

A fall visit to the Abbaye de Saint-Benoît-du-Lac

By Mable Hastings

SAINT-BENOÎT-DU-LAC – Sometimes we are so busy planning vacations to other locations that we forget to explore our own backyard. We can get accustomed to something “just being there” and always accessible so we put off a visit and in doing so, we have no idea of what we’ve been missing until the day finally comes when we take it all in and wonder, “why didn’t I do this before now?”

If you have been living in the Eastern Townships and have not yet explored the beauty and wonder that is the Saint-Benoît-du-Lac Monastery or if you have not seen this as a must stop for visiting family and friends from other areas then think again. The building is awe inspiring and the surrounding grounds breathtaking. The lifestyle of the Benedictine Monks and the history within the architecture of the 1912 Art Deco influenced building will capture the interest of guests of all ages.

The fall season provides the perfect reason to plan a visit where you can pick your own apples from the 3,500 apple trees on the property or where you can purchase products produced by the monks in the boutique. Abbey apples such as Paula Red, Sunrise, Vista Bella Lobo and Jonamac are in season in the beginning of September. Lobo, Jonamac, MacIntosh, Honeycrisp, Cortland, Spartan, Ginger Gold and Empire come into season the middle of September and Cortland, Spartan, Ginger Gold, Empire, Gala, Liberty and Golden Russet are in season for picking in October. From Labor Day to Thanksgiving Day the apples await you!

There are hiking trails on the property and if ordered in advance, the boutique will even prepare a lunch for you to take along while you bathe in the beauty of the picturesque countryside offering breathtaking views of the Lake Memphremagog and surrounding mountains.

The Abbey boutique offers visitors a wide selection of products including: cheeses, fruit compotes



ABBAYE FACEBOOK PAGE

and spreads, ciders as well as books, CDs and religious products. All of the products sold help support the community’s monastic life and heritage. The products sold are PAX certified. The PAX certification mark certifies that a product is crafted by monks and only appears of products in Canadian abbeys. You will be impressed with the wide range of homemade products such as jellies, jams, preserves, apple-butters, applesauce and more. The products are reasonably priced.

From late June to mid October, 50-minute tours are offered daily, twice a day as a general rule at either 10 a.m. or 2 p.m. for a fee per adult of \$12. You must reserve by visiting: info-visiteurs@abbaye.ca Attending a worship is also possible where visitors can listen to the Gregorian chanting at a daily mass held from 10:45 to 11:45 a.m. The service is in French but the experience is universal in heart.

If you are making a fall bucket list of “must do” activities, a first visit to the Abbaye will surely result in a once a year stop.



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