



Taking the plunge at an iconic mountain cabin getaway

by Jennifer Bain, images courtesy of Fairmont JPL

Glacier-fed Lac Beauvert was just 2C (barely 36F) when I stood in it up to my waist wearing water shoes and full-length, sun protective swimwear while babbling to distract myself from the shocking cold.

"Inhale four. Hold four. Exhale four," health club attendant Sadie Shykora urged as she led me through the Glacial Plunge & Sauna Journey at the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge.

I'm proud to say I made it to 45 seconds, standing with my arms in prayer position and resisting the option to sink down until the frigid water reached my shoulders.

After 15 toasty minutes in the lakeside barrel sauna, I lasted two minutes and 13 seconds the second time I climbed down a ladder into the shallow lake in June.

I made it to three minutes and 16 seconds the third and final time I forced myself into the lake, but honestly could have kept going.

"That's longer than most so that's really good," said Shykora when I was done. "High five."

I've reluctantly jumped off expedition cruise ships into Alaska's Pacific Ocean and visited Nordic spas, but this was my first real glacial plunge.

The plunges debuted in November 2025 after Season 28 of *The Bachelor* saw Joey Graziadei and contestant Kelsey Anderson brave these very waters in episode seven. They heard about the Jasper polar plunge tradition from a local in a pub.

That first winter, Fairmont staff broke the ice every morning and in between twice daily guided sessions. But since Lac Beauvert is always cold, the instantly popular plunge is now a year-round luxury wellness offering.

JPL is also celebrating a \$100-million makeover of its 700-acre property in Jasper National Park.

The Fairmont is calling it "the arrival of a new expression of wilderness luxury in the Canadian Rockies" and says that it has been brought to life with a refreshed main lodge and fully redesigned guest rooms.

The property is still home to a Stanley Thompson-designed golf course and the Jasper Planetarium (Jasper is the world's largest accessible Dark Sky Preserve and home to the Jasper Dark Sky Festival every October).

But a new lakeside patio at the lodge makes better use of Lac Beauvert and Whistlers Mountain views. More than 330 of the 397 guest rooms, suites and cabins have been renewed and redesigned. Embark Outpost + Provisions is a fun new general store and adventure hub with an adventure concierge.

The glacial plunge was supposed to clear my mind and make me either sleepy or ravenous.

Even though I had dined on elk meatballs and forest gnocchi at lunch in the new Elderwood (a timber-framed dining room inspired by Jasper's forests), I returned for dinner mostly to have more corn "ribs" (a trendy way to eat corn on the cob in curled strips).

And since I never miss eating steak in Alberta, I later checked out the new Barbicon steakhouse to make sure the tenderloin and wood-fired cauliflower were up to snuff. Okay, that dinner was just an excuse to try their unusual take on Smoked Campfire S'mores for dessert.

Whether you're up for the glacial plunge or not, try to join the JPL's hour-long history tour or at least spend time downstairs in the main lodge admiring the vintage photos and historic timeline.

You'll learn that the resort turned 100 in 2022, but traces its humble beginnings to 1915 when "Tent City" debuted on the shore of Lac Beauvert at \$2.50 a night.

You'll also discover which starlet it famously kicked out in 1953. That would be Marilyn Monroe, apparently for wearing pants to dinner while in Jasper to film *River of No Return*. ■

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