

## The Old Train Station

The first visitors came here riding the railway – initiated by parish priest Curé Labelle – which reached Saint-Jovite<sup>1</sup> in 1893. Whether descending from the train or awaiting its arrival, visitors were greeted by shiny wood benches and a pot-bellied stove that glowed with heat all winter long. There was a wicket for buying tickets and even a cart where excess baggage could be placed. A stationmaster ruled this kingdom, living above the station and ensuring that everything went well.

Beginning in 1927, the first “snow trains” packed with skiers arrived. The station came alive. The sounds of people calling back and forth mingled in happy confusion with the jingle of bells on the sleighs that came to fetch the visitors. These were the glory days of the *P’tit Train du Nord*.

After that exciting boom time, train transportation gradually declined and, in 1981, the railway company finally ceased its activities. The abandoned station became silent. These were its saddest days. Then George Kelegher, well-known antiquarian, bought the station and moved it to the centre of town. He renovated and decorated it, carefully retaining its authenticity. Today, it is a virtual museum where artefacts, posters and photographs bring to life the context and atmosphere of the original station.

Antipasto restaurant, which had been in operation on rue St-Georges since 1984, then moved into these premises. It opened on June 30, 1988, thus allowing the Canadian Pacific building to again take up its initial role, which was to welcome both visitors and locals in one shared space.

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Moving the railway station

Source: photo from Gérard Charbonneau

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<sup>1</sup> Saint-Jovite is the name of one of the former municipalities which merged to form what is today the Ville de Mont-Tremblant.