

## Restaurant review

# Fine Italian cuisine and much more at Ristorante 11 Scalini

By Mike Cohen  
The Suburban

Is Ristorante 11 Scalini the best kept secret in Westmount? My good friend Neil and I certainly think so. This fabulous Italian dining spot is celebrating its third anniversary this month at 4894 Sherbrooke St. West, near Victoria. When Neil and I chose to dine there recently, most of the tables were full.

Scalini in Italian means stairs — and there are 11 of them to descend once you enter the storefront, thus the name of the restaurant. The entrance to the main storefront leads you to stairs, which descend to the main level. We had reserved ahead of time, so a table awaited us one more level below.

Robert Narducci, the chef/owner, has been in the restaurant business for over 20 years and is rightfully proud of his establishment. His parents emigrated from Italy in the 1960s. As most Italian-Canadians, he says food such as homemade pastas, pizzas, sauces, meats and desserts was a key part of his daily life. He notes that this greatly influenced how he prepares his dishes, using fresh, high-quality ingredients in every meal.

Besides a wide array of choices on the main lunch and dinner menus, 11 Scalini also offers catering and takeout options. The latter is made quite simple, with a nice selection of items presented in a refrigerated glass display case near the entrance and discounted at 11 percent. Ristorante 11 Scalini can accommodate 36 diners at a time and 50 if it is a group. Bookings for Christmas holiday parties are already being accepted.

The daily table d'hôte includes soups, salads, pasta, pizza, fish and dessert, and there is a nice selection of



wine. Our waiter Claudio greeted us with a nice basket of different breads and breadsticks and some Pellegrino water.

Neil started off with an Insalata Cesare, a Caesar salad containing romaine lettuce, eggs, croutons, Parmesan cheese and anchovies (\$8) while I opted for some piping hot Stacciatella alla Fiorentina, chicken broth with eggs, spinach and parmesan (\$6). From the antipasti section, we decided to share the Polpo alla griglia, grilled octopus with tomatoes, yellow peppers and capers (\$19). It was a touch on the spicy side, but most delicious.

For our main courses, Neil had the Scaloppini di Vitello alla Toscanina, a veal scallopini with spinach, mozzarella and cream (\$26). He gave the dish big thumbs up, pleased with the fact the veal cut like but-

ter and virtually melted in his mouth. I was tempted by something I do not get to try very often — the Osso buco alla Milanese, veal shanks with tomato sauce. This came with a delicious risotto side dish, complete with eggplant, peppers, some rice and endives (\$32).

There is a terrific pasta menu here, with popular spaghetti, tortellini, linguine and gnocchi choices. They are quite filling, which is why half portions are available. There are also a variety of veal and chicken selections, as well as pizzas, filet mignon with giant shrimps and a fresh fish of the day.

Each day there are different specials, such as all-you-can-eat mussels and fries, veal margiano with spaghetti Bolognese, and osso buco with risotto and vegetables.

We did not have room for dessert, but saw others enjoying such dishes as crème brûlée, Italian chocolate with vanilla ice cream cake with cookies. That will have to wait until next time.

There is live jazz Thursday evenings — another reason to come dine here. Table D'Hôte du soir \$22 to \$34 - Table D'Hôte du jour \$12 to \$22.

**Ristorante 11 Scalini is located at 4894 Sherbrooke St. West in Westmount. Free parking after 6 p.m. behind their building. Open 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mon. to Fri.; 5 to 10 p.m. Mon. to Thurs.; 5 to 11 p.m. Fridays, and 4 to 11 p.m. Saturdays. Closed Sundays. For reservations, call 514-564-4256. To view the menu, log on to [www.11scalini.com/11scalini\\_menu.pdf](http://www.11scalini.com/11scalini_menu.pdf)**



Chef/owner Robert Narducci



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