

HEALTH, WELLNESS & GREEN LIVING MAGAZINE

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# tonic

## TORONTO

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# AWESOME AUTUMN AURA

Replenish your spirit  
with our invigorating  
November Issue



# A COUPLES' PARADISE

## ST. ANNE'S: THE PERFECT HIS AND HERS GETAWAY

The pleasure of any spa stay begins as soon as you know you're going. Sweet anticipation! It doesn't hurt either when the office mates you tell of your upcoming escapade not only respond with appropriate expressions of sympathetic excitement and simmering envy, but have heard of the spa in question and inform you that it is reputed to be one of the best in the country. Indeed, according to the global readership of Spa Finder, Inc., it is the "Favourite Spa in Canada" (two years running), and (did my wife know this before she invited me to accompany her?) the "Best for Romance."



The pastoral grounds of St. Anne's

Ste. Anne's, situated on over 500 acres of rolling countryside overlooking Lake Ontario, 90 minutes east of Toronto, has everything you want in a Spa and none of what you don't want – no television in the room, no internet connection anywhere at hand, no distractions from the appreciation of the present moment and anticipation of the pleasures of the moment just to come: the start of your next body treatment, those first powerful breaths of fresh air on your hike along the trails, the moment you notice that yes, you really (truthfully) do have room for dessert, all the way to the moment you slide a satisfied body into the fresh cosy sheets...

What was I most looking forward to? On the one hand, it does seem curious in retrospect that those office mates I told about my upcoming overnight were disproportionately women – as if there were something unmanly about relaxation in the absence of any sort of challenge: nothing to build, no fish to catch, no portage to cross, not even a putt to sink. On the other hand, as it seems to me now, to simply relax often seems challenge enough.

I was most looking forward to switching off my busy mind and switching on my starved senses, to the relief of knowing that not only would I not be doing any work, I could not do any, and probably most of all, to time alone and away with my wife.

Upon arrival at the estate's country castle, named for one of Canada's patron saints, the observant guest will notice in the brickwork above reception the inscription: "I have chosen this beautiful garden, where I will send many people to be healed." According to Ste. Anne legend, this was the spontaneous utterance of Jay Rawlings, a modern-day

"prophet" on his first visit to the property. The inscription hints at the deeper sense of mission to holistic wellness one encounters everywhere at Ste. Anne's, beginning with your greeting at the front doors by Father Ed, the Spa's unofficial and non-denominational Chaplain. A former Catholic Priest, the warm and wise Father Ed is available to any guest who feels the need for a sympathetic ear or gentle counsel.

Compared with the needs of the spirit, the sorts of needs of the body catered to by a Spa might seem rather trivial. We tend to think of massages, saunas, mud baths and the like as "pampering," and, no doubt, at Ste. Anne's the pampering is as luxurious as it is down to earth (literally a mix of Ontario Golden Moor Mud mixed with Saskatchewan clay). But how is it that my first and last thoughts during my Aveda Caribbean Body Wrap were: "God, I need this!" "Wow, I really needed that!?" I really did.

Your choice of hydrotherapy, bodywork, or aesthetic treatments aside, everything is included in your stay at Ste. Anne's, from the spring water that comes out of every tap to the 5-star, diet-sensitive meals prepared by executive chef Christopher Ennew, who in September won first place for his rosemary crusted pork tenderloin in the Homegrown Ontario Dish competition. No need for wallets or pocketbooks, no need for pockets at all: most guests (men and women) spend their indoor hours comfortably wrapped in their Ste. Anne's Spa robes. It's a great equalizer. One feels at home. And one is constantly reminded that whatever one may have planned for the day, it's all about unwinding, relaxing, and reconnecting.