

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL LISAGOR FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Kayaks at Eagle Harbor; retrieving at Ford Ward State Park; Sam Zuckerman deals with kayaks; The Bloedel Reserve.

WASHINGTON

Perfectly outfitted: pines, pints, pizza

BY MEGAN LISAGOR | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT



BAINBRIDGE ISLAND — It would take a special place to get me to board a plane for a 10-hour flight from Paris with a squirmy toddler and in my fifth month of pregnancy. Bainbridge Island, where my parents moved in 2004, has that pull, and family is not the only reason to go.

A 35-minute ferry ride from Seattle, the island makes the perfect side trip for travelers to the rainy city, which shows its sunny side in the summer months. At 28 square miles, Bainbridge just outsizes Manhattan, but counts a million fewer residents. With endless evergreens for skyscrapers, it maintains a local feel, thanks to conservation efforts and a town center served by small businesses (count the independent coffee shops). Visitors can eat and drink well, after a day spent hiking or paddling along the briny Puget Sound. It's the perfect antidote to jet lag and Elmo-induced mommy brain.

5 p.m.: Seaside stroll

Head for **Fort Ward State Park** (www.parks.wa.gov), a picturesque bike ride or drive from the ferry's landing point in Winslow. The 137-acre marine property — and former military stomping grounds — always puts me in a Northwest state of mind: fairy-tale forest, rock-strewn beaches, views of the Olympic Mountains.

I like to continue my stroll through the bordering neighborhoods, which offer a vicarious taste of waterfront living and an occasional glimpse of sunbathing seals. Please e-mail me if the white-brick house with light-blue shutters is for sale.

7 p.m.: Pizza and pool

Eat dinner nearby at **Treehouse Café** (4569 Lynwood Center Road, NE; 206-842-2814; www.treehousebainbridge.com), a popular pizza place where bicycles and jogging strollers compete for space on the patio. Farm-fresh toppings like bean sprouts and carrots are par for the course on an island where enough residents raise chickens for an annual "Tour de Coop." I prefer the sausage-laden Old Mill, with feta, garlic, and roasted red peppers (10-

BAINBRIDGE, Page M3

GO WEST OR GO NORTH

QUÉBEC

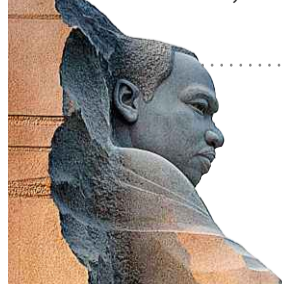
Still rooted between two rivers

BY JANE ROY BROWN | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

GRAND-MÉTIS — My maternal grandmother's siblings, all 12 of them, were terrific cooks. They grew up in the valley of the St. John River, below the notch in Maine's northern tip. They spoke French, or the Québécois version of it. Their ancestors had crossed over from the Québec countryside south of the St. Lawrence River, an area known as Bas-Saint-Laurent (loosely, "Below the St. Lawrence"). Maybe this is why the sliver of land between Maine and the St. Lawrence — a thinly settled region where tributary floodplains meet the oldest ridges of the Appalachians — has always beckoned. My husband and I used Route 132, which traces the St. Lawrence's southern shore, as the spine of a food-based driving tour between the old resort village of Grand-Métis, on the edge of the Gaspé Peninsula, and the artisans' haven of Kamouraska, two hours west of Québec City.

DAY 1: GRAND-MÉTIS TO LE BIC

Reford Gardens, also known as Les Jardins de Métis (Gardens of Métis), is renowned for the flower gardens created between the 1920s and '50s by Elsie Reford, the niece of the railroad magnate who owned this summer



INSIDE

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial to be dedicated today in Washington. **M2**

JOHNNY BIVERA



BILL REGAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Marché des 3 fumoirs (Market of 3 smokehouses), in L'Isle-Verte, is recognizable on sight and smokes fish on site.

EXPLORE NEW ENGLAND

These **10 places** — indoors and out, big, small — are better than new. **M5**

Disabilities (and mountains) are **not obstacles** with adaptive partners. **M5**



HIT THE OPEN ROAD AND ENJOY SPECIAL OFFERS

bonjourquebec.com/roadtrip
1 877 BONJOUR

EASTERN TOWNSHIPS.ORG

PROVIDING EMOTIONS SINCE 1934

Québec

Montréal



PHOTOS BY BILL REGAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

A view of the St. Lawrence River shoreline from a height in Bic National Park.

History of fishing, farming, river trade, French

► QUÉBEC

Continued from Page M1

estate. Today the property is managed by a nonprofit organization overseen by Elsie's great-grandson, Alexander Reford, who hired a talented young chef to turn the restaurant into a laboratory for flower-based cuisine. Our lunch began with a soup- spoon piled with multicolored petals. A dab of jelly made from a shrub called Labrador tea melded the sweet-sour-salt flavors and turned up again in a salad of chewy whelks heaped with shaved fennel, heirloom carrots, and herbs. Sugared pansies and violas garnished the entrees (duck, halibut), and geraniums flavored the closing tart.

The restaurant and a small museum are housed in a high-

ceilinged fishing lodge built in the 1880s. The grounds have goodies for the eyes, too: sculpture, a curving alley of gumdrop pines, vast river views. The property also hosts an annual garden festival and design competition, with gardens on display through early October.

On the drive to St. Flavie, the St. Lawrence flowed roadside opposite planted fields, which stretched out between farmhouses with the region's traditional up-tilting eaves. Outside the village, a cluster of pilings in the water materialized into carved figures as we grew closer. Many of the villages along this coast are artists' communities. Tourists come here to visit galleries, watch whales, and explore historic lighthouses. We climbed

the 128 steps of the **Pointe-au-Père lighthouse**, a fluted concrete spire, and were rewarded with all-around views. This lighthouse, a Cold War-era submarine, and a small museum make up the Pointe-au-Père Historic Maritime Site. The sub can be explored with a self-guided audio tour. The museum tells the little-known story of the Empress of Ireland, an ocean liner that sank off Québec in 1914, just 14 minutes after a collision, killing more than 1,000 people.

A few miles west, Rimouski has the utilitarian look of many rural Québec towns — boxy tan brick houses, a dearth of street trees, and farms and factories cheek-by-jowl. It takes getting used to, but it's one of the differences, like the road signs in

French and speed limits in kilometers, that say, this is not Connecticut. We stopped for the night in the scenic Victorian village of Le Bic, at the **Auberge du Mange Grenouille** (Inn of the Frog Eaters, an old slur on the French). The decor alone — Vampire Rococo? — is worth the trip: candles and gargoyles, Victorian bird cages, and gilded cupids. Lawns and gardens overlook the river. Locations like this don't require good food, so dinner was a blissful surprise — fresh, lightly sautéed foie gras preceded seared scallops and roast pork, simply prepared, every flavor distinct. Frog legs? Not on this menu.

DAY 2: LE BIC TO RIVIÈRE-DU-LOUP

Le Bic is the gateway to **Bic National Park**, a forested slice of St. Lawrence shoreline, and we took a few hours to explore it. Visitors can rent a yurt or a tent site as well as mountain bikes and kayaks, but limited time forced us to make do with a ramble along the craggy shore and a picnic of sandwiches.

Beside the road in Isle-Verte, the sharply pitched red roofs of the **Marché des Trois Fumoirs** (Market of Three Smokehouses) are impossible to miss. The roofs belong to three tall, narrow fumoirs, which stand like guardhouses beside the market. Inside the shop, the odors of fish and smoke — maple wood, we learned — mingled in the humid air. Cases held shrink-wrapped packages of smoked fish, from shrimp and crabs to sturgeon and salmon. Co-owner Jacqueline Ouellet, a small woman with sinewy arms, bustled around the kitchen with other workers, preparing seafood pizzas to be sold (alas) that evening.

We tasted smoked salmon and rolled on. The St. Lawrence, narrowing as the distance from the Atlantic increased, vanished, and reappeared in Cacouna, where Victorian houses clustered around a crescent bay. About 8 miles beyond, we stopped for the night in the ferry port of Rivière-du-Loup.

DAY 3: NOTRE-DAME-DU-LAC AND AUCLAIR

From Route 132 in Rivière-du-Loup, we turned inland to the village of Notre-Dame-du-Lac and the **Fromagerie le Détour**, a small artisanal factory. Ginette Bégin, co-owner, was arranging a tasting tray in her shop filled with cheeses, butter, and maple products. Petit and wrapped in a blue-striped apron, Bégin pointed out international award-winning selections. We sampled a Brie-like cheese brimming with butterfat, a velvety goat cheese, and the Québec favorite, a substance called curd, which looks pre-chewed and squeaks like a dog toy in your mouth. Its buttery flavor helps explain the regional obsession.

Bégin suggested a vegetarian restaurant near our next destination, in Auclair, about 25 miles east. The rustic restaurant, **Simplement Bon** (Simply Good), lived up to its name, with homemade dishes made from local organic ingredients: cheese pizza on focaccia, salad, and strawberry pudding.

The dirt road was a dark stripe in the roller-coaster landscape to the **Domaine Acer Economuseum** (Maple Economuseum), a producer of maple syrup and alcoholic beverages. (The trademarked name denotes a network of 40 agritourism businesses.) Co-owner Nathalie Decaigny led a tour of the operation that turns some sap into syrup and some into alcoholic beverages. These unique drinks are not technically wines, which are by definition made from grapes, and the owners have had to devise their own formulas. "We've been at this for only 14 years," Decaigny said, "and the process is as much art as science."

In the tasting room, she introduced her four beverages: a dry sparkling (yeasty, toasty, woody), a semidry white (honey-toned, Riesling-esque), an aperitif (golden, hints of apple), and a port-like beverage (caramel, low acidity-high astringency). We left the other visitors sniffing, sipping, and murmuring contentedly.

If you go . . .

Information

Québec Maritime Tourism Office
www.quebecmaritime.ca
Suggestions for self-guided tours, brochures, maps, and information about language, customs, etc., in English and French.

Bas-Saint-Laurent Tourism Association
148 Rue Fraser, second floor
Rivière-du-Loup
800-563-5268
www.bassaintlaurent.ca

What to do

Reford Gardens
Les Jardins de Métis
200 Route 132, Grand-Métis
418-775-2222
www.refordgardens.com

Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse
1000 Rue du Phare, Rimouski
888-773-8888
www.quebecmaritime.ca/phare
pteaupere

Auberge du Mange Grenouille
148 Rue Ste-Cécile, Le Bic
418-736-5656
www.quebecmaritime.ca/mange
grenouille/

Bic National Park
3382 Route 132 West, Le Bic
418-736-5035
www.quebecmaritime.ca/parcbic

Marché des Trois Fumoirs (Market of Three Smokehouses)
47 Seigneur-Côté, Isle-Verte
418-898-2046
www.bassaintlaurent.ca/en/com
pany/marche-des-3-fumoirs

Fromagerie le Détour
100 Route Transcanadienne (185)
Notre-Dame-du-Lac
418-899-7000
fromageriedetour.ca

Domaine Acer Economuseum (Maple Economuseum)
145 Route du Vieux-Moulin
Auclair
418-899-2825
www.domaineacer.com

Auberge du Chemin Faisant
1 Rue du Quai, Cabano
418-854-9342
www.cheminfaisant.qc.ca

From Auclair we backtracked to Cabano, home to an acclaimed inn and restaurant, **Auberge du Chemin Faisant**. Owned by chef Hugues Massey and his wife, Liette Fortin, the inn is an island of urbanity in this country village. The couple left Québec City to start this enterprise, and they seem to be having fun. An example of one of Massey's whimsical dinner courses: Trout tartare served with a cube of lychee-grapefruit gelée and a cardamom cookie, sprinkled with red rose petals. After the kitchen closed, Massey slid behind the piano and filled the room with gentle jazz.

DAY 4: KAMOURASKA

After a three-course breakfast, we set out on the final leg of the trip, 50 miles north to the coast, then west on Route 132 to Kamouraska, a fishing village-turned-artisans' refuge. Kamouraska's shops are as likely to contain gourmet food as paintings and handmade jewelry. A bakery and a chocolaterie were just two of the stores we dawdled in. But for our last lunch, we chose a peasant meal at a fish market with picnic tables. While live lobsters bubbled in a tank, we tucked into fish soup, mopping the bowls with homemade bread. It was a meal my grandmother might have made.

Jane Roy Brown can be reached at janerobrown@verizon.net.

AZORES

Feel alive.

OCTOBER 07

- Go for a walk wearing short sleeves in October.
- Snorkel in crystal-clear warm waters.
- Check the calendar to remember what day it is today.

www.visitazores.com

Sete Cidades - São Miguel

Located in the heart of the Atlantic, the Azores offer the ideal conditions throughout the whole year for diving, whale-watching, walking, golf, geo-tourism and many other experiences surrounded by Nature. Get to know a unique World Heritage and take advantage to delight yourself with the rich cuisine filled with natural products from the archipelago. Azores. A lively, magic and safe place where no two days are the same.



Kamouraska has become known as an artisans' refuge, but was once only a fishing village.