

Check out *Lulu's*: Montreal's newest pasta bar in trendy Griffintown

MtlRestoRap

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Lulu's Pasta Bar, located in trendy Griffintown, had made a very good impression thus far.

The husband and wife team of Jimmy Petropoulos and Anthony Siounis are the visionaries behind this project. Jimmy has a long history in the restaurant business. While he had moved into the technology field, he always lent an ear to Anthony's brother Billy Siounis, a founder of the highly successful Mr. Puff's chain. In fact, last year, Jimmy accompanied his brother-in-law to New York for the purpose of possibly establishing a Mr. Puff's presence there. He came home, however, with an entirely different plan. Montreal, he determined, was missing a true pasta bar experience and *Lulu's* was born. It opened last January and business has been thriving from day one.

"LuLu" is Anthony's nickname. It also comes from the word "louloudi," which is flower in Greek. The restaurant uses Semolina flour, derived from durum wheat, which boasts numerous health benefits. Rich in essential nutrients like iron, magnesium, and B-vitamins, it provides a high protein content, supporting tissue repair and immune function.

At *Lulu's*, customers approach the pasta bar and place their order. There is a wide choice of pastas and sauces, including classic, special creations and vegan options. The turnaround is very quick. You can grab a drink from the fridge and either select a dessert or wait until you have finished your meal. Each dish comes in a large crafted cup and you can take a cover to

easily take home the leftovers. The Griffintown location has 20 seats inside and a terrace which can accommodate 24. Takeout and delivery orders are very popular. Ecole De Technologie Supérieure is a block away. There is also a lot of commercial and residential properties nearby, as well as the Bell Centre.

The pricing here is excellent: between \$10.95 and \$15.95 for a serving. I brought my friend Eddy with me for a tasting and we were both sold on the place the moment our forks dug into the bowls that Jimmy and Anthony delivered to our patio table. There was the creamy cheeseburger (rosée sauce, ground beef, pickles, cheddar cheese, parmigiano reggiano, parsley); pistachio pesto (creamy pistachio pesto, parmigiano Reggiano and parsley); Tuscan chicken (*LuLu's* cream, chicken, spinach, sun-dried tomato pesto, parsley topped with cherry tomatoes and parmigiano reggiano) and parmesan bacon (*Lulu's* sauce, crispy bacon, caramelized onions, mushrooms, parmigiano reggiano and parsley). Every bite was a journey, a fusion of textures and tastes that evoke comfort and satisfaction. The pastas represent culinary masterpieces, where simplicity meets sophistication, leaving you craving for another delightful encore. Needless to say, we went home with leftovers.

For dessert we grabbed a nutella cornetto and a tiramisu. You can also order small servings of wine, beer, cocktails and many other beverages. I could not resist



Anthony and Jimmy, with their son Constantine (centre), at *Lulu's*

the cherry coke. There is also a choice of three salads. The menu allows you to build your own pasta bowl, including the sauce and extras.

The concept here is so unique that expansion makes sense. A second location will open in September on St. Denis and Ontario, with Carrefour Laval also on the planning board.

Lulu's Pasta Bar is located at 1346 Notre-Dame St W. Opening hours are Monday to Saturday, 11am to 10pm and 1 pm to 10pm on Sundays. For more information you can call (514) 504-1111 or go to www.luluspastabar.com

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Mike's Resto Notes: Porto Poulet serves up great Portuguese chicken

Every now and then I discover a terrific restaurant in an unfamiliar location. Such is the case for Porto Poulet at 1612 Fleury East in Ahuntsic, which specializes in Portuguese chicken. It is called Porto Poulet. There is limited seating inside and a nice terrace which can accommodate 30 diners.

We started off with some delicious grilled calamari and unquestionably the best cod croquettes I have ever tasted. For the main course, one of my friends and I went directly for the house specialty: the half chicken served with fries and home-made salad complemented by a special house sauce. And speaking of sauce, owner Johnny's secret recipe Piri Piri sauce is a culinary delight.



Staci from Porto Poulet serves with a smile on the terrace

The third member of our party was eager to try the poutine, along with the house salad, and he was not disappointed. For dessert there is a choice of tiramisu, flan pudding and the nata, Portuguese custard tarts. We each opted for the latter. The nata here bursts with a rich, creamy sweetness, balanced perfectly with a hint

of caramelized goodness and some cinnamon on the top. For more information call 514-507-1217 or log on to www.restaurantportopoulet.com. It is open Wednesday to Sunday from 11 am to 10 pm.

LA BELLE PROVINCE: I have been among the many regulars at the La Belle Province franchise on Decarie Blvd. for many years. Well, it was recently sold. Costa Angelis and Angie Tourgelis are heading up the operation. The interior was completely renovated, from an attractive and colorful paint job, new booths, washrooms and outdoor patio tables. Not only are there now hotdogs for 99 cents (except for delivery), there are also foot long Nathan's kosher hotdogs and breakfast on weekends from 7am to 11am. I recently dropped by and tried the new addition from Nathan's, as well as a smoked meat sandwich and those great fries. You can also get poutine, salads, spaghetti, club and submarine sandwiches, chicken burgers, grilled cheese and more. There are people from all walks of life eating here. That's what makes it so successful.

ROYALMOUNT NEWS: When the new Royalmount complex opens in late August, there will be a trendy European-style food hall called Le Fou Fou. Designed as a gathering place where gastronomy meets ambiance and innovation, Le Fou Fou will welcome *Eva's*, an all-day à la carte café featuring an inventive mix of Americana. *Le Lucky Belly* will serve Southeast Asian cuisine; *Tiramisu*, Neapolitan-Style pizzas. *Claude Pelletier* is bringing Italian fare and



Costa Angelis and Angie Tourgelis are new owners of La Belle Province on Decarie

artisanal pasta to the table with fan favorite *Il Miglio*. The **Torres brothers** (Hogar Steakhouse) will turn up the heat with a Mexican "taqueria modern. For those looking for a healthier and lighter offering, **Jessica Power and Olivia Farruggia** are bringing the vibrant fare from *Spirulina* with a menu of smoothies, salads, toasts and fresh juices. Also look out for Kishu, a sushi bar; Bayswater, a raw bar; and Shio Ramen, a slurp-worthy ramen bar. Finally, **Lenny Lighter and Peter Katsoudas** (Moishes & Rib 'N Reef) two longtime steakhouse rivals will team up for an eatery yet to be announced.