

Montrealers continue flocking to the nearest Red Lobster in Ottawa

MtlRestoRap

MIKE COHEN

Ask me which restaurant brand I miss most in Montreal and I will always name Red Lobster, which mysteriously disappeared from Quebec back in 1997.

Red Lobster still operates in four Canadian provinces – Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. There are two locations in Ottawa. The one at 1499 St. Laurent Blvd., just as you enter the city, has always been our “go to” spot. Twenty years ago, I did a few reviews for my newspapers and connected with General Manager Ian Forrester. When I went there for a curbside pickup back in December, Ian was still on the job. It turns out he has been there for an incredible 36 years.

More recently, I did a more extensive order. The place was packed, and people were waiting for tables. Meanwhile, the lineup at the bar for pickup and delivery orders was long as well.



“We get a lot of Montrealers who drive up here on the weekend just to dine with us,” said Forrester. “They clearly miss Red Lobster. I frankly cannot believe how many of them come here.”

Now that family reasons bring me to the Nation’s Capital more often, we are thrilled to have this option while secretly hoping the brand will return to Quebec one day. Word has it that before the pandemic, Red Lobster officials were scouting Montreal for potential locations. Now that the restaurant industry is getting back to normal, perhaps this will indeed become a reality.

Red Lobster is the world’s largest seafood restaurant company, headquartered in Orlando, Florida, with more than 55,000 employees in over 700 restaurants in the U.S. and Canada.

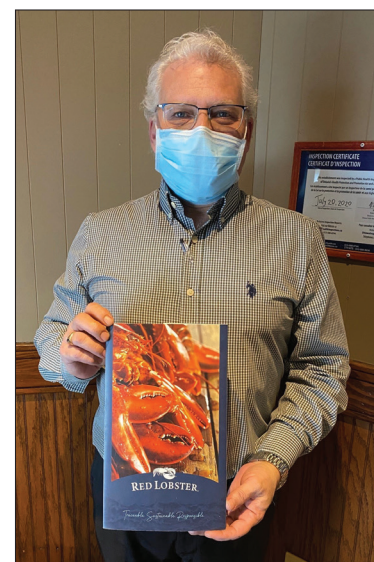
A Great Menu

For our most recent visit the three of us started off with an appetizer of seafood stuffed mushrooms. That was followed by bowls of piping hot clam chowder and lobster bisque to share and, of course, the mouth-watering signature biscuits. You get two per serving and there is an option to order a half dozen more – good to wrap in a plastic baggie and take home to enjoy. These delicious and soft rolls are not something you will find anywhere else.

For the main course I chose the Lobster Lover’s Dream – a roasted rock lobster tail, butter-poached Maritime lobster tail and lobster-and-shrimp linguini in a



An appetizing serving at Red Lobster in Ottawa



Veteran General Manager Ian Forrester

creamy lobster sauce, served with a side of rice. My wife ordered double lobster tails, with side of mashed potato and crispy Brussel sprouts. As for my daughter, she opted for the Seafarer’s Feast – broiled Maritime lobster tail, seared sea scallops, garlic shrimp and Walt’s Favourite Shrimp. It was served with melted butter, lemon, cocktail sauce and a choice of side – in this case mashed.

There are some nice desserts, as well, such as the chocolate wave cake with a side of vanilla ice cream and chocolate sauce. You can find many other tempting items on the menu, such as Date Night Feast for Two – two butter-poached Maritime lobster tails, two seven-ounce sirloins, two jumbo grilled shrimp skewers and a shareable Bacon Mac & Cheese, plus a choice of one side for each guest. The Lobster-Topped Stuffed Tilapia features tilapia roasted with their signature seafood stuffing and topped with Maritime lobster in a creamy lobster beurre blanc and a choice of two sides.

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The signature Red Lobster cheddar biscuits

Mike’s Resto Notes: Big Food Bucket List is a must watch

By Mike Cohen

If you like restaurants, then Food Network Canada’s Big Food Bucket List now airing on Saturday evenings from 8 pm to 9 pm is a must watch.

Host John Catucci (*You Gotta Eat Here!*) is back to take viewers on an all-new food adventure across North America as he checks buzz-worthy, crazy, delicious food off his bucket list. In each episode, he visits the restaurants behind these must-eat meals and hits the kitchen to learn how the chefs make their mind-blowing creations. This season has already featured two Montreal restaurants – Tropikàl Restobar in St. Henri, specializing in Caribbean cuisine and owned by Dollard native Jae-Anthony Doughan and trendy Foiegwa in Griffintown.

Catucci records 20 episodes per season, profiling three restaurants in each half hour segment. That is 60 dining experiences across Canada and the United States. The show also airs on Hulu in the United States. It is a busy pace, keeping him on the road two and a half weeks per month. How does he stay in shape? “Because of this show and to keep me honest, I hired a personal trainer a few years ago,” he said.

The format is neat. At each restaurant, he is joined by regulars who sit with him and talk about the dishes.

On Tropikàl Restobar Catucci told me: “I loved the vibe. The food is so special, and Jae-Anthony is an amazing chef. He is one of those guys who really wants to feed you. I especially enjoyed his jerk chicken poutine.”

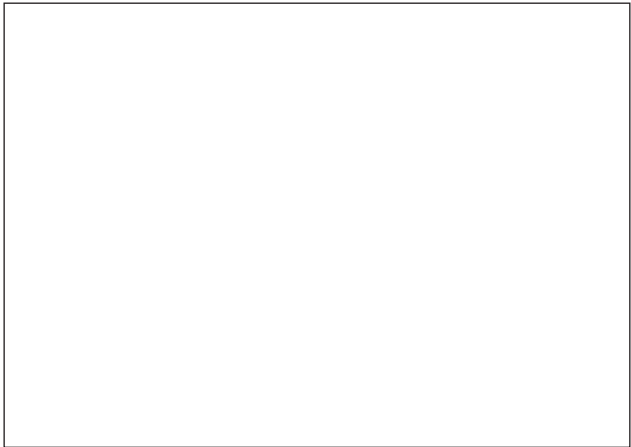
LITE BITES: I recently sampled Mont Tacos, an innovative concept of fast-food restaurants based on an authentic product, the French-style taco. First you need to pick the size of your taco and choice of sauce, meat, cold cuts, cheese and vegetables. There are also fries or poutines, not to mention a series of signature tacos. I had a combo of the grilled chicken cutlet and marinated chicken, with mayo, fries and a drink. There are now nine locations, with one more to come in Sainte-Thérèse. I went to the LaSalle locale, which has good parking...

BeaverTails, makers of unique and delicious BeaverTails® pastries, recently opened two new locations: one in historic Old Quebec City and the other on Les Avenues Vaudreuil. CEO Pino Di Ioia notes that the menu has been diversified to include BeaverDogs Poutail, BT Sip, ice cream and sharable take-out-friendly items like BeaverBite and BeaverTails Brownie Pie. Today, there are 195 BeaverTails points-of-sale in six countries. More than 20 new locations are expected to open this year – the majority will be community shops



Chef Jérémie Falissard welcomes John Catucci to Foiegwa.

across Canada. Info: www.beavertails.com... Pizzeria NO. 900 has opened its 13th location on 27th Avenue in Verdun. Félix Sylvestre has gone from an employee to owner in just two short years... A shout out to the team at Au Vieux Duluth. Their 30 franchises are celebrating the 40th anniversary of the popular Greek restaurant chain. I stopped off for a seamless pickup order recently at the St. Laurent location, with the wonderful Tony Antonopoulos at the helm.



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Lunch Specials and Pivoting to Take-Out

Red Lobster is also introducing a new 10 Under \$12 lunch menu, available Monday through Friday until 3pm and featuring a variety of delicious selections. This includes garlic shrimp, crispy cod sandwich, popcorn shrimp, and more. The 10 Under \$12 weekday lunch menu, along with the recently introduced three from the Sea combination option for just \$19.99, appear on Red Lobster’s newly designed,

easy to navigate menu, providing great value options for guests no matter when the craving hits. During the pandemic, Red Lobster mastered the take-out and delivery concept. At the St. Laurent Blvd. location, you place your order online and upon arrival just go to one of the curbside pickup spots and call the restaurant. Someone will bring the order right to your vehicle. The restaurant itself is perfectly handicapped accessible, with a level entrance and no stairs. There are also handicapped parking spots. “We had just started to put more effort into take-out

and third-party delivery before the pandemic,” said Forrester. “During the pandemic we managed to double our take-out sales. I was also able to maintain 90 percent of my staff.” To view the complete Red Lobster menu or find a restaurant location, visit RedLobster.ca. You can call 613-744-7560 and ask for Ian or his trusty assistant Matt if you want to beat the other Montrealers for a reservation. *Mike Cohen can be reached at info@mikecohen.ca. Follow his dining experiences at www.MtlRestoRap.com which now includes an Ottawa section.*

Art By The Water Exhibit & Sale at the Beaconsfield Yacht Club

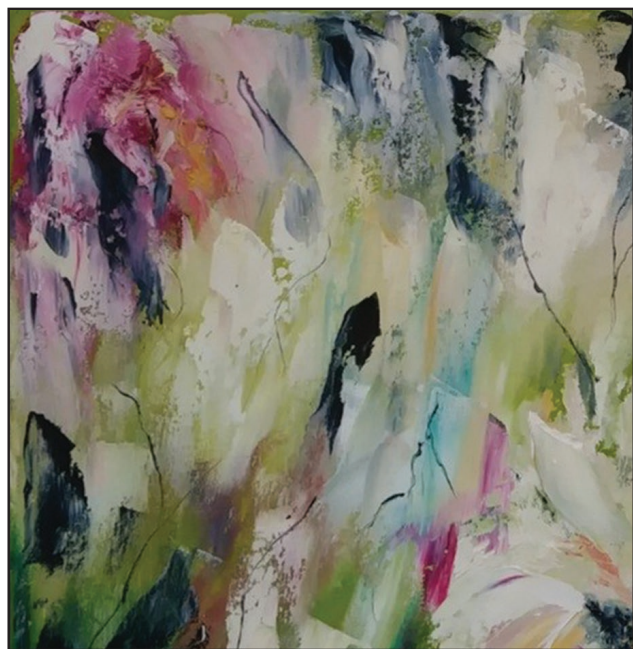
By Aud'rey Riley

The 13th Art By The Water Exhibit and Sale 'is back'. The artists have a passion for the arts and would like to invite and welcome everyone to the historic and charming Beaconsfield Yacht Club on April 30 and May 1st at 10am – 5pm. Free admission. The yacht club is located at 26 Lakeshore Road, Beaconsfield H9W 4H3

Paintings make a house feel like a home. Bring the warmth of an original painting into your home with the purchase of a painting. We offer a wide variety including modern abstracts, classic realism, watercolour and mixed media. A percentage of sales and a donation jar will benefit the Lakeshore General Hospital Foundation with sincere appreciation of all healthcare workers and staff everywhere. Hospitals need our help now more than ever before.

"Gone are the days of hanging just one painting over the sofa. Expand and try new ideas of a 'focal wall of art'."

Art comes from the heart. "Our mission is to paint to our heart's content, share our artworks with the public through exhibitions while also contributing to a worthy cause. Putting paint on a canvas and expressing oneself is very gratifying. Thus, it is a proud moment when the last stroke of paint is applied to the canvas and the final signature marks the completion of the artwork" as stated by artist Aud'rey Riley. The "Art By The Water Exhibit" is not just another art show, it has 'heart' and the visitors are touched by



"Spring Fling" by Aud'rey Riley

the work the artists put into the exhibit to make it a welcoming event. Visitors are encouraged to browse at their leisure and enjoy the art and the ambience the artists have created.

Visitors come from far and wide outside the West Island Beaconsfield area including the Eastern Townships, Ontario, Westmount, Town of Mount Royal, NDG, Outremont, the Laurentians, Laval and the list goes on and on. The two-day event is held rain or shine, inside the charming 200-year-old fieldstone building and outside under the large elegant tent as well as on the very large covered veranda. "So whatever the weather, we've got you covered" said Riley. The artists will be present both days of the show.

Every year to add more interest and variety to the show, three guest artists are invited to participate with the group. Artists Beatrice Cluney, Johanne Turgeon and Ginette Parizeau bring a wealth of talent and stunning art to the exhibit. Beatrice paints in an exquisite classic style and has also expanded to using a palette knife creating wonderful art. Johanne is known for her unique whimsical house paintings and has recently delved into other styles as well. Ginette is an interior designer with a well-known Montreal home builder. She has a great 'eye' for detail which reflects in her striking watercolour paintings.

All of the participating artists in the group offer a wide variety of art to suit everyone's style, something for everyone from the beginner art collector to the more serious collector. Affordable art can be had for gift giving, the home or office.

Gone are the days of hanging just one painting over the sofa. Expand and try new ideas of a 'focal wall of art'. Experiment. Stand smaller paintings up on book shelves amongst an arrangement of books and potted plants for a stunning effect.

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"The Allure" by Beatrice Cluney

The artists extend a warm welcome to all. Come and discover the quaint Beaconsfield Yacht Club and see the clubhouse transformed into a 2 day 'art gallery'. Boating and social memberships are offered with or without a boat. Adult sailing courses are also available. For information call 514-695-1272

Directions to the yacht club and Art By The Water, take either highway 40, exit # 50 St. Charles south or take highway 20, exit # 48, turn south off the 40 or 20 on St. Charles to Beaconsfield Blvd and turn left at the traffic lights, then turn right at the second stop sign. Or take a leisurely drive along the shores of Lake St. Louis on the lakeshore road round many of the picturesque bays until you reach the yacht club. Direction signs will be posted.

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