

Iconic Pasta Casareccia remains a West End favourite

MtlRestoRap

MIKE COHEN

I have been a fan of Pasta Casareccia (www.pastacasa.ca) on Sherbrooke Street West in NDG for many years. The restaurant's name is Italian for "homemade pasta." What originally started out as making their own pasta, grew into a distribution to many restaurants in the greater metropolitan area and availability of over 50 different kinds of pasta from their gourmet boutique for you to cook at home.

There are 70 seats in the dining room, naturally closed off during most of the pandemic. But when I stopped by recently for what turned out to be a multiple-day selection of lunch items for the office; the place was busy. Owner Mauro Petraccone has kept the place humming with a take-out window of delicious items, a fridge full of ready to heat up meals, sauces and more. You can order piping hot menu items for pickup or delivery via DoorDash or Uber Eats.



The restaurant has a handy take-out counter with ready to warm up foods.

Mauro started working here 35 years ago. The happily married dad has been the owner for 20 years now. He does it all, from preparing meals to working at the cash. Last summer he was able to accommodate 50 people before the government shut dining room down. "It has been tough," he told me. "Sales are okay and I am grateful. Delivery orders have tripled. We have a good reputation in the community."

All of the freshly made pasta is made with 100 percent durum semolina and they only choose the best ingredients for their stuffed pastas. In season you must sample some of their special kinds of pastas, like the Agnolotti di Zucca, large raviolis stuffed with pumpkin and almonds.

I called in my order at Noon for a 1 pm pickup. During the pandemic I have opted in favor of ordering from restaurants to treat myself to a few days of fun lunches at the office. For meal number one I chose the tortellini rosa in tomato and cream sauce, with two large pieces of fantastic garlic bread and a decadent piece of chocolate mousse cake. The Spaghetti Bolognese was perfect



There are plenty of selections that are perfect for take-out



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for the following day. It was pre-made, but tasted as fresh as can be after I pulled it from the microwave oven. Mauro included two pieces of bread and butter, something I always like to have for a spaghetti meal. The meat Tortellini in Brodo soup started things off for my finale, followed by an absolutely amazing Poulet Parmigiana sandwich.

The menu has other soups, salads, bruschetta, cold-cuts, antipastos, cheeses, lasagna, cannelloni and a wide variety of other pasta plus a few other yummy looking desserts which I will have to sample for future visits.

Pasta Casareccia is located at 5849 Sherbrooke St. W. It is open every day except Monday. For more information call (514) 483-1588 or log on to www.pastacasa.ca.

RestoNotes: Alain Creton keeps going and a Laval restaurant also becomes a food bank

Like virtually every other festival impacted by the never-ending COVID-19 pandemic, Montréal en Lumière managed to continue onwards this year by making some adjustments to correspond with safety measures in place. During the month of March, this year's edition offered an unprecedented, panoramic view of the different gastronomic branches of the incredibly creative culinary ecosystem here in Quebec. Among the participating restaurants and hotels partnering with the festival this year was Chez Alexandre et fils on Peel Street downtown. Owner Alain Creton was thrilled to be involved. For \$45 (before tip and taxes) he offered the duck foie gras terrine from Hudson Valley Farms, 12 hour braised beef cheek, mushrooms, carrots and truffles or scallop risotto with lobster sauce and chocolate croustillant from Christian Faure at ofauria.com. I was pleasantly surprised when I dropped by for a lunch pickup. All of the food was freshly prepared by the Chez Alexandre chef and placed in vacuum packed plastic bags. Bravo Alain!

...Cavallaro St-Jean in Dollard des Ormeaux has been in business for 12 years. Matthew Blanchette and his business partner took over in late 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The two knew they had a

tough road ahead of them, but both were ready for the challenge. Cavallaro St-Jean is your one-stop shopping for European products such as pasta, tomato sauce, and cookies and rare to find products. It has a variety of deli meats (salami, porchetta, smoked turkey, mortadella, capocolli, pepperoni, and other meats) to make succulent sandwiches at home. They have eight different pizzas to pick from. Below are the different types that they offer....

We all have our dreams in terms of restaurants establishing themselves in your neighbourhood. For me, my wish was to see Harvey's and St-Hubert locations return to the West End of Montreal. A few weeks ago I learned that this was about to happen, but to keep it to myself.... Groupe St-Hubert has opened a new restaurant concept on St-Jacques Street in NDG featuring a Harvey's, New York Fries and St-Hubert. Uber Eats, Skip the Dishes and Door Dash provide delivery and a take-out counter will open soon. It is located at 6710 St. Jacques in the same plaza as EggsFrutti, just west of Cavendish. The parking lot is spacious and convenient for customers to eat in their car.... Casa Grecque in Chomedey, located at the corner of St. Martin Blvd. and Daniel-Johnson Blvd, not only offers take-out and



Alain Creton, owner of Chez Alexandre et Fils

delivery but franchise owner Peter Chiotis has also turned the spot into a food bank. Since January volunteers have collected groceries and other supplies and packaged boxes that they distribute every Saturday. Please see MtlRestrap.com for more details.

— Mike Cohen