

When in Manhattan dining can be an exceptional experience

Travel Talk

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NEW YORK- Dining out in New York City (www.nycgo.com) and the Manhattan area is always such a treat and I am pleased to provide readers of The Montrealer with my latest tips of where to go.

Il Mulino Prime

Il Mulino Prime in Gramercy (www.ilmulino.com/prime/gramercy), located at 43 E 20th Street is a modern steakhouse and Italian restaurant featuring inspired cuisine and choice cuts by Executive Chef Michele Mazza. We were greeted by the manager on duty Roland. He immediately introduced us to our very charismatic server named Stefano, who knows a great deal about Canada.

A nice plate of crackers, cheese, focaccia and cold cuts was brought to the table to get things started. Roland handed us the wine list and we decided to share a bottle of Pino Grigio. As appetizers we had two orders of delicious tuna tartare with avocado and chips, some jumbo shrimps and an order of burrata and tomato and crab cakes with zesty garlic sauce. For the main course the ladies remembered how much they enjoyed the risotto langostino from the Florida location and for them this was the only option. They were pleased with their choice. As for me it was the veal chop Milanese, topped with a light arugula salad that got my attention. Stefano said it was a house favorite. It was thin and crispy the way I like it and cut like butter. I savored every morsel. Reservations are recommended by calling: 212-777-5314.



The chic exterior of Il Mulino Prime

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Del Frisco's

Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steakhouse (www.del-friscos.com), an energetic, luxurious three-story restaurant located at 1221 Avenue of the Americas, is one of 16 locations across the United States.

Our server Stephanie was excellent, providing us with superb guidance for both the food and drink menus. Two members of our party started off with their signature VIP cocktail, Svedka Clementine Vodka infused with fresh Hawaiian pineapple. I treated myself to a glass of Prosecco. For the appetizers we shared the shellfish plateau: Chilled Alaskan King Crab Legs, Iced Jumbo Shrimp and Chilled Crab Claws. We added six delicious oysters to the order. This was a meal on to itself. Next came a Caprese salad, a simple Italian salad made of sliced fresh mozzarella, tomatoes, and green basil, seasoned with salt and olive oil. It closely resembles the colours of the Italian flag: red, white and green. This was easily split in three. Since Del Frisco's is known for its fantastic steaks, that is what we wanted to sample. Stephanie recommended the bone in filet and the bone in prime rib eye. As sides, she suggested we try the Cauliflower and Brie au gratin and the sautéed wild mushrooms and pearl onions. She was right on the mark. For our meal, the sommelier brought us a bottle of Chablis.

We left just enough room to enjoy their fabulous lemon cake split in three for dessert. You can call 212-575-5129 for reservations.

Ocean Prime

Located in the heart of Manhattan, Ocean Prime (www.ocean-prime.com) at 123 West 52nd Street, spans 7,400 square feet, has a 2,500 square-foot mezzanine and seats more than 275 guests. This place only opened in 2015 and quickly gained a reputation for excellence. It falls under the 16 restaurant umbrella of renowned restaurateur Cameron Mitchell.

Our server was Giscard and he guided us beautifully through the superb menu selections. We each started off with wine and then indulged in a spectacular selection of Dutch Harbor King crab legs and six delicious oysters. In addition, we shared some sushi in the form of a lobster roll – poached lobster tail, kiwi, pickled Serrano, masago and spicy mango. It had been a while since I enjoyed a bowl of lobster bisque and this piping hot option truly hit the spot. The two ladies chose wisely with the sea scallops for their main course, accompanied by parmesan risotto, English peas and citrus vinaigrette.

I was in a steak kind of mood and when Giscard described the bone in filet, dry aged for 28 days, it sounded perfect. This was one fantastic cut of steak as others around the table concurred when sampling some pieces. I added some lobster mashed potatoes on the side, something I do not get to sample on each menu. We concluded with one of their signature desserts – the warm butter cake with fresh berries, vanilla ice cream and raspberry sauce. It was the perfect way to end a fabulous dinner. For reservations call: 1-212-956-1404.

Patsy's Italian Restaurant

Patsy's Italian Restaurant (www.patsys.com) recently celebrated its 75th anniversary. Located at 235 West 56th Street location, only a few short blocks from Times Square, this legendary Midtown Manhattan spot has been known to attract celebrities.



The shellfish plateau is a popular choice at Del Frisco's

I started off with a glass of prosecco and an order of fried calamari, with some delicious marinara sauce on the side. I followed that off with a magnificent chopped salad. It was as good as I remembered from the last time. For the main course there were so many options. I looked at the signature dishes and elected to go with the veal rollatine marsala, stuffed with parmigiana, ano-reggiano and prosciutto. It was sautéed with onions, mushrooms, prosciutto and marsala. Adriano brought me some fried zucchini sticks on the side, shaped just like French fries. For dessert I sampled the chocolate mousse cake. For more information call: 1-212-247-3491 or log on to www.patsys.com where you can view the entire menu.

Junior's Restaurant

I experienced the legendary Junior's Restaurant (www.juniorscheesecake.com) at 1626 Broadway and 49th Street just a few blocks away from its sister spot at 1515 Broadway. Featuring a full menu ranging from steaks to seafood and sandwiches to salads and cheesecake, there was a lot to choose from. I asked my server Gregory to guide me and he started me off with their trademark beverage: the chocolate egg cream, which consists of milk, carbonated water and flavored syrup. You can even follow the recipe on the glass they pour it into. Gregory then brought me a piping hot bowl of matzoh ball soup. Given the fact this was my first time there he wanted me to try an old favorite: the single potato pancake with apple sauce. This is one big latka, crispy and delicious.

I knew I was going to have a sandwich and once again I turned to Gregory. There are four Reuben sandwiches and he insisted that the combo (corned beef and pastrami and grilled sauerkraut and Swiss cheese on rye) was actually the best of its kind in all of Manhattan. For the finale, I could not leave without dessert and I opted for the devil's food cheesecake. It was half cheesecake and half of the most decadent chocolate I have ever tasted. This was a piece meant for at least two people so I forced myself to stop at a certain point. At the table next to me, a dad ordered a huge piece of cheesecake for his seven year old daughter. He took out a \$50 bill and said that it was hers if she finished it. She tried and about half way through grabbed the money and wisely did not consume the entire piece.

For a more detailed review of the restaurants please go to www.sandboxworld.com/travel. Mike Cohen can be reached at info@mikecohen.ca