



Le Chateau Montebello

 / TRAVEL

## The World's Largest Log Cabin Offers Free Curling Lessons

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**“Hurry hard” to Le Chateau Montebello in Quebec, Canada**

[Le Chateau Montebello](#) offers what may be the most unusual hotel amenity yet: free curling lessons, offered every morning at 10 a.m.

If you're not up on the Olympic sport that the IOC added to its official roster in 1998, this baronial AAA four-diamond log castle in the wilds of Canada, owned by Fairmont, is the perfect place to polish your skills (or at least learn the lingo). Who knows? You might even be invited to try out for the US team that took home the gold medal this year in Pyeongchang.



Pam Grout

Curling uses special brooms, special shoes, and special commands (“hurry hard” is an exuberant exhortation shouted at the skips), all of which can be mastered at Le Chateau Montebello.

Of course, if you don’t relish the idea of hurling a 42-pound polished granite orb across a long sheet of ice, this romantic getaway also offers cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, and dog-sledding as well as Land Rover Off-Road Driving school. And that’s just in the winter.

But here are four more reasons to “hurry hard” to Le Chateau Montebello:

**It’s set on 65,000 acres of ooh-la-la wilderness.**

Bordered on one side by the wide waters of the Ottawa River, it’s on one of the last surviving land grants from a 17<sup>th</sup>-century French king and it is gorgeous, a true respite from big city life. Harold Saddlemire, the Swiss-American entrepreneur who built it in 1930 as a private club for prime ministers, bank presidents, and foreign dignitaries, conceived it as Lucerne-in-Quebec.

**From the beginning, it’s inspired awe and an “anything-is-possible” mentality.**

In order to hold its grand opening on July 1, Canada’s Dominion Day, Finnish master builder Victor Nymark hired an army of 3,500 laborers to work around the clock. To assuage the local parson, who insisted it was a sin to work on the Sabbath, Nymark sent him to Rome to get a dispensation from the pope. Of course, by the time he returned (going by boat, it took a while) the 10,000 huge pine logs and the cathedral-like lobby with its massive six-sided, six-story stone fireplace were already in place, just in time for the grand opening masquerade ball.

**It regularly hosts bigwigs.** Although it's no longer a private club, it still attracts people you read about in the headlines. The world's largest log cabin, as it is known, has hosted the G7 Summit, a NATO Summit, the Bilderberg Group, and lots of movie stars.

**The food, the food.**

Suffice it to say, you don't find many fine French restaurants in the middle of rustic wilderness. [Aux Chantignoles](#) offers an extensive wine list to accompany dishes like pan-seared foie gras with pear tarte; goat cheese-crust rack of lamb; pan-seared Arctic char; and wild mushroom roasted beef tenderloin. Whatever you do, don't miss the maple crepes at breakfast or a Sunday brunch that's probably more famous than its celebrity clientele.