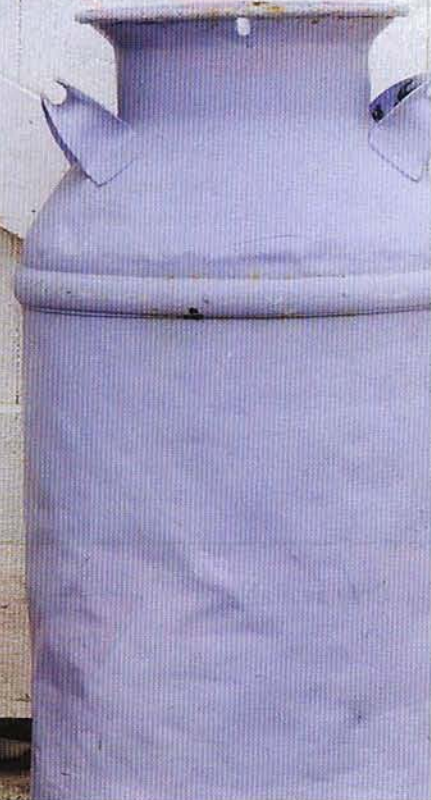


Farm Fresh

FIELDS OF FRAGRANT LAVENDER AND A CHARMING BOUTIQUE LURE DAY-TRIPPERS TO THIS BUCOLIC PROPERTY IN QUEBEC'S EASTERN TOWNSHIPS.

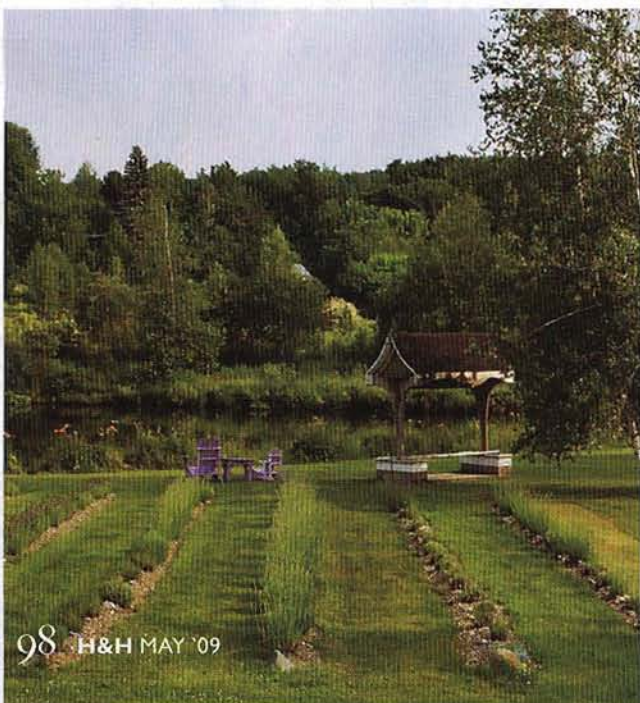
TEXT BY KATIE GOUGEON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANGUS MCRITCHIE



DESTINATIONS



RIGHT: Christopher Marks opened Joie de Lavande in 2007 with his wife, Alison. **BELOW:** With more than 1,000 lavender plants in five varieties, there's plenty for visitors to snip. Since lavender thrives in hot, dry weather, July is an ideal time to visit. **PREVIOUS PAGE:** Purple was the obvious choice for painting these antique milk cans and sap buckets.



If there's a time to sow and a time to reap, for Christopher and Alison Marks it was three years ago when they retreated from Montreal to open their own farm. "We'd been in the city forever and we thought it was time to find a place to start gearing down," says Alison. That place was just outside Knowlton, Que., a picturesque village in the Eastern Townships. What they sow is lavender, but what they reap is beyond their expectations. Opened in 2007, Joie de Lavande is a lavender "experience," where visitors can take cuttings from the plants and peruse a boutique filled with lavender goods. "But it's not just about cutting flowers and heading home," says Alison. "We want people to stay the day, explore the property, picnic on the deck or lounge by the pond. Lavender is known to induce relaxation, and we want this place to embody that."

ABOVE: To turn the property's barn into a boutique, the couple raised the roof, and added rafters and windows. **Lavender sachets, \$8; dried lavender bouquets, \$20; bath salts, \$8; culinary lavender, \$6.**

RIGHT: Visitors to the farm can buy potted plants and try their hand at growing lavender at home. Potted plants, \$10. FAR RIGHT: A top seller, lavender-scented soaps make pretty hostess gifts. Soaps, \$8 to \$10. BELOW: When creating Joie de Lavande, the Markses wanted a place that reflected the relaxing properties of the flower. Visitors are encouraged to make full use of the land, including this picturesque pond at the back of the property.



IF YOU GO

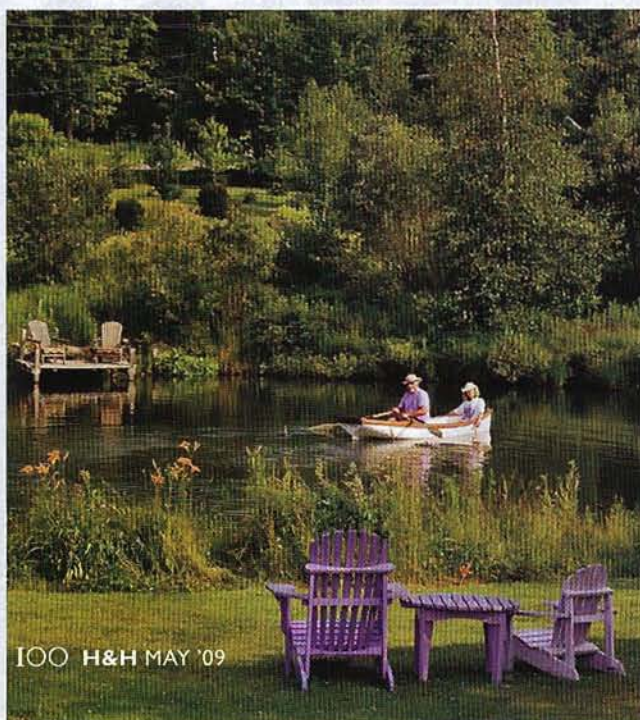
Joie de Lavande

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Knowlton, Que.
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www.joiedelavande.ca

DIRECTIONS:

From Montreal, take Autoroute des Cantons de l'Est east toward Sherbrooke, turn off at exit 90 and head south on Route 243. The trip takes approximately 90 minutes.

Open May to Thanksgiving.



ALL ABOUT LAVENDER

- There are about 30 species of lavender belonging to the *Lamiaceae* or mint family. If you're planting your own, choose an area in your garden that receives direct sunlight and has excellent drainage. Plant seeds in spring or early summer.
- The distinctly scented flowers and buds are often dried and used in potpourri sachets or as culinary herbs, while essential oil is extracted from the leaves and spikes.
- Lavender has proven beneficial to sufferers of insomnia, anxiety,

headaches and respiratory ailments, to name a few. It has antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties and is widely used in aromatherapy and massage. For a good night's sleep, steep dried lavender in water (or even milk) and drink before going to bed.

- The culinary uses of lavender are many — French chefs have used it for centuries (it's a key ingredient in *herbes de Provence*). Incorporate the dried buds into sugar and cream for baking, or into soft cheeses. Use candied flowers for cake decoration. **H&H**