

From a great raw bar to top-notch menu Lucille's Oyster Dive offers a great dining experience

MtlRestoRap

MIKE COHEN



Lucille's Oyster Dive opened its first location on Monkland Avenue in NDG back in 2009. For reasons I cannot properly explain, it took me 14 years to enjoy my first experience and wow was this ever a treat.

There are now five restaurant locations; NDG, Fairview Pointe-Claire, Dix30 in Brossard, Laval and Mont Tremblant. In addition, there is a summer pop up at At-water Market, three food trucks and a catering division. We decided to enjoy our first Lucille's experience at Fairview.

Under the watchful eye of executive chef Mark Gaffney, the kitchens at Lucille's are headlined by an outstanding raw bar, tantalizing starters, seafood and



Lucille's is noted for its oysters and raw bar.

steaks. The goal from day one has been to provide patrons with the best selection of both east and west coast oysters. According to seasonal availability, the oyster selection changes daily.

Cayleigh Starr is one of six managing partners at Lucille's and she spoke with great enthusiasm about the future of this small, but growing chain. Are there plans to open any new locations? "We are looking at introducing a downtown location next year," she told me. "Exactly where, I am not at liberty to say at this time. After that, we might be ready to go out of province."

While we heard great things about each of the Lucille's locations, we chose Fairview since it was still terrace season. Theirs sits 120 people and we couldn't have been happier. This restaurant opened in March of 2022. It can accommodate over 400 indoors. One room has a neat set of garage doors, which can swing open in warm weather season. "This is such a beautiful and multi-faceted room," Starr said. "We call it our solarium."

Our server Mas really helped steer us in the right direction for this first visit. We started with a Pino Grigio and a cool glass of lemonade. From the raw bar, there was little doubt what we would order. The half seafood tower was absolutely perfect for two people to share. It contained fresh lobster, which was nicely cut up for us, as well as snow crab, shrimp and 12 magnificent oysters. We took our time with this treat, enjoying every morsel.

Next, as a starter, we ordered the Asian-style salmon tartare. It came with rice noodles and lettuce wraps, the latter of which you don't see on every menu. By making virtual lettuce wrap sandwiches, it also enabled us to stretch out and thoroughly appreciate this serving.



The entrance to Lucille's restaurant in Pointe-Claire

For the main course, the 45 ounce porterhouse steak caught our eye and we were very pleased with that choice. It came perfectly cooked medium rare and pre-sliced, accompanied by some chimichurri sauce. There was enough left over for us to take home and eat for supper the following evening. The dinner came with French fries, which we substituted for cheesy mashed potatoes and a salad.

Did we have room for dessert? When Mas suggested a domed chocolate mousse cake and a key lime pie, she got no arguments from us. It was a truly decadent way to end the perfect evening. We will be back; that is a certainty!

Lucille's Fairview Pointe-Claire is located at 6801 Autoroute Transcanadienne R001. Opening hours are 11:30 am to 10 pm Sunday to Wednesday and 11:30 am to 11 pm Thursdays to Saturdays. For more information call 438-618-0006 or log on to <https://www.lucillesoyster.com/>

Mike Cohen can be reached at info@mikecohen.ca. Follow him on Instagram and Twitter @mikecohencsl and for more reviews at www.MtlRestoRap.com

Mike's Resto Notes: Experiencing Le Burger Week; St-Hubert and Lafleur

Le Burger Week: Le Burger Week (www.leburgerweek.com) took place in early September, with 31 Montreal locations taking part. Each year I look to sample something new. That was the case for *BBurger*, with locations on Fleury Avenue in Montreal North and Côte des Neiges Road; and *Patty Slaps* (<https://pattyslaps.com/>) on Ste. Catherine Street downtown.

BBurger opened in 2017, the vision of co-owners and friends Mustapha Taha, Moustafa Sayed Ali, Hussein Atoui and Ali Douhayni. In February 2023 they expanded to the West End on Côte des Neiges, near Queen Mary Road across from the Metro supermarket. It's a great spot, with seating for more than 60 people inside at tables and booths as well as a small seasonal patio. A friend of mine and I were indeed impressed as we feasted upon *BBurger's* entry in Le Burger Week. The Double Smashed B Burger Style is topped with cheddar cheese, their delicious house sauce, pickles



(left) *BBurger* partners Moustafa Sayed Ali, Ali Douhayni, Hussein Atoui and Mustapha Taha (right) Le Burger from *Patty Slaps*

and onions. It was outstanding! So were the crispy fries.

Meanwhile, at *Patty Slaps* I sampled Le Burger, made from grilled AAA Canadian Beef. This juicy eight ounce burger comes from freshly ground meat each day. Your taste buds will revel in the interplay of textures, from the melting yellow cheese to the tantalizing smokiness of the bacon they bake in-house. The satisfying crunch of onion rings pairs perfectly with the crispness of their signature crunchy fries, creating an adventure in every bite. The burger sits atop a daily baked pretzel bun, adding that extra dimension of flavor and texture to elevate your burger experience. They have big plans to expand across Canada and beyond within the next five years.

St-Hubert locale returns : As readers of my restaurant stories know very well, the *Rôtisserie St-Hubert* (<https://www.st-hubert.com>) chain has always been high on my list of dining experiences. There are now 126 locations across Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick. My "go to" spot on Côte des Neiges Road was closed for four years because the land where the restaurant sat was repurposed for a residential high rise building. It's back, and company President Richard Scofield was on hand for the official cutting of the ceremonial ribbon, which included a half a dozen rotisserie chickens on a spit. I was happy to drop by for lunch on a warm late August summer day, seated on the patio. I went off course and tried an angus steak and some pizza on the grill. Don't worry; I still love their chicken and ribs.



The revamped Lafleur Restaurant on Côte de Liesse

Lafleur Makeover: I was recently invited to visit the completely revamped and iconic Côte-de-Liesse location of Restaurant Lafleur and get a firsthand look at the company's new brand image. The new décor is attractive. There is now seating for 72 people, a small patio and a drive thru window. This renovation is the result of a multi-million-dollar investment, marking a major turning point for the brand since its takeover in 2022 by the second-generation of the Papagiannis family. It is the first of what will be a long series of transformations planned for Lafleur Restaurants, so stay tuned. Oh yes, I tried the crispy chicken crunch sandwich. Of course I will go back to their iconic steamy hotdogs next time.