

Mont Tremblant Minilofts

Eric Harari.



MONT TREMBLANT, Que. — They're the antithesis of the type of lodging you traditionally found at Mont Tremblant, said Eric Harari in describing the Minilofts at Bel Air Resort, a complex he is developing in the Quebec ski area.

"It's not rustic with old ducks and green things. My idea is to build a different type of lodging that is more appealing to today's traveler," he said.

Harari, who divides his time between Florida and Mont Tremblant, used to be in the vacation rental business, renting apartments and houses rather than hotels. His idea is to provide spacious units with kitchens — that's what's so popular about vacation rental properties.

The Minilofts are modern places made from environmentally friendly materials sourced from the area. Conservation is important, as is automation of systems.

They are small houses, with 12-foot ceilings and lots of windows. For example, a compact four-bedroom house would be 1,300 square feet. They're affordable at an average cost of \$235 per night.

One of the main purposes is communion of the inside with the landscape outside.

"The site is marvellous," said Harari. "We have 500 acres with beautiful views."

Harari analyzed what's going on at Mont

Tremblant — what's missing. He decided that he would build amenities including a clubhouse with a real gym, "not 350 square feet of space." There's a spa and a place to do yoga.

"The point is to have a healthy lifestyle, an active lifestyle, onsite without leaving the property. We have the lake, trails we are creating, and guests can come back to the health bar where we have salads.

"There's a kid's room, a place for teenagers, and small office pods of 50 square feet, where you can have a printer and computer and work."

Harari, who hails from France, initially went to Mont Tremblant for a ski week and fell in love with the area. He bought his land in 1998 and decided to build the Miniloft complex in 2008.

It took some time to get approvals, do the required environmental assessment and create roads.

Once that was in place, in 2014, Harari tested the market with four little houses — and the response was amazing. "We saw the reviews and earned the respect of clients — and we knew it was a go."

In addition to the four original Minilofts, there are now four more, plus the clubhouse and spa. The idea is to have six different types and sizes of Minilofts, constantly refining the designs as more are built.

The concept is very scaleable

Harari was very involved in the design. "I worked with different architects, some in Miami. I would sit with the architect, get ideas, sit down for five or six hours, and start designing a house.

"It was like having a baby — I knew what kind of architecture I wanted. I wanted small construction — not too modern or too rustic. The Cortina [Miniloft] model was the most out-of-the box. It took a lot of time."

Harari studied business law in France, and earned his MBA in Finance from New York University (NYU). He worked for a while in France and then in 2000, got into the real estate and vacation rental business.

More Minilofts will be coming this fall, Harari said.

Cortina Miniloft.

