

SOUTHEASTERN QUEBEC

Enchanted Forest

Across North America's longest pedestrian suspension bridge, an otherworldly walk in the woods awaits in Quebec's Parc de la Gorge de Coaticook — *by Terri Peterson Smith*

When night falls, a magical mood overtakes Quebec's Parc de la Gorge de Coaticook, located just north of the Vermont border. Lights twinkle, music wafts through the air, and ethereal creatures appear. This is the amazing Foresta Lumina, a multimedia nighttime show that winds along a 1.6-mile trail through the park. As visitors walk through the mysterious forest, they experience stories inspired by myths and legends of this region.

Brainchild of the Montreal company Moment Factory, Foresta Lumina artfully blends video, lighting, animation, sound and special effects into the natural environment. Moment Factory honed its international reputation with multimedia displays for Cirque de Soleil, Madonna's Super Bowl halftime show, and rock bands such as Muse and Arcade Fire.

Now, the company also translates its technology to park and natural venues, creating what it calls a "digital campfire that draws people to a central place by telling stories with light."

Foresta Lumina includes perforated-metal panels resembling ancient manuscripts, lighting units designed to look like fairies, and video projection on natural elements, integrated seamlessly with the surroundings to create an all-encompassing sense of magic. The experience takes place in 11 different zones including the Fairy Trail, Garden of Wishes and Forest of Illusions. Visitors may walk the trail at their own pace, which typically takes an hour or two.

"We also want to preserve the natural heritage and to protect

nature," says park spokesperson Josée Petit. "When daylight comes, all that technical equipment blends perfectly into its surroundings, and visitors can still appreciate the site's beauty." That's important because, long before Foresta Lumina, the 650-acre park was famous for its breathtaking gorge and the pedestrian bridge suspended over it, the longest in North America. Visitors come for activities — hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding and feeding farm animals, with snowshoeing and ice climbing in winter — that make the park a magical place, day and night.

www.forestalumina.com/en

IF YOU GO

Parc de la Gorge de Coaticook Campground caters to RVers with 112 full- and partial-hookup sites and another 42 dry sites. Free evening shuttle service from the campground to Foresta Lumina runs every 15 minutes from June 16 to October 8 this year. www.gorgedecoaticook.qc.ca/en

↓ Just north of the Vermont border, Quebec's Foresta Lumina takes hikers on a multimedia nighttime experience that blends nature with mind-blowing lighting and an original soundtrack.