

Brasserie Blandino opens at the The Hilton Garden Inn/Hilton Homewood Suites Montreal Midtown

MtlRestoRap

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Westbury Montreal is an impressive project offering a brand-new neighborhood to its residents, leaving no one indifferent. The four phases of the project feature luxury condos with high-end finishes as well as breathtaking common spaces. In addition, thanks to the many shops located within the project, such as PA Supermarket and Starbucks, its enviable proximity to the Namur metro station and major highways, and the huge park of over 40,000 square feet located across the street from the project, this Decarie Boulevard location ensures a dynamic daily life for its residents.

The Hilton Garden Inn/Hilton Homewood Suites Montreal Midtown on site has been a hit from the moment its doors first opened. A few months ago, I met



with Devmont President Sam Scalia, the builder of this entire complex, for a great breakfast at Brasserie Blandino. More recently, one night I went back to the restaurant for dinner. It was late summer and General Manager Clement Thompson and Chef Chris Ranco made sure I got an excellent sampling of the fine cuisine here.

Blandino is a neighbourhood Italian inspired seasonal brasserie using fresh market produce with local inspiration. This staple Midtown restaurant is named and pays homage to Carmelo Blandino, a Montreal based artist whose work adorns the side of the hotel façade. Born to Sicilian parents in Tübingen, Germany, and raised in Montreal and Sicily, Blandino studied art and design at here. He then embarked on a successful career as a freelance illustrator, working with architects, designers and advertising agencies before shifting his focus to the world of fine art.

Situated right next to the lobby of the hotel, Brasserie Blandino can seat 80 people at tables and at the bar. There is also a nice seasonal terrasse which I took advantage of. Customers can also take advantage of free indoor parking.

A new menu has recently been introduced for breakfast, lunch and supper. For the first meal of the day there are items such as: Colazione Americana (two eggs, country style bread, breakfast potatoes, bacon or sausage and seasonal fruits); Nutella panettone French toast (thick cut panettone, seasonal berries, creme chantilly, maple syrup and Nutella); Ricotta pancakes (including seasonal berries, whipped ricotta and lemon); Pane avo (smashed avocado, everything bagel spice, country bread, parmesan, herbs and sunny side egg); Scrambled & :Lox (scrambled eggs, challah bread, smoked salmon, cream cheese, caviar and more.

The lunch menu will resemble the inspiration of the evening and will continue offering certain classic dishes such as the stapled Blandino Burger and a variety of salads. A Blandino Table d'Hotel will also be introduced at a starting price point of \$33. This will include an appetizer of zuppa or salad and coffee or tea. There is a dessert offering as an add-on of \$4 and a new list of signature cocktails.

For the evening, Blandino will continue to have a spectacular selection of pasta dishes inspired by the



Clement Thompson and Chef Chris Ranco

season and local market. Some of the new contenders on the menu include Gnocchi Sorrentino (ricotta gnocchi/heirloom pomodoro & basil, al forno with fiore di latte, parmesan and brown butter); Black Cod & Chanterelles (Organic black cod, Quebec chanterelles, parsnip puree and herb salad), and Corn Pumpkin spiced bomboloni (Pumpkin spiced crema and dulce).

On the night I visited, my server Antoine made several suggestions. I started off with a terrific burrata salad, some splendid cornmeal calamari and their outstanding focaccia bread which was perfect for dipping. The salmon cioppino (salmon, lobster, brodo, mussels, clams, shrimp, salsa and cruda) was highly recommended. For dessert, it was tough to choose between the cannoli and the blueberry cheesecake. We had wonderful service, great food and superb ambience.

Thompson also oversees Taquería Pancho, another restaurant on site. I hope to try that as well one day. Blandino Brasserie is located at 6939 Decarie Blvd. It is closed for dinner Sunday and Mondays. For reservations call (514) 657-2622, go to libroreserve.com and log on <https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/ymqmmgi-hilton-garden-inn-montreal-midtown>.

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Burrata in a round green bowl

Mike's Resto Notes: PopcornPoutine at Lafleur and Dizz's Cream Cheese

More Than Steamies: Lafleur Restaurant, home to those amazing steamie hotdogs and crispy fries, has added two items to its menu that will certainly get people talking: its brand-new popcorn and its new popcorn poutine! Lafleur has been offering a variety of quality fast food dishes since 1951. The company now has 16 restaurants. The menu is typical of Quebec restaurants and offers hot dogs, hamburgers, fries and poutines of all kinds. "Lafleur wanted to add something new to its menu," says Alexandra Tsotsis, Director of Marketing and Communications at Lafleur Restaurants. "The popcorn poutine was the perfect touch of creativity and innovation that we were looking for and adds a little pop to the classic poutine. The crispy popcorn is absolutely delectable. Once you try it, you can't stop."

Birthday Cake Cream Cheese: With news that General Mills will no longer be able to continue making Liberté cream cheese, bagel lovers in particular have gone into a bit of panic. Founded by the Kaparovsky family in 1936, Liberté (initially known as Liberty Dairy Products) was created in a building on the

corner of St-Urbain and Duluth Streets in Montreal's Plateau-Mont-Royal borough, as reported by CBC. From there, the Kaporovskys sold kosher dairy products such as cream cheese, cottage cheese and sour cream to the Jewish community living in the area, according to Romanow. The company was eventually acquired by multinational yogurt producer Yoplait, and then by General Mills in 2021.

When I stopped by my "go to" Dizz's Bagel & Deli on Côte St. Luc Road, owner Steve Dizgun was telling customers they have nothing to worry about. Dizz's has been around for 28 solid years and recently expanded with a West Island location in Pointe Claire Village. They are so ready for the challenge that they have started to unveil their own line of cream cheeses for \$5.99 a container.

"We have always made our own, using Liberté as part of the mixture," Steve told me. "Now we have pivoted to our own recipe and the response has been amazing!"

Presently they come in regular, scallion, lox, truffle, garlic & herb and yes, birthday cake. I can't wait to try



The popcorn poutine

that one. Steve says they are also working on a cottage cheese one as well. I walked away with a container of lox. Manager Jeff Greenblatt insisted I also take a smoking hot fresh bagel. I got back to my office, cut the bagel in half and put on the spread. It was beyond delicious! Bravo Steve and company. Liberté, we hardly knew you. You can go to <https://www.dizzsbagel.com/>