

Arahova Souvlaki celebrates its 50th Anniversary with plans for more expansion

MtlRestoRap

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Back in 1966 Christos Kalogrias came to Canada, leaving his native Greek village of Arahova. He was only 26 years of age and had some family here. His first job was in manufacturing, earning 95 cents an hour. In order to build some savings he relocated to Thompson, Manitoba to work in a nickel and mining company, returning to Montreal in 1971 with enough money to open his own restaurant on St. Viateur Street. In June, Arahova Souvlaki celebrated its 50th anniversary.

There are now nine Arahova locations, with a 10th coming in the fall to Pointe Claire, in the commercial plaza on Brunswick and Sources next to Les 3 Brasseurs. Laval's Curé Labelle location also serves as the head office for the operation and home for the company central kitchen, which produces fresh products each day for the restaurants and distribution at grocery stores. Most recently, Costco was added as a distributor.

While Christos is officially retired, he still comes to the Laval spot most days where he can be found in



Madonne has been a server at Arahova Chomedey for 23 years

the kitchen making his own special Moussaka recipe. When I dropped by with a friend recently, Christos did not stop working, and we talked while he worked. He also grows his own tomatoes on site.

Christos' son George (a.k.a. Souvlaki Man) and daughters Tina and Bia work as a strong team in steering the company in the right direction. They have been around the restaurant scene since childhood. George is President/Director of Sales; Tina, VP of Marketing and Bia, Regional Manager.

"We were born into it," says George. "For us this is a lifestyle, not a job." Let's not forget Angela, Christos' wife and the mom of the three restaurateurs.

The Kalogrias kids grew up in Chomedey and that is why most of the company's action occurs there.

I chose the Laval location to dine in order to meet the legendary Christos in person. He was busy in the kitchen most of the time. Veteran server Madonne showed us to a table on the spacious terrasse. It is completely covered, perfect in case of rain. Madonne has been on staff for 23 years.

My friend and I started off with some Arahova salads, containing lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, Greek olives, feta cheese, house dressing and oregano. Madonne brought us some pita bread, their world famous tzatziki and my favorite taramosalata,

Next came a seafood platter, with grilled salmon, grilled shrimp and calamari. As we dug in, Madonne



A delicious chicken brochette plate

reappeared with pork, lamb and chicken souvlaki sticks and the crispiest French Fries I have tasted in a long time. Arahova locations also have an excellent lunch express menu from 11 am to 3 pm.

Not only did we each have leftovers to take home, but George had Madonne bring us a pair of classic Doner meals with rice and Greek potatoes. To ensure that the experience was complete, I got a package of frozen calamari that I happily heated up at home. This came directly from the central kitchen in the back of the building. My friend got a frozen Greek Spinach pie with a garlic crust.

Pleased that COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, business at the Arahova terrasses and dining rooms has been good. But George notes that take-out and delivery was strong during the pandemic and of course clients can always get their Arahova favorites at the grocery store.

As for the future, Arahova is taking calls for potential franchisees in Mirabel, Griffintown Saint-Laurant, the West Island and Repentigny.

For more information log on to www.arahova-souvlaki.ca

Read more restaurant reviews at www.MtlRestoRap.com. Mike Cohen can be reached at info@mikecohen.ca.



President George Kalogrias displays some of the frozen food items produced by Arahova

Mikado Monkland in NDG rebranded as Kiku Montreal

My "go to" sushi restaurant has changed its name!

Thy "Liem" Tran and Thinh Pham, better known simply as "Sushman," have rebranded their popular Mikado Monkland sushi restaurant as Kiku Montreal. They have owned the NDG establishment for the past 20 years. With their partner Kimio Nguyen from Mikado Laurier going into semi-retirement, the timing was right to carve a new identity while ensuring the same name and popular menu remains in place. Sushman does promise some new sushi creations to go along with such favorites as the sushi pizza, salmon tartare, Ebi Gyoza, chicken and salmon teriyaki and rolls like the Happy, Relax, NDG, Paradise and Hampstead.

The name "Kiku" comes from Japan's most famous fall flower, a chrysanthemum. It became very popular, particularly with the Japanese royal family, who made it part of their family crest.

The restaurant has 50 seats, a sushi bar for six and a seasonal terrace. The take-out and delivery menu features the same local and seasonal products as the restaurant selections. Orders can be made in person, over the phone or

online. The restaurant will maintain its successful catering service for receptions, weddings, office parties and other occasions. They can provide a partial service to complement another caterer's menu, or a sushi bar service.

For more information go to www.kikumontreal.com or call 514-369-3659.

Dic Ann's Sauce: Fans of the iconic Dic Ann's restaurants are now able to buy their famous sauce in Metro grocery stores across Quebec to reproduce the taste of their favourite hamburger in the comfort of their own home. I took home a jar recently, warmed some sauce up and used it on my own burgers and wow what a treat! The sauce has actually been sold at the cash at all Dic Ann's locations since last December. Delbina and Anthony said they will be watching closely to see which Metro spots sell the most sauces (they will not necessarily be available at each one, so you can ask the manager).

Taking The Cake at TCBY: Here is a shout-out to Lenny Rosenberg, the owner of TCBY on Côte St-Luc Road at Grand. I recently purchased a cake for a very special occasion and the message needed to be very



Liem and "Sushman" at Kiku Montreal

specific. Lenny's design was par excellence and done on a very tight deadline. Bravo to one good businessman!

– Mike Cohen