

# Ferreira Café serves as a great Montréal ambassador of modern Portuguese cuisine

## MtlRestoRap

MIKE COHEN

Since 1996, Ferreira Café on Peel Street has been a great Montréal ambassador of modern Portuguese cuisine. Warm and refined, while chic and relaxing, this is an ideal spot for anyone wanting to savor delicacies. When I saw them on the Montréal en Lumière lineup, I decided it was time to drop by for my first tasting and was I ever impressed,

The quality and the freshness of their products is their number one priority. This goes for their meticulous selection of products, an olive oil production (which I had with my sourdough bread served with olives and lupini) and a truly impressive fish selection from Portugal caught and served within 24 hours.

At Ferreira, wine is a celebration. Renowned for their collection, their wine cellar is filled predominantly with Portuguese wines, and the largest offering of fine Porto in Canada. Their cellar is where you can see the extent of their passion and knowledge. Carlos Ferreira, the owner, knows each producer personally and has carefully chosen each wine for its quality and price.



Owner Carlos Ferreira



Their cellar also features the F wine from their own vineyards in the Douro Superior. I enjoyed a glass of Carlos Ferreria F Bruto prosecco from Portugal.

My friend and I first looked at the selection of On Ice offerings, choosing the magnificent seafood platter, consisting of lobster, viger shrimp, oysters, mussels in escabeche and octopus ceviche, Matane shrimp and clams. There is also a wide list of appetizers and exclusive caviar. For the main course my friend had the eight-ounce filet mignon while I opted for the 16-ounce Angus rib. It was perfectly prepared and cut in two, so it can be shared, or you can take the remainder home for the following day, which I did. Indeed, save room for the dessert menu. I zeroed in on the chocolate mousse, which is made with Ferreira oil, and comes with ice cream.

Groupe Ferreira is comprised of four restaurants, each offering a unique experience and showcasing the best ingredients available. The story began in 1996 with the opening of Ferreira Café on Peel Street. The restaurant quickly became the go-to spot for Portuguese cuisine in Montreal, and businesspeople met there regularly. Eight years later, Café Vasco da Gama opened just steps away, serving sandwiches and premium salads and supplying catering services to eager gourmets. There are also two Campo grilled Portuguese chicken restaurants downtown, one on de Maisonneuve and the other at the Timeout Market.

Over and above her responsibilities as Director of Operations of Groupe Ferreira, Carlos' daughter Sandra makes a point of sharing innovative ideas and gives time and energy to local charities. Always on the lookout for trends in the restaurant milieu, her vision and passion are certain to take that of her father even further.

Carlos Ferreira himself selects the suppliers with whom the company does business, in addition to



A 16-ounce Angus rib perfectly prepared for two



The popular seafood platter

offering his own wines and olive oils. It was a pleasure to meet him for the first time as well as director Damião Santos, a veteran in the restaurant service industry.

Ferreira Café has indeed established itself as one of the best restaurants in town. In that case, there is no mystery: a visionary owner, an inspired chef, high-quality products, and a talented and dedicated team. In Montreal, Ferreira Café gives Portuguese cuisine all its nobility.

When Carlos Ferreira opened his flagship restaurant nearly 30 years ago, he wanted to create an upscale Portuguese presence downtown among a slew of French and Italian establishments. "I wanted to be an ambassador of my culture and through my restaurant, show how beautiful my country is, and pay homage to it," Carlos says.

The restaurant can seat 130 people, as well as about 45 on a seasonal terrace. There is a beautiful private room that can accommodate 64 to 72 diners, and a smaller one that can fit 12. Besides a very regular clientele, they have a successful catering division with fully personalized menus for large events.

*Ferreira Café is located at 1446 Peel Street. It is open for lunch Monday to Friday 11:45 am to 2:30 pm and dinner Monday to Thursday 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm and Friday and Saturday: 5:30 pm to 10:00 pm. For more information call 514-848-0988 or log on to [www.ferreiracafe.com](http://www.ferreiracafe.com)*

## Mike's Resto Notes: Boustan's rapid expansion; and Pizzeria NO.900

Emad Saad purchased the Boustan restaurant brand in 2017. At the time, only the original spot on downtown Crescent Street and three others existed. Seven years later there are now 66 locations and counting. Publisher Peter Kerr and I sat down with Saad, Marketing Director Jad Akiki and Head Office Manager Kaylea Peres at the spanking new Lachine location recently, situated in a strip mall on busy Victoria Street. Saad went behind the counter himself to prepare a pair of delicious mixed shawarma bowls for us and a pair of vegan shiitake mushroom brochettes that tasted and looked like chicken. Saad told us his goal is to reach 100 franchises by 2025; 250 in the next five years and 750 in a decade's



Owner Emad Saad at Boustan

time. A new menu will be rolled out soon. For more information on Boustan, visit [www.boustan.ca](http://www.boustan.ca).

**PIZZERIA NO.900:** Fiodar Huminski, the head of Research and Development for the Pizzeria NO.900 chain, is so impressed with the product that he continues to invest in different franchises. He is now the co-owner of locations in the Quartier des Spectacles, Terrebonne, Verdun and most recently Outremont. This is where I recently sat down with him for a sampling of their new risotto fritto appetizer as well as slices of their trademark Charleboix pizza and a new tasty offering topped with yellow tomato sauce, fior de latte mozzarella, roasted garlic potato, ham, parsley, ricotta salata and crispy taralli.

The cozy Bernard Street spot in Outremont was actually where Pizza NO.900 founder Alexandre Brunet first debuted the concept of Neapolitan pizza cooked in a remarkable 90 seconds. The special ovens are at 900 degrees Fahrenheit, hence the name of the chain. Since that time there have been 28 more franchises opened in Quebec and one in France. As the group gets set to mark

its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, they will make their Ontario debut in the Beaches area of downtown Toronto and in Paris, hopefully in time for the Paris Summer Olympics.

At the restaurants the team provides a unique selection of high-quality products created exclusively for NO.900 by producers from Quebec (more specifically the Charlevoix region) and Italy. You can even leave with your own pizza kit. Sometime this month, new charcuterie packages will be available for purchase in all Metro grocery stores. I was sent home with a sample to try. This is a collaboration with Les Viandes Biologique de Charlevoix. After winning a prestigious pizza challenge in Atlantic City, New Jersey last summer, the NO.900 team will head to the Pizza Expo in Las Vegas in March. Marketing Director Gabrielle Hamelin, who is also Huminski's wife, is working on a book of stories and recipes about the NO.900's first decade of existence. That is expected out later this year when grand celebrations are planned. For menus and locations, visit: [www.no900.com](http://www.no900.com).