

Le Pois Penché is one Montreal's finest French brasseries

MtlRestoRap

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Le Pois Penché has steadily earned a reputation as one of the city's standout French brasseries, thanks in large part to the vision and passion of its owner, Imad Nabwani.

Nabwani's fascination with the hospitality industry began at a young age while growing up in Syria. That early interest led him to formal training in hotel and culinary management, graduating in Hospitality Studies from the prestigious École Hôtelière de Lausanne, followed by the Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec (ITHQ).

As vice-president of the renowned Queue de Cheval Group, Nabwani oversaw some of Montreal's highest-grossing restaurants, including La Queue de Cheval, Trinity, and 40West. In 2011, he purchased Le Pois Penché, which has since grown steadily into one of the city's most popular Parisian-style brasseries.

"Our dishes are familiar yet distinctively original," Nabwani told me during an interview a few days after my first-ever dining experience at the restaurant. "Our warm hospitality will immediately make you feel like family. This restaurant is the realization of a dream I've cherished since I fell in love with French gastronomy and wine as a young man working hotel jobs in Paris. I was 17 at the time, and I promised myself I would one day own a French brasserie. It remains my daily aspiration to share the food pleasures I discovered in the City of Lights, infused with the multicultural spirit of Montreal."

Located downtown on De Maisonneuve Boulevard at the corner of Drummond Street, Le Pois Penché offers 120 seats, a private room that accommo-

dates up to 80 guests, and a seasonal terrace for 60. The restaurant is open for lunch, dinner, and weekend brunch.

Le Pois Penché specializes in French comfort food classics with Montreal accents, including seafood platters, steak frites, onion soup, duck confit, and brunch favorites.



The rib steak at Reuben's



Stevie Ben Hamron at Smash Mzl



Le Pois Penché owner Imad Nabwani

For dinner, we began with cocktails, followed by a tray of a dozen freshly shucked oysters and a half lobster served in the shell. The main courses featured Alberta lamb sirloin with gratin dauphinois potatoes for me, while my dining partner enjoyed duck confit accompanied by fingerling potatoes, Brussels sprouts, smoked duck lardons, and peppercorn sauce. We saved room for dessert, indulging in crème brûlée, profiteroles, and ice cream.

The menu offers many other tempting options, including fresh fish, homemade rigatoni with tiger shrimp, lobster bisque, salmon tartare, beef tartare, and more.

I also had the pleasure of meeting Fede Sanchez, who handles communications for the restaurant.

More recently, Le Pois Penché expanded its offerings with a French-style catering service, handling everything from intimate private receptions to large-scale corporate events. During my visit, I met general manager Mehdi, who arrived directly from Paris, as well as Clément, one of the restaurant's most praised servers. Guests frequently single out his gracious service—and that of the entire team—in online reviews.

Le Pois Penché is located at 1230 De Maisonneuve Blvd. West. Hours are Monday from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.; Tuesday to Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.; and Saturday and Sunday brunch from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., with dinner from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. For more information, visit lepoispence.com or call (514) 667-5050.

Reuben's and Deville deliver great food and now – parking

It has been a challenging few years for the Tzempoulos brothers, Anthony, Adam and Jimmy. They are the owners of Reuben's Deli & Steakhouse (<http://reubensdeli.com>) on Ste. Catherine Street and Deville (www.devilleinerbar.com) on Stanley.

The pandemic forced them to close Reuben's for 18 months and Montreal bureaucrats even gave them grief during the shutdown about the size of the Deville terrace. But nothing has been worse than the seemingly endless construction on Ste. Catherine Street and Stanley. Now let's be clear: their "beef" was with the Projet Montréal administration of former Mayor Valerie Plante. During their eight years in office, they did significant damage to the health of downtown Montreal. Newly minted downtown Councillor Leslie Roberts has been by and Mayor Soraya Martinez Ferrada has pledged to get rid of the orange cones and speed up the work using artificial intelligence.

The brothers have now introduced free indoor parking seven nights a week, from 4 pm to 11pm, at 1475 Stanley Street for both restaurants. This is a fantastic



The duck confit at Le Pois Penché

deal for people headed to the Bell Centre and seeking a good pre-game meal.

I have been by Reuben's twice in the last few weeks, first with my friend Steve and then with Councillor Roberts. The sandwiches here always get my attention. I went for the roast beef melt with fries; Steve had the famous open sandwich. I quenched my thirst with some Stewart's cherry cola and topped things off with a decadent piece of chocolate cake. Anthony Tzempoulos insisted I return to try their trademark rib steak. Let me tell you how much it exceeded my expectations, perfectly grilled at my usual medium rare. This time I had some rice on the side.

Reuben's Steaks and Deli (<https://reubensdeli.co>) is located at 1116 Rue Ste-Catherine Ouest. Deville Dinerbar (<https://www.devilleinerbar.com>) is located at 1425 Stanley Street. You can call 514-281-6556.

More Food Coverage on Instagram

If you'd like to see more of my restaurant adventures please follow me on Instagram @MikecohenCSL. Among my recent video profiles you can enjoy are the iconic Schwartz's Deli on St. Laurent Blvd, the decadent dessert spot Delysees at Royalmount, breakfast experiences at the new Yolks in Dollard, Orange Café in NDG and Petinos in St Laurent, the kosher Smash Mzl on Jean Talon near Decarie and the kosher Boucherie Eden on Westminster in Côte Saint-Luc. Let me also share some words about Lori Maler, the woman behind Lori's Loafs (www.lorisloafs.com). Working out of her West Island home she bakes delicious loaf cakes that are available at stores across the city, including Yagel Bagel in Dollard des Ormeaux and Noshers in Côte Saint-Luc. I absolutely love the banana chocolate chip and the apple crumble. Yagel Bagel has some fantastic prepared foods. They recently moved into new digs on Blvd. St. Jean, near Roger Pilon. Karen Glazer, who has been there for some 35 years, walked me through the menu and made me a nice smoked meat sandwich on a challah roll. A big shout out to wonderful owner Brent, who likes to stay in the background.

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