



Ville de  
**MONT-TREMBLANT**

## The Domaine Saint-Bernard in the era of the Brothers



A small inn or auberge called the Onontio Inn, later the Onontio Health Resort, in 1935 succeeded the Saint-Bernard hotel, owned by Robert J. Rousso.

Source: Archives of the Fiducie du Domaine Saint-Bernard, photographer unknown.

It was in these magnificent surroundings that, for sixteen years, cohorts of young men in cassocks came to study in the summer in order to obtain a teaching certificate or an arts degree. Numerous brothers came here on retreat, to pray and find spiritual replenishment. Others came regularly to stay at the Domaine on their weekend holidays. There were many recreational and other activities: swimming, boating, walks in the forest, bird watching and manual labour. The men from religious orders could also lend a hand to Brother Philippe Lambert, who undertook the planting of trees starting in 1956. Over the years, some 130,000 coniferous trees were planted on the property, which in 1964 obtained the status of a forestry farm. The Domaine Saint-Bernard plantations won four *Ordre du mérite forestier* awards, the highest of these being conferred in 1976.

In 1968, the brothers modified the Domaine's role: it would henceforth be a residence for brothers who had retired from teaching and wanted to settle here. The fraternity also hosted groups of young people for "snow classes" or a "green week", as well as families who stayed at the Petit Saint-Bernard, the wooden building that faces the Grand Saint-Bernard.

In January 1952, the people of Saint-Jovite and Mont-Tremblant learned that the religious congregation of the *Frères de l'Instruction chrétienne* had just bought the Domaine Onontio, an 1100-acre property bordering the Diable river where—since the mid-'30s—a vacation hotel called Le Saint-Bernard had been in operation.

"A dreamlike oasis", a diarist of the religious community wrote at the time. The beauty of this spot is unequalled: a huge plateau under cultivation, from which Mont Tremblant seems to arise; an unspoiled lake; streams with waterfalls; wooded hills; hillocks and stone outcroppings; deer and birds. The Domaine included a hotel, two large annexes and several farm buildings. Furnished and equipped, the hotel and its outbuildings could easily accommodate fifty or so of the brothers.

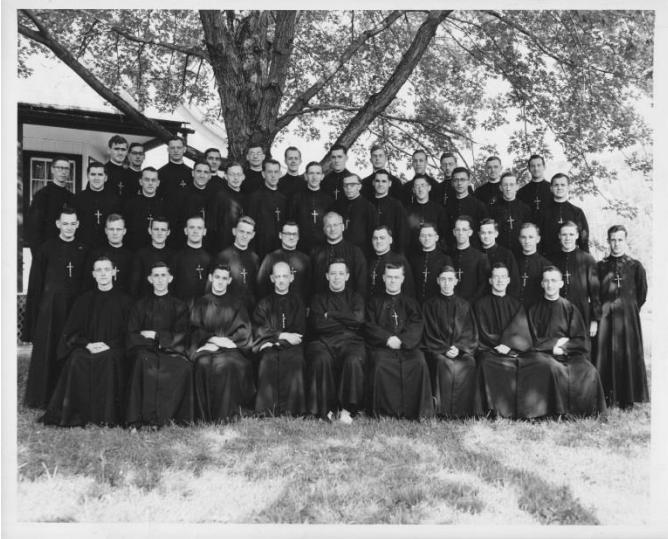


At the end of autumn 1951, Brothers Mathieu and Lambert visited the congregation's future property. The transaction was signed on December 31, 1951.

Source: François Mathieu, FIC, *Annales du Domaine Saint-Bernard* (1951-1976), photographer unknown.



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A group of novices and Frères de l'Instruction chrétienne brothers who participated in the retreat that took place at the Domaine from June 30 to July 21, 1952,

Source: Archives of the Frères de l'Instruction chrétienne (La Prairie), photographer unknown.

visitors.

During this period Brother Herman Deshaies started, with the makeshift equipment he had on hand, to lay out trails in the forest. Initially intended for snowmobiling, the Domaine's trails were later taken over by cross-country skiers; the sport was experiencing huge growth. Brother Deshaies remade his trails so that they would be better suited to this activity, which was more respectful of the environment. In 1976, the Congregation authorized the members of the new *club de ski de fond de Mont-Tremblant*—the Mont-Tremblant cross-country ski club—to use some of the trails. The popularity of the Domaine soared among the club

founders, whom the brothers lodged free of charge throughout the winter. Until the 1990s, it was not unusual to meet one of the residents of the Domaine on the trails, sliding along on his skis, happy to share the beauties of this incomparable site with

### From the Congrégation to the community

On December 15, 1999, the municipality of Mont-Tremblant bought the Domaine Saint-Bernard, which at the time consisted of 1471 acres, to create a territory protected in perpetuity offering recreational, educational, cultural, social, sports and scientific activities. The management of this ecotourism park is entrusted to a social utility trust which is the guardian of the mission devolving upon this jewel of the natural and historic heritage of the region.

Research and writing: Danielle Soucy



In 1960, development of a golf course for the use of the brothers was begun. The nine-hole course was completed four years later.

Source: Archives of the Fiducie du Domaine Saint-Bernard, photographer unknown.