guests pay \$30 for use of the baths on Saturday and Sunday and \$20 to \$25 on weekdays. Reservations are requested. Spa treatments are extra. The Hammam Experience Package, including spa baths,

breakfast and lodging, starts at \$107 per person, double occupancy, in a standard room, Sunday to Thursday. The Ultimate Relaxation Package adds dinner and a massage, and starts at \$212 per person, double occupancy, Sunday to Thursday.

Lodging: Seven categories of rooms and suites with view of the lake or Mont Orford: \$198 for two, with two queen beds, including breakfast buffet, to \$217 with one queen bed and a sofa-bed, a fireplace and a balcony. Suites \$295 to \$315 for two, with breakfast. No charge for lodging for children 17 and younger (does not include breakfast). Table d'hote dinner, \$29 to \$41.

Package prices are per person, double occupancy: The Rising Sun bed-and-breakfast package: \$90 for one night. The Gourmand Package, with breakfast and dinner, \$120 to \$130 for one night. The Gentle Getaway: two nights, two breakfasts and one dinner, \$209. Spa packages are available.

Winter activities included are: on-site trails for cross-country skiing or snowshoeing, indoor swimming pool, whirlpool and fitness room.

Orford-Magog tourism information: 819-843-2744, [www.tourisme-memphremagog.com](http://www.tourisme-memphremagog.com).

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