

Kyo Bar Japonais offers a splendid Izakaya experience

MtlRestoRap

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With MTL à TABLE continuing until November 17, you could not make a better choice than Kyo Bar Japonais (www.kyobar.com) in Old Montreal.

We absolutely love this restaurant and were pleased to return there in advance of the MTL à TABLE showcase of local dining establishments. Kyo Bar Japonais immerses you in the frenzied vibe of an Izakaya with the hushed atmosphere of a sushi bar, with a list of over 25 sakés

For “Izakaya” you share everything that is ordered. Everyone at the table generally picks some items that they want and when the dishes arrive they are put at the center of the table. You use small plates called “torizara” to take the food you want and eat it.



The seven piece nigiri



Situated in the boutique Hôtel Place d’Armes and operated by Corner Collection, this chic Japanese tavern offers high and low seating as well as dining options at its bar or sushi counter, all accented by enveloping brick walls, beautiful wood paneling and hand-crafted lanterns. Service is laid back and never rushed. There are 101 seats in the dining room, eight at the bar and a seasonal terrasse of 40. Refined and dynamic, the restaurant combines the frenzied vibe of an Izakaya with the hushed atmosphere of a sushi bar and a menu offering both types of cuisine

Our server Elizabeth greeted us and provided an excellent overview of the Kyo formula.

We recommend you start your visit at Kyo with an exclusively crafted cocktail, or choose from a wide selection of imported beers. Classic cocktails are revisited with a Kyo touch, like the pinky ginger, consisting of Pur vodka, raspberry, ginger beer and soda. Their selection of imported beers, mainly from Japan, is sure to accompany your meal perfectly.

We did indeed go the route of Izakaya. Each dish that arrived was a true treat. We started off with gyoza wagyu, panfried waygu beer dumplings with sweet chili shoyu, truffle oil and green onion. Next was the gyukaki aka miso, beautifully prepared grilled skewers of AAA beef marinated in a mixture of red miso, sake and Montreal steak spice. From the sushi bar we went for the tataki maguro (bluefin tuna, green onions, jalapeno, crispy taro, aji amarillo cream and truffle ponzo), the rainbow (shrimp tempura, tuna, salmon, albacore, hamachi and avocado), maki kitano (spicy crab, tempura, asparagus, cucumber, avocado, kimchi mayonnaise and chives). Finally, the seven piece nigiri, was a



The dining room at KYO Bar Japonais

delight: suzuki (sea bass), sake (salmon), kihada (red tuna), hotate (scallop), saba (mackerel), bincho (albacore tuna) and hamachi (yellowfin tuna).

We savored every morsel and concluded the meal with a spectacular Miso and sake marinated black cod (gindara saikyo yaki). While everything was beyond delicious, this was the culinary highlight of the evening.

We remembered their desserts, notably the yuzu doughnuts dipped in a creamy condensed milk sauce. We enjoyed that and some bread pudding.

Jacob Murat is the head chef and the main creator of the menu.

Kyo Bar Japonais is located at 711, Côte de la Place d’Armes. The restaurant is open for dinner seven days a week and lunch on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Friday. For more information call (514) 282-2711 or log on to www.kyobar.com. Here you can also see their MTL à TABLE selections.



The decadent Yuzu doughnuts

Mike’s Resto Notes: A New Baton Rouge opens in LaSalle; Wednesday special at The Westwood

It has been almost 33 years since the first Baton Rouge Grillhouse & Bar location opened at Carrefour Laval. Fast forward to today and there are now 30 across Quebec, Ontario and the Maritimes. I remain a huge fan of this brand, so it was with great enthusiasm that I got to experience the new Lasalle location at Carrefour Angrignon. This marks the first Baton Rouge spot in the Sud Ouest. There is plenty of free parking and the spacious venue seats 269, including a seasonal terrasse. It opened last July, following a nine-month construction project. Owned by the MTY Group, the Baton Rouge team always seems to be in expansion or full renovation mode. I have written stories over the past two years on the magnificent makeovers at the Decarie and Complexe Desjardins facilities.

The Baton Rouge menu features many tempting choices such as the trademark BBQ baby back ribs, chicken, the finest AAA and Certified Angus Beef steaks, craveable appetizers, crisp salads, signature burgers and sandwiches, seasonal vegetables, premium seafood, lobster in season and decadent desserts. In Lasalle,

the team is headed by general manager Tom Sabatino. He is a veteran in the restaurant business. At our table we were taken care of by a trio of servers: Lena, Natalie and Ricardo, nicknamed “Flash.” We started off with some soups, chicken noodle for me and Classic Maine chowder. The latter comes with clams, potatoes, celery and onions, served with traditional oyster crackers. While my usual go-to meal here are the chicken and ribs, I decided to try the Baton Rouge prime rib for the very first time. On the side I had wild rice pilaf and their trademark crispy fries. My friend went for one of the house favorites, rib steak, with seasonal vegetables and a side and some black tiger shrimp and scallops. For dessert we had chocolate dipped key lime pie and white chocolate raspberry cheesecake. This new Baton Rouge Grillhouse & Bar is located at 7077 Boulevard Newman. You can call 514- 223-0713. Log on to www.batonrouge.ca

Bernies Pizza Martini Bar: There is a new sensation on the West Island. Bernies Pizza Martini Bar opened on Sources Blvd. in Dollard des Ormeaux just a few short months ago. Business is booming. The brainchild of notable restaurateur Jonathan Dresner and his partners Jordan Biberkraut and Steve Murray, this place serves up some of the best thin-crust pizza I have tasted in a long time. Ditto for the sliders and the assortment of martinis. Best of all, I got to dine with Bernie and Shirley Biberkraut. Yep, the place is named after Bernie and vintage photos of him from his younger years grace the walls. Like Shirley told me, “Close your eyes and you are transported from Dollard to a trendy place

in Griffintown.” It is open Wednesday to Sunday from 5 pm to 11 pm T 3627 Sources Blvd, DDO. Reservations are recommended. Call 514-225-9655.

Westwood Wednesdays: There is presently an excellent promotion being offered on Wednesday evenings at The Westwood Bar & Grill next to Place Bell. For only \$30, the steak and frites combo is a fantastic deal. Seated in cozy

booth, my excellent server Thamelie had started me off with a cocktail, a Casanova St. Germain, pamplemousse and prosecco. I also had a choice of appetizers and went for the salmon tartare, which was really terrific. For dessert I opted in favor of the Tres Leches milk cake, topped with coco whipped cream and coconut crumble. The Westwood Bar & Grill is located at 1950 Rue Claude-Gagné. It is open Wednesdays to Saturdays from 6pm. For more information call 438-542-9552 or log on to www.westwood-restaurant.com

– Mike Cohen



Lena serves up prime rib and steak at the Baton Rouge



Jordan and Bernie Biberkraut