



▶ for the Falls. However, the trail became much steeper and less groomed.

A well deserved break awaited us at the wooden platform lookout for Les Chutes du Diable – and a spectacular view of the 120m (400 ft) falls that tumble down the boulder strewn river to the sprawling Lac du Diable.

But, we thought, we're not at the top of Mont Albert, and since we're so close, we really should complete the ascent. What were we thinking? From camp to summit, the six kilometres (four miles) trail ascends about 1100m (3500ft) – Mont Albert is the eighth highest point in the province of Quebec – and it's a steep climb over boulders and exposed tree roots.

Closer to the top, we emerged from the forest into the tundra landscape. This is the portion of the trail labelled 'difficult' and 'some preparation required'. Does having a sweater, a camera and three bottles of water count?

On reaching the summit the struggle is essentially forgotten as we stood in the wind and looked out over the neighbouring point of Mont Ernest La-Force and the valley and quiet lakes below wrapped in mist.

*Above: Where the mountains meet the sea.*

*Above inset: The view from the gun emplacement... ideal for spotting roaming German U-boats.*

*Below: Jim Leach with a menacing grin on his face... just about to take a golf cart 'off-roading'!*



Having dragged our weary bodies back down the mountain-side, we settled in at the Gîte du Mont-Albert to dry out and warm up over a beer.

The Gaspé Peninsula is where the ancient Appalachian mountain range finally falls into the Gulf of the St. Lawrence; the Mi'kmaq called it "Gespeg", meaning "the place where the land ends". Another day of travel took us to the St. Lawrence and along the winding coastal highway, to the east side of the peninsula to the towns of Gaspé and Percé. It was a beautiful day to drive, gorgeous weather, and around every sharp bend there was a view of the craggy coastline or the lush mountains.

We stopped at the Cap des Rosiers Lighthouse along the way.

The north side of the peninsula is not for the faint of heart. The landscape is rugged and the weather cruel; the faded paint on the homes speaks to the driving winter winds that whip down the St. Lawrence and warning signs advise against travelling when the high waves crash over the road: "Caution, you may be swept off the road by high waves."

We pulled into our campsites in

Fort Prevel (about halfway between Gaspé and Percé) in late afternoon and set up camp. The weather was quite cool, as there was almost always a constant breeze over the water. We were at the top of a cliff with wide-open views of the Gulf and the southshore of Quebec in the distance make for a beautiful morning sunrise view from our rooftop tent perch.

Having learned our lesson about the tides, we arrived in time to pick our way carefully across the rocky, sea-weed strewn spit walk out to the famous Percé Rock (rocher Percé or 'pierced rock'), so called for the archway on the seaward side. The rock provides a home to some of the few remaining Harlequin ducks, a threatened species.

The remainder of the afternoon was perfect for golf and perfect for a stroll on the beach. The tide was out and so there was plenty of beach to walk on – alternating sand and rock but very passable in bare feet for the distance of about a mile before a sharp turn in the cliff-face would have required swimming around.

The scheduled 'golf day' was windy, rainy and a bit cool, so while some opted to brave the elements on the course, a couple of us took a