

# The growing Saint Houblon restaurant group noted for its beer, pub fare and weekend brunch

## MtlRestoRap

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I have been curious about Saint Houblon for several years now, often passing by their Côte des Neiges area location. When I saw them listed on MTLàTABLE a few months back there was no question this was high on my list. I connected with their charming Chief Operating Officer, Roxane Brossoit and she could not have been more accommodating. More recently I returned to sample their fabulous weekend brunch.

Saint Houblon was founded eight years ago by Alexandre Verville, who was a student at the time at the Université du Québec à Montréal. He and three partners opened a first location on St. Denis Street, followed by Gatineau Avenue in Côte des Neiges, St. Laurent in Little Italy four years ago and then a micro-brewery in St. Bruno was launched last summer. Verville lives on a farm where he grows fruits and vegetables used in menu items. They also have a food truck.

My dinner at the Côte des Neiges location was on a Saturday night in early November which brought us unseasonably warm temperatures, so I got to sit outside on the terrasse. What a surreal experience that turned out to be!

Saint Houblon is noted for its vast selection of beers and pub fare. The menu changes every six months while the variety of beers rotate.

The Côte des Neiges spot can accommodate 300 diners over three floors and the seasonal terrasse. Situated only a few blocks away from Université de Montréal, there is indeed a youngish vibe here.

My server was Camille, who did a wonderful job guiding me through the menu options. Now I am not a big beer drinker, but how could I come to Saint Houblon without giving Camille's recommendations a try. You get a beer can to the table with your server's name on it and a QR code which leads you to the full suds menu.

Camille brought over two small glasses. One was called the Marc-Ambre Fleury (close to the spelling of the NHL goalie for Minnesota), beer on tap. It had a nice taste. As for the second glass, a sour cassis & raspberry which I must say was superb and tasted like a sweet wine.

For an appetizer I tried the duck rillettes (basically a duck pâté with pepper jam, flatbread and arugula. Wow, this was beyond outstanding. Next came a plate of salmon tartare, with green onions, coriander, Gochujang aioli, garlic sauce and tahini and sesame seeds also served with flatbread and some crusty French bread.

I was tempted by their double cheeseburger and fries. So, I decided to have just a bit of the tartare, saving most of it for lunch the following day. The burger did not disappoint me, nor did the crispy fries. For dessert, I tried the almond cake, with strawberries from the farm, and salted caramel ice cream. On future visits I will try the duck poutine, fried calamari, chicken wings, salmon bowl, the octopus and the fried oreos.

As for brunch, it is offered every weekend from 11 am to 3 pm with all you can eat options for \$35 by reservation and \$40 without. You can also order à la carte.

Manager Justin Bernatchez took care of me, bringing over a thirst-quenching pitcher of mimosa to drink. From the menu I sampled some delicious scrambled Queso (cheese) eggs, bacon, a beef sausage pogo containing beer (I did not even taste it), absolutely yummy garlic and maple syrup potatoes and a delicious breakfast sandwich. There are also a host of vegan options. And try the pain perdu, a small French toast item that was superb.



Côte des Neiges Manager Justin showcases some breakfast plates.

From the all you can eat menu, there is the Carnivore selection, which includes scrambled queso eggs, Marc-Ambree Fleury bacon, beer sausage pogo, garlic and maple syrup potatoes, beer and tomatoes, baked beans, sausage and leek hash and sometime overnight oats, coconut and IPA strawberries.

There are also vegan options: okonomiyaki, Marc Ambree Fleury tempeh bacon, beer tofu pogo, garlic and maple syrup potatoes, beans, vegan sausage and leek hash, and the oats as well (not always available).

Justin noted that Saint Houblon has started to air live sports events on its TV screens, attracting even more new audiences.

Go to [www.sainthoublon.com](http://www.sainthoublon.com) for the coordinates of each location and to see the menu.

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## Mike's Rest Notes: Pizza Salvatoré expansion; success for of MTLàTABLE

By Mike Cohen

Pizza Salvatoré is a significant success story, with 61 franchises and counting. Thus far there are a handful of locations in and near the Greater Montreal area, including Dollard, St. Leonard, Laval, Repentigny, Terbonne and Mascouche, as well as the South Shore. They have expanded to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, with Ontario (London) next on their radar screen.

It all started in 1964 when Angèle Fecteau, a native of Chaudière-Appalaches, and Salvatoré Abbatiello, originally from the province of Benevento in Italy, established their first pizzeria in Saint-Georges de Beauce. This soon became a family operation, with the couple's seven children getting involved. In 1987 Pizza Salvatoré franchises started to surface. It was only in 2018 when five of the founders' grandchildren, Guillaume, Élisabeth, Sébastien, Katarina and Frédéric Abbatiello, took over the reins of the family business that expansion started to explode. To give you a better idea, there were 13 franchises when they took over. In the fall of 2020, just months before the COVID-19 hit all businesses hard, the grandchildren set a goal of opening a new restaurant a month. Despite the shutdowns, they have met their objective and more.



David Malka from Leyleys in Decarie Square

This is a take-out and delivery format. Known for its delicious pizzas and poutines, the fast-food chain has succeeded on the strength of the family entrepreneurial spirit. Let me recommend their Chinese Fondue and BBQ Chicken pizzas, chicken wings (they have a variety of choices) and the decadent hot and soft eight inch cookie sprinkled with crushed M&Ms.

For more details on locations, the menu and opportunities to become a franchisee, log on to [www.salvatore.com](http://www.salvatore.com).

**MTLàTABLE:** The 10<sup>th</sup> edition of MTLàTABLE in November was a resounding success. Over 92,000 patrons dined in some 115 participating restaurants during this grand culinary celebration. The event generated over \$6.5 million in economic spin-offs.

In this period of recovery, restaurateurs felt that this event was more than welcome: "A wonderful experience bringing strong traffic at a time of the year when restaurants need it!" According to a survey, more than 80 percent of the owners who responded said that MTLàTABLE attracted a new clientele that is looking forward to the next edition. I was among those for certain, checking out St. Houblon and Pullman.

Yves Lalumière, President and CEO of Tourisme Montréal stated "MTLàTABLE is a key culinary celebration in the North American capital of gastronomy that is Montréal. We are thrilled to contribute to the city's economic vitality by encouraging foodies to discover the richness and diversity of Québec products. Citizens and visitors alike have graced the city's tables



The five partners at Pizza Salvatoré: Sébastien, Katarina, Guillaume Jr., Élisabeth and Frédéric Abbatiello

during this event for the last 10 years and we are determined to continue democratizing Quebec gastronomy."

**LEYLEYS:** The sister and brother team of Lea and David Malka have opened a new kosher restaurant at Decarie Square called Leyleys Trendy Salad Bar. Lea, 24, was educated as teacher and David, 32, has a background in construction. Prior to the pandemic Lea operated a small restaurant in the same location on the second floor of Decarie Square. She and David reopened in October 2022, operating weekdays from 9 am to 4:30 pm. Leyleys has already gained a steady clientele, notably during the lunch hour. Their menu features breakfast items from eggs, pancakes, fruit bowls and avocado toast served until 11am. There is also an array of signature salads, focaccia, specialty pasta, poke bowls, sandwiches and paninis, tapas, pastries and muffins.