

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH



MUSÉE MARITIME DU QUÉBEC
HARNESSING THE HEAVENS FOR OUR MARITIME HERITAGE!



Through its generalized, pan-Québec mission and activities aimed at promotion, dissemination, education, preservation and research, [Québec's oldest maritime museum](#) creates emotional ties with youth and community groups, thereby fostering callings for maritime industry careers.

Visiting the Musée maritime du Québec (MMQ) means:

- Touring a retired Coast Guard icebreaker, from boiler room to wheelhouse
- Boarding a one-of-a-kind hydrofoil
- Safeguarding the memory of our seafaring past via a contemporary approach
- Having fun imagining seafarers' daily lives
- Learning about the events, places and challenges that have marked Québec's maritime history through [five exhibitions, three ship museums and a riverfront park](#)
- Making exciting discoveries and participating in rich programs involving [cultural and educational activities \(traditional and digital\)](#).

The MMQ is located along the St. Lawrence River in the Chaudière-Appalaches region's municipality of L'Islet, dubbed "the sailors' homeland".



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It houses one of the richest collections showcasing Québec's and Canada's maritime heritage and legacy: more than 15 000 artefacts, old maps, books and documents.

The Musée maritime du Québec was officially founded in 1968 through a major cultural initiative spearheaded by the Association des marins de la vallée du Saint-Laurent to:

- Disseminate Québec's rich maritime heritage
- Promote occupations linked to navigation and seamanship
- Highlight Quebeckers' strong ties to the St. Lawrence River.

More than 50 years later, the Musée proudly ranks among the most important maritime museums in America.

Question 1 : The Musée maritime du Québec in L'Islet, which was founded in 1968, completely renovated its interior from 2008 to 2011. On the MMQ's 50th anniversary (2018), management decided to modernize its outdoor spaces to set up a permanent outdoor exhibition in the next generation riverfront park. What improvements are planned?

Answer 1 : This permanent outdoor exhibition project is part of a bigger structuring initiative designed to completely rework the almost-one-hectare area between the St. Lawrence River and the MMQ buildings. These buildings underwent renovation and construction work to the tune of \$4.4 M in 2010 but the outdoor areas have not been reworked

since 1994, despite the fact that they feature our star attractions: our three ship museums, including the [Ernest Lapointe](#) icebreaker and the [Bras d'Or](#) hydrofoil, which the general public can visit from stem to stern.

This outdoor work entails redesigning the trails and accesses leading to a selection of 26 large-sized objects based on two key principles: **infrastructure sustainability** in the context of the nearby River and major tides and **universal access** for people with reduced mobility.

The **family**, a fast-growing public we are targeting, is central to this investment. In 2021, more than 48% of our visitors came in families and we would like to increasingly encourage this public by offering attractive, high-quality exhibitions and activities based on discovery and exchange.

The experience we propose is:

At your own pace, [tour our 11 outdoor zones](#), which include 9 interpretation stations featuring [self-guided technology \(L'Équipée\)](#). Each zone offers unique entertaining, sensory experiences. The content is bilingual (French/English) just like the rest of the museum.

1. Le Jardin des ancrés des Pilotes du Saint-Laurent Central (Central St. Lawrence pilots anchor garden)
2. L'Allée du navigateur Canada Steamship Lines (Canada Steamship Lines navigator's walkway opportunity available)



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3. Le Quai de la lentille (as of 2023, partnership opportunity available)
4. La Pointe du mât Port de Québec (Port of Québec mainmast point)
5. La Place des brumes des Pilotes du Bas Saint-Laurent (Lower St. Lawrence pilots fog and mists station)
6. L'Escale de l'hydroptère APL (LPA hydrofoil stopover)
7. La Placette des treuils Énergie Valero inc. (Valero Energy winch courtyard)
8. Le Sentier des hélices Port de Montréal (Port of Montreal propeller pathway)
9. La Halte des icebergs Desgagnés (Desgagnés iceberg way station)
10. L'Espace piqueunique Terminal Norcan (Terminal Norcan picnic area)
11. La Terrasse Solutions Mieux-être LifeWorks (Solutions Mieux-être LifeWorks terrace)

Question 2 : What are the goals targeted by these improvements?

Answer 2 : This prestigious project will underpin our museum's mission and vision as it seeks to become the reference for understanding Québec's maritime history and heritage. We strive for the highest cultural tourism standards within a sustainable development perspective and want to increasingly enhance awareness of Québec's maritime tradition as well as [the legacy of Captain Joseph-Elzéar Bernier](#). We wish to affirm our position as a must-see tourist stop on the Navigators' Route and in the Chaudière-Appalaches region. We also want to increase MMQ patronage (families, school and community groups, tourists) and our institution's



MMQ riverfront park mock-ups by Pierre-Yves Diehl based on the Pratte Paysage + master plan



Aerial view of the MMQ riverfront park project, November 8, 2021 - Credit: Pierre Gosselin

renown in order to bolster the attachment to, pride in and discovery of the importance of the Québec maritime sector.

We are confident that the new outdoor exhibition—through the quality of its installations, relevant content and appealing design—will help tangibly enhance the region's museum and cultural offerings. We will be the only museum with exhibitions and activities targeting a young public and 100% accessible for people with reduced mobility. Ultimately, we will be the region's only museum offering guided night-time tours along the St. Lawrence River.



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Question 3 : In 2018, you received Québec government funding under the Ministère du Tourisme's (MTO) St. Lawrence tourism development strategy assistance program (Aide à la stratégie de la mise en valeur du Saint-Laurent touristique). This financial assistance was designed to serve as a lever and help raise the funds needed to complete the funding package. What is this funding's current status? Do you have requirements or expectations involving the maritime industry?

Answer 3 : The MTO's announcement did, indeed, help spur the work of the [campaign cabinet](#), a group of extraordinarily motivated individuals. On August 24, 2021, we were able to launch this major financing campaign's public phase under the banner *Offrons le ciel à notre patrimoine maritime* (Harnessing the heavens for our maritime heritage). Spearheaded by the [Fondation capitaine J. E. Bernier](#) and chaired by Nicole Trépanier, Director, External Relations and Communications with Fednav, Phase 1 of the project is currently only \$211 000 short of its \$1 750 000 goal. We already have [30 partners and donors](#) but there is still room [for others who would like to contribute](#) to the project's success.

We are still looking for a presenting partner whose name will be associated with the riverfront park.

Work on Phase 1 began on August 16 and is scheduled to finish in June 2022, just in time for the summer season. At that time, tours of the Ernest Lapointe and Bras d'Or will start up once again.



Le Jardin des ancrés des Pilotes du Saint-Laurent Central (Central St. Lawrence pilots anchor garden) worksite, October 2021 - Credit: Martin Bérubé, Pratte Paysage +



L'Escale de l'hydroptère APL (LPA hydrofoil stopover) worksite, October 2021 - Credit: Martin Bérubé, Pratte Paysage +

In Phase 2, scheduled for 2023 and 2024, we intend to restore a first order lighthouse lens housed in our reserves, build an elegant protection pavilion and add architectural lighting to the entire riverfront park.

Question 4 : We asked [Nicole Trépanier](#), Chair of the [Fondation capitaine J.E. Bernier](#), and [Simon Mercier](#), MMQ Chair: "If you had a wish regarding the maritime industry's involvement, what would it be?"

Answer 4 : “We are involved in the Fondation Capitaine J.E. Bernier and the Musée maritime du Québec’s major fundraising campaign because we want to support the museum and ensure its sustainability. The museum is a unique institution that helps make young people and families from throughout Québec aware of our treasured maritime heritage. Through its educational approach, which is constantly being revitalized, especially for the riverfront park where construction is currently under way, the museum team will be able to promote interest among the students visiting the museum, introduce them to the historical importance of the marine sector and, perhaps, encourage them to opt for a career in the maritime industry. That’s certainly what we hope. By participating financially in the project, you will help heighten our maritime culture’s visibility. Thank you for joining in supporting this cause that is so dear to us!”.

To make a donation (individual or corporate) online, [simply click here!](#)

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