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Low Country
Eating PAGE 45

Cruising
Into Jamaica's
Montego Bay PAGE 39

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PAGE 72

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PAGE 36

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PAGE 82

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AND THE
ART OF
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PAGE 94


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*Trails at Le Massif
ski resort seem to
drop directly into the
St. Lawrence River.*

THE PLACE

Quebec's Powder Outlet

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL'S indomitable co-creator, Daniel Gauthier, turned his focus from the big top to big drops with his latest project, revitalization of the Quebec ski haven **Le Massif de Charlevoix**. Gauthier invested \$300 million to transform his local ski slope, about 47 miles northeast of Quebec City, into a sustainability-minded, all-season, vacation destination. An expanded resort opened in 2004 with 53 trails. La Ferme, a new green hotel complete with farmers market, began welcoming guests this past spring. Gauthier also renovated a run-down freight line to convey visitors the two and a half hours between Quebec City and the foot of the slopes. Specially designed railcars showcase the passing scenery—Montmorency Falls, forested hills, the St. Lawrence River's craggy shoreline—while the onboard menu touts regional cuisine such as escargot terrine with Charlevoix oyster mushrooms. And the skiing? Le Massif features one of the highest vertical drops east of the Rockies (2,526 feet) and an average of 22 feet of snow annually. —GREGORY B. GALLAGHER

LE MASSIF DE CHARLEVOIX/BENJAMIN GAGNON

