

# Dagwoods unveils a new concept; Rib 'N Reef parks your car; Lulu's Pasta expands; & more

## MtlRestoRap

MIKE COHEN

I got a true behind the scenes look at the first new Dagwoods concept in Dollard des Ormeaux, with Senior Vice-President of the MTY Group Michel Lamontagne as my guide. Founded in 1989, Dagwoods is a Montreal-based sandwich chain celebrated for its freshly made sandwiches prepared right before your eyes.

MTY purchased Dagwoods from Spiro Krallis in 2017, with Lamontagne chosen to steer the ship. There are 12 locations across the Greater Montreal area. The Dollard spot on Sources Blvd. was recently taken over corporately which made it the perfect place to test out the new concept. It was closed for five months and given a complete overhaul. The revamped culinary experience brings a fresh, modern twist while staying true to Dagwoods' authentic essence and vision. New bread options have joined the menu, alongside delicious focaccia sandwiches — all while keeping the beloved classics that have long defined the brand. What I like about this store is you order and pay for your food first and someone will bring it to your table when it is ready.

Visually, the reimagined identity nods to Dagwoods' roots, blending vintage inspiration with local pride through design elements that pay homage to Montreal's iconic culture. Guests are invited to enjoy the bright, refreshed space and indulge in a **flavor-packed menu** served in a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. Lamontagne provided me with a tasting of two new sandwiches: steak on some Dutch crunch bread and focaccia prosciutto and pesto, both available for a limited time. "Given how strong our roots are in the West Island, it only made sense to debut our new concept right here, at the heart of this community," said Lamontagne. "The feedback has been incredible — it's a great sign of what's to come!" Info: [www.dagwoods.ca](http://www.dagwoods.ca)

### Rib 'N Reef's Valet Parking Secret

I dropped by the iconic Rib 'N Reef Steakhouse on Decarie recently for their annual oyster party. Holding court was owner Peter Katsoudas, who celebrated his 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the helm. "The Rib" has been around since 1960. When Katsoudas took over the place looked like it was on its last legs. Over the past three decades he has switched things into high gear, packed for lunch



Rib 'b' Reef owners Peter Katsoudas and his wife Antonella

and dinner. There is a popular cigar lounge and an immaculate seasonal and weather-proofed terrace. The steaks, roast beef and seafood are second to none. A lot of people ask why they have valet parking. "We only have 54 spots," Katsoudas, "and we pack in 78 cars." Info: [www.ribnreef.com](http://www.ribnreef.com)

### Le Fou Fou adds vendors

I was pleased to return to the magnificent Royalmount Food Hall, Le Fou, which has introduced three new vendors: Mersea, Sacré Bao and Ciccio's. Mersea brings a fresh, coastal sensibility to Le Fou Fou, offering a refined yet relaxed take on classic seafood fare. Co-founded by acclaimed chef Claude Pelletier (known for his celebrated Montreal restaurants like Club Chasse et Pêche and Il Miglio), Mersea reflects his signature approach to simplicity and finesse. From oysters and mussels to truffle-kissed tartare, each dish highlights simple ingredients elevated with care. The result is an inviting, effortlessly chic destination where seaside flavours meet contemporary style. They are now offering exclusive 5 à 7 specials such as \$1 oysters and \$18 wine flights. I enjoyed one of their house favorites, the fish and chips.

Sacré Bao celebrates the authentic flavours of Asian street food, serving up bold, satisfying bites made with care and tradition. Created by Hanhak Kim, the visionary behind Bar Otta and Tori Ramen, Sacré Bao brings Kim's signature creativity to every dish. From fluffy bao buns (which I had with duck, Korean fried chicken and salmon) to vibrant banh mi layered with fresh herbs and spice, each bite captures the heart of true comfort food. It's a warm, inviting spot where authenticity, flavour, and the perfect amount of spice take center stage.

Ciccio's brings a bold, modern twist to classic Italian eats, celebrating the art of the perfect sandwich. Each sandwich creation — from the porchetta-stuffed showstopper to the fresh, prosciutto and pesto Caprese — is layered with premium ingredients and house-made sauces that pack serious flavour. Paired with vibrant salads and a touch of nostalgia, Ciccio's delivers a scrumptious taste of Italy. Bravo to owner Gian Paolo De Riggi whom I got to meet. Info: <https://www.lefoufou.com/>

### Lulu's Pasta Bar Expands

In less than two years, Jimmy Petropoulos and his wife Anthy Siounis have opened four Lulu's Pasta Bar locations. It all started in trendy Griffintown, then Ontario and St.



Chef Olivier Perret is preparing for the holidays at Renoir

Denis streets, Carrefour Laval and now de Maisonneuve Blvd. across from the downtown campus of Concordia University. 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. What's next? The couple told me they will focus on the four locales for now and consider franchising in 2026. [www.luluspastabar.com](http://www.luluspastabar.com)

### Renoir Holiday Menu

I recently returned to the **newly renovated Renoir**, nestled within the Sofitel Montreal Golden Mile, for the unveiling of its holiday menu crafted by **chefs Olivier Perret, Félix Duquet, Arthur Josserand, and Paul Peyrat**. Inspired by Quebec culinary traditions, this exceptional menu skillfully combines the expertise of **French haute cuisine with the authenticity of locally sourced ingredients**, carefully selected for their quality and seasonality. I hope to be back soon to experience their much talked about brunch. Info: [www.restaurant-renoir.com](http://www.restaurant-renoir.com)

### Looking back at MTLàTABLE

Tourisme Montréal hit a homerun once again with the 13<sup>th</sup> edition of MTLàTABLE in November. More than 150 restaurants offered fixed-price table d'hôte menus: dinner for \$35, \$50, \$65 or \$80. Some participating restaurants also served brunch for \$25. I visited two of the participants. The Vieux-Port Steakhouse (<http://www.vieuxportsteakhouse.com>) on St. Paul Street West in Old Montreal has been a year-round favorite of mine for many years. Their offer was not to be believed; \$50 per person included a beverage, a starter, a main course, a dessert and coffee or tea. After drinks both of us started with the lobster bisque from the Gulf of St. Laurent. Next came the mains, a 10-ounce NY Striploin, with roasted garlic mashed potatoes and vegetables from my dining partner and the grilled salmon for me. When it came for dessert, we went for the decadent chocolate mousse hands down, concluding the evening with cups of tea and a decaf Americana. Next it was on to Restaurant Sho-dan (<http://www.sho-dan.com/>) on Metcalfe downtown, which also had an incredible \$50 per person selection. It was wonderful to see Chef Chinh Pham, better known simply as "Romeo." We had the Miso soup, a generous assortment of sushi and maki (including my favorite the Besame Mucho roll) and some tiramisu cake for dessert.

Mike Cohen's e-mail address is [info@mikecohen.ca](mailto:info@mikecohen.ca). Follow his dining adventures at [www.mtlrestorap.com](http://www.mtlrestorap.com) and on Instagram @Mikecohencsl



A look at the new concept Dagwoods in Dollard des Ormeaux



The delicious Bao buns at Le Fou Fou