

## The Lighthouse Hunters 2014 Vacation

Story and Photos by Christine & Tom Cardaci



Our last article mentioned October 29, 2012's Hurricane Sandy destroying our home and rental. We spent 2012-2013 rebuilding both and later still went on two lighthouse vacations. Once we returned home the next phase began. It was an intense 9 months of planning, preparing and executing our house lift. It's similar to how a lighthouse gets moved away from a cliff, but we just went up. We moved out of our house again but this time only for 3 months and went to our smaller rental. Many steel I-beams were placed under our house and the hydraulics lifted us up 8 feet in March 2014. It was scary to see our home perched on wood cribbing so high up for weeks. Over months the masons, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, insulators, sheet rockers, windows and doors installers worked on the new taller foundation and under the house. It was an amazing process and we learned so much.

On August 2, 2014 Christine drove down to Baltimore, MD alone for a lighthouse cruise. The Chesapeake Chapter of the USLHS chartered the 65 foot Watermark-Annapolitan II for the 48 mile trip. I haven't photographed a lighthouse in almost a year and it was awesome to engage with 75 fellow lighthouse hunters, especially friends with whom I've been on several trips. Unfortunately the time spent at and the distance from the lights were not ideal. We hard core lighthouse hunters were disappointed. The highlight of the 5 ½ hour 9 lighthouse cruise was the circling of the endangered Fort Carroll lighthouse. I drove 458 miles for this 24 hour trip.

Luckily our September vacation went much better. Months earlier a couple from the mid-west contacted us through our website. They are also on the free USLHS Lighthouse Community page, where you can log all the lighthouses you've seen. It's a nice tool to use to visually see the lights you've seen or haven't seen either in map form or in list form. Then you can compare your visits to other members. The couple asked if we would be interested in sharing a Quebec vacation with them. After emails, calls and a brief meet while they were here in NJ, we said yes. After much research and planning from both couples it was time to go. We had four days alone in Quebec which began on Labor Day 2014. We started with the inland Ash Island light, then the four Soulanges Canal lights on the St. Lawrence River. Very early the following day, we popped into Ontario to see the L'Original range lights on the grounds of the A La Rochelle Campground. Once back in Quebec we crossed the Ottawa River to see the light in Grenville. We began to drive east along the river to Point Aux Anglais, Dixie Ranges, and Lachine Ranges. Once in Montreal we drove over the Jacques Cartier Bridge to Île Sainte Hélène and the lighthouse. Several range lights later we ended for the night. Next we crossed the St. Lawrence via the cheap 10 minute Sorel Tracy-Sainte Ignace de Loyola Ferry. We met our charter captain, Guy Vandandaigue, in St. Sulpice, QC. Guy's 25 foot catamaran with a steel hull took us 17 miles in 2 ¼ hours on a nice calm day. We saw 6 off-shore range lights (Mousseau, Lavaltrie, Île Ronde). He owns the island and the B&B that the Île Ronde lights are on. We continued to see more lights from the west side of the river including Île Richelieu. The sunset made the rusted helipad light in the water glow orange.

The morning brought the sad news that comedian, Joan Rivers, passed. I first loved her when she would fill in for the great Johnny Carson. She was a ground breaker! We saw the lights on the east side of the river between Levis and Trois-Rivières. A 2 tooth man allowed us to walk down his long field to see the Île Richelieu light this time from the east side of the river with the morning sun. This was a totally different view due to the amount of visible boulders and rocks in the water surrounding the light. Friday, we met the couple at the boat ramp in Sorel-Tracy, QC. They have a 17 foot Grady White boat with a center console that holds four people. On this beautiful day in 3 ¼ hours motoring 25 miles we saw many off-shore range lights. The farthest lights were



Maskinong Curve

Maskinong Curve, Route Louiseville Upstream and Downstream ranges. Once back on land we caravanned  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour to the boat ramp in Nicolet, QC. In 45 minutes we traveled 5 nautical miles to see Nicolet Sector, Port St. Francois FR and RR lights. The following few days were too windy for any boat so we saw the lights from land. One day we went to the Parc de la Chute-Montmorency (big waterfall) and also saw Le Voile De La Marie's thinner fall in Quebec City, QC. There were people walking up the hundreds of steps on the cliff to get a wet view. We drove to the top of the falls and walked across the foot bridge, very cool.

Since we couldn't use their boat we saw the off shore Stone Pillar, St. Andre, off shore Long Pilgrim, and inland Cabano by car. In the morning we had hoped to use their boat for Île Bicquette but found the tide was super low in the morning (think Bay of Fundy). We had better luck for the boat trips the other day. We settled for the morning view of Île Bicquette from Parc National du Bic and walked up the steep 50 meters to the viewing spot. We returned to Rivière-du-Loup, QC and got on the booked boat/land tour of Pot à l'Eau de Vie (Brandypot Island). [www.pharedupot.com](http://www.pharedupot.com) For less than 50.00 per person a 27' boat took the 14 people to the island  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles away. The tour guide spoke in English then in French while we toured the keeper's house, grounds and climb the light. What a great view from the top of the island light in the middle of the St. Lawrence River. The lighthouse is beautifully kept. We were served cookies and juice while we took shots from a deck with the perfect afternoon sun. Their unique boat ramp system prevents unauthorized boaters from getting on the island. Before our 20 minute ride back to the mainland the captain took us to their favorite water view. This was the best lighthouse of the whole trip so far! A fantastic three-hour tour.

In the morning we boarded the Rivière-du-Loup Saint Simeon car ferry. The 16 mile river crossing took  $1\frac{1}{4}$  hours. Next we drove south an hour to board the free car ferry from Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive to Île Aux Coudres. It took 20 minutes to go the  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles to the island. At almost low tide we four took shots of the Ile Aux Coudres light. Across the way we were able to distantly see the Cap Aux Corbeaux ranges. Once back on the mainland we drove north to our next boat ramp. This 3rd time on their motor boat was for  $1\frac{3}{4}$  hours, and we shot the Cap au Saumon and Cap de la Tête au Chien lights. To get to our motel we used the free 10 minute Baie St. Catherine-Tadoussac ferry. This extension to the highway crosses the Saguenay River for a mile and runs 24/7. The following day we drove  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours west from Tadoussac, QC. We had tough 1 hour mountain hike on a rocky, bulging root filled trail, often holding on to trees. We took shots of the Cap à l'Est light then trekked another hour back to the cars. The whole hike took longer than expected and therefore put us behind schedule for our next boat trip.



Haut Fond Prince

Once at the Marine Park boat ramp at the Bay St. Catherine Wharf we launched the boat. On our 4th time on their boat we headed east into the St. Lawrence River. Within 14 minutes we were at Haut Fond Prince. This

red and white striped light is kind of shaped like a wine goblet. Next we motored 12 minutes east to photograph Île Rouge. Then another 18 minutes east to Île Verte where there was a couple just standing in front of the lighthouse. They couldn't hear us asking them to get out of our shots. We turned around and began our steam west back to the mainland. The sun was now covered by the clouds and nearing sunset. We encountered a whale fluking about 30 feet from the boat, but no pictures. It took 42 minutes to get to the boat ramp dock navigating with the white range lights of Point Noire. We motored 30 miles round trip in 2 hours and during that time the tide really went down.

The morning brought rain so we drove west on Rt. 172 and found a few range lights along the Saguenay River. For our last of 8 days with our new friends we all went to Cap de Bon Desir and said good bye. Tommy and I drove north on Rt. 138, booked a ferry, and finally got to photograph the red and white striped Pointe Des Monts light. We had beautiful afternoon sun with low tide. We walked on the rocks and before we knew it the tide was coming in, boy its fast. We crossed the wooden foot bridge for closer shots. Our last light of the day was a half hour drive north. Île Aux Oeufs is 1+ miles off shore and afternoon sun was best. The following morning we took the Forestville-Rimouski car ferry 30 miles in 1 ¼ hours to the Gaspé Peninsula. We haven't been here since 2003 and now have only 3+ days.



Pointe Des Monts light

We improved our shots of several lights and climbed a few. A highlight was finally shooting the red LaMartre light with full sun after waiting for eleven years. We enjoyed the water view from the tower. Their Fresnel lens is still operating like many of the lights on the Gaspé Peninsula. One night we stayed across the street from the Cap des Rosiers light, enjoyed a beautiful sunset and sunrise. Since we did the hard hike for Cap Gaspé years ago we skipped it due to the weather. Raymond Lalonde is the unofficial caretaker of the Cap d'Espoir light because it's on his property. He keeps it painted and allowed us to climb it. Near the end of the trip we saw the Point Duthie light for the 1st time. Before we left Canada we had to eat at Pizza Delight. We love the weird combination of a white garlic pie and the white, creamy, sweet garlic sauce dipper.

It was great to get away for 18 days. We saw 94 new lights and 18 repeats making 1,378 lighthouses seen in North America while driving 4,364 miles. The 19 times on boats and ferries totaled 146 miles. Join our Facebook group-The Lighthouse Hunters. If anyone needs any information about a private charter or cruise we've ever taken, please feel free to contact us by phone or through our always expanding website. [www.thelighthousehunters.com](http://www.thelighthousehunters.com)

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