

# La Molisana and Restaurant Calzone: Eating Italian from East to West

## MtlRestoRap

MIKE COHEN

I recently decided to experience the cuisine of two notable Montreal Italian dining spots, La Molisana in East End Ahuntsic and Restaurant Calzone in Kirkland.

Mike Cianciullo opened La Molisana on Fleury Street nearly 40 years ago. The restaurant is renowned for its fine Italian cuisine. This includes home-made pastas, veal, seafood and authentic pizza baked in their splendid wood oven. Presently open Wednesday through Sunday evenings, those who live in the immediate area can also take advantage of delivery or take-out. I often have business in the area, so the latter option works nicely for me.

Cianciullo's close friend Frank gave me a call recently, inviting me to come for a family dinner. I happily complied and I was surprised to learn that on Saturday evenings in particular many of the customers are regulars from the West End of town. One of the draws that night is Israeli singer Michel Chétrit, who loves taking requests from the audience.

Cianciullo runs the operation with his son, Michael Jr. who works alongside his head chef of 35 years Renato. The family owns a good portion of the block. Across the



street is Sacré Fût Resto-Bar, owned by one of Mike's other sons, also named Renato, and daughter Teresa. A third son, David, works in the meal prep business in Florida.

The restaurant has indoor seating for about 80 people. There is a private hall on the main floor that can accommodate 55 and a larger one upstairs with the capacity for 100. A seasonal terrace is popular as well.

I started off with a piping hot bowl of tortellini in brodo soup, following that up with a nice serving of focaccia and then my main course of veal scallopini parmigiana, which came with a generous side of penne smothered in tomato sauce. For dessert, I ordered two Nutella bombs – warm rolls stuffed with Nutella.

As for the others, there was one order of filetto di Manzo ai pepe verdi (an eight ounce AAA filet mignonette) with a side of frites maison and two orders of salmon with rice and vegetables, along with an Italian salad that was shared. There was also a delicious tiramisu for dessert.

La Molisana has a variety of other soups and salads. Appetizers include calamari and arancini. As for pastas there is spaghetti Napoli, carbonara and Bolognese, penne arrabiata, linguini primavera, fettucine alfredo, manicotti Fiorentina, risotto, cannelloni, lasagna tortellini aurora and gigi, gnocchi and of course a variety of pizzas. Some of the customer favorites include Osso Bucco casalinga and the shrimp dishes. They also have a nice selection of wine.

La Molisana is located at 1014, rue Fleury E in Ahuntsic. For reservations call 514-382-7100 or go the website at <https://www.lamolisana.ca/?lang=en>.

### Restaurant Calzone to mark 25 years

Meanwhile, Restaurant Calzone will celebrate 25 years of successful operations in Kirkland next spring. This is a family-run business, with Tony Spinelli, his son Mike and son-in-law Shayne Fuller at the helm.

Located in a strip mall on St. Charles Blvd, the location is noted mainly for take-out and delivery. There are a few tables inside which can seat 16 and a gigantic menu on the wall. You will also want to check out the wall of fame, featuring framed photos of different celebrities who have stopped by. Frank Marino, guitarist and singer for the legendary rock band Mahogany Rush, appears in many, as he has become a good friend of Tony's.

The locale opened its doors in April of 1998 and has been recognized for the Best Pizza on the West Is-



(left to right) Shayne Fuller, Tony Spinelli and Mike Spinelli of Restaurant Calzone

land for a number of years running. Here the dough, sauces and meatballs are homemade while the pastas are freshly cooked. In addition to pizzas, they make calzones, hot subs, pasta and salads. The ingredients and recipes go back to the early 1970's when another successful pizzeria named Colosseo's was being successfully run by the family in Montreal West.

I was on my way back from Ottawa near suppertime when I pulled in for a take-out order, which I had called in a half hour earlier. Everything was ready when I arrived: a terrific 12" pizza, garlic bread, a 10" chicken sub with fries and an order of tortellini in rosé sauce, which came with a soft roll and some butter. Now let me just share with you that I spread this order out over the course of three days. I ate half of the pizza and some of the rosé in the car, as I participated in a Zoom meeting for work.

The following day I enjoyed the sub and fries for lunch. All of their subs are served with tomatoes, lettuce and some delicious house dressing. For the pizza, Tony recommended I heat up the remainder in the oven at 350 degrees. Well, I opted for the airfryer and in only two minutes it was as delicious and crispy as it originally came.

Calzone operates its own delivery service, so no apps. The minimum order for delivery (in the immediate area) is \$15.

Calzone is located at 3717 boul. St. Charles in Kirkland, open from 11am to 11pm Monday to Saturday and 11am to 9pm Sundays. For more information call 514-426-9000 or log on to [www.calzone.ca](http://www.calzone.ca)

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La Molisana owner Mike Cianciullo makes a pizza

## Mike's Resto Notes: MTLàTABLE ... and more

From November 3 to 13, MTLàTABLE will present exceptional dining experiences in over 100 restaurants showcasing the city's culinary diversity and talent. The event, which returns to its original format, offers diners the choice of three- or four course table d'hôte dinner menus at fixed prices of \$35, \$45, \$55 or \$75. Foodies can take advantage of this culinary feast to discover new eateries or simply reconnect with their favourite restaurants. From classic to creative dishes, gourmets are in for a treat with the wide range of cuisines featured on the menus. Now that the highly anticipated list of 114 participating restaurants has been revealed, you can go to [mtlatable.com](http://mtlatable.com) and start booking your next culinary experiences! MTLàTABLE is an initiative by Tourisme Montréal that invites people to celebrate Montréal's gourmet dining scene. Log on to [www.mtlatable.com](http://www.mtlatable.com).

**LA MAISON ALCAN:** The new resto-café AMÉA has opened its doors inside LA MAISON ALCAN in the Golden Square Mile in downtown Montreal. Améa café gourmand is an Italian inspired Mediterranean style café that advocates slow living and will inspire customers to enjoy the good things in life and the simple pleasures. It's a grab-and-go concept where people can enjoy breakfast, lunch or coffee in a soothing oasis away from the hustle and bustle of downtown or take-home home-made dishes and authentic pastries to enjoy with family and friends. This unique Italian-inspired Mediterranean-style café is overseen by the team behind the renowned Sherbrooke Street restaurant Béatrice, including owners Pino Forgione and Max Caprio, and chef Michael Coppa. AMÉA café gourmand also becomes the official caterer for all events at LA MAISON ALCAN, a gathering and eclectic heritage site. Info: [www.ameacafe.com](http://www.ameacafe.com)



Chef Michael Coppa of AMÉA, in the Maison Alcan