

Restaurant Sho-dan prepares to reopen for diners; its take-out and delivery service aims to please

MtlRestoRap

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When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in mid-March, Restaurant Sho-dan on Metcalfe Street closed its doors like others in the industry. Traditionally, this place is packed for lunch and dinner during regular operating hours, so for charismatic owner Chinh Pham (best known as Romeo) it was a bitter pill to swallow.

Because restaurants like Sho-dan have such a loyal following, clients made it clear to Romeo that his superb cuisine was dearly missed. So, in mid-May he reopened for take-out and delivery via Skip the Dishes and Uber Eats. On June 25 the dining room was back in business, with the new conditions set forth by the Quebec government. For starters, they are now open Wednesday through Saturday from 5 pm to 10 pm. (4 pm for take-out and delivery).

"We have a big place," said Romeo, "so we are able to set up the restaurant in a completely safe way."

All surfaces are being disinfected before and after every customer. Employees wear masks, social distancing measures are being respected and single use paper menus are now part of the program. Diners are asked to wear masks as well upon entering the premises.

Spread over two floors, with capacity for 180 to dine, Sho-dan did not have a terrace but Romeo took advantage of the loosening of regulations this summer and added some tables with umbrellas in the front. "We hope to welcome many people downtown this summer," Romeo said.

The take-out and delivery service has always been popular. Romeo recognizes that many clients still want to stick with that option. My family and I first experienced Sho-dan last summer. We actually loved the ambiance and we specifically tried to go on nights when Romeo was there, because he typically goes from table to table and makes timely suggestions from the menu.

We were delighted to opt for the take-out route, for which Sho-dan is uniquely situated and has a special menu on its website. You merely need to pull up in front, where there are many available spots, call and someone will place the entire order in your trunk or back seat. Inside all staff are wearing full protective gear, including Chef Romeo.

The trip from downtown back to my house in Côte Saint-Luc was a mere 20 minutes. Everything was beautifully packaged. We placed all of the plastic containers on the dining room table and prepared ourselves for a delicious meal. It could not have been fresher had we eaten it at the restaurant.

As usual we started off and began by sharing a few appetizers: the Haru Maki (spring rolls); and the gyoza (Japanese dumplings filled with a mix of seasoned chicken and cabbage, served with soy-vinegar sauce) and simply sensational sushi pizza.

Next we turned to some of the specialties, designed mainly by Romeo. The different combination of flavours are unique to this restaurant and will be sure to make you live the "Sho-dan" experience.

Next it was on to the main course. First on our list remains the house specialty, the Besame Mucho (spicy tuna, shrimps, avocado and tempura flakes rolled in soya paper). Next was the Explosion (fresh yellow tail served with fresh ginger, green onions and ponzu sauce) followed by the Phoenix (crabsticks, avocado, mango and fried onions rolled in soya paper topped with red tuna), the Fuji (Red spicy tuna, jalapeno, shrimp tempura, rice, rolled in soya paper) and the Sunflower (lightly fried salmon with avocado and tobiko rolled in soya paper).

We had 12 pieces left to enjoy for lunch the following day.

When you dine at the restaurant make sure to try their dessert special:



Chef and Owner Romeo in full protective gear.

a plate consisting of two sorbets, a large piece of chocolate cake and a mouthwatering taste of cheesecake. The restaurant offers Nao teas.

Restaurant Sho-dan is located at 2020, rue Metcalfe. For more information log to www.sho-dan.com, email info@sho-dan.com or call (514) 987-9987

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Some of the delicacies from Sho-dan.

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