

Curb Your Appetite:

The new Pigeon Café transitions to take-out

MtlRestoRap

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At the age of 40, Jonathan Dresner is quite the entrepreneur. After graduating from Concordia University with a business degree, he tried his luck at a number of jobs and eventually made the plunge into restaurants, operating some Quiznos franchises in Montreal and became part of a startup called Kupfert & Kim. He's also a partner in the Hello 123, a plant-based restaurant and bar.

Dresner's masterpiece was Notre Boeuf De Grâce (<https://www.notreboeufdegrace.ca>), born in 2015 in NDG. It has since grown to nine locations. After opening an NBG downtown, he started something called the Pigeon Espresso Bar next door.



Smoked Salmon Avo Toast

In the summer of 2019 Dresner took possession of the former St. Viateur Café property on Monkland Avenue in NDG. Last July, the Pigeon Café was born. With seating for 60 people inside, as well as a terrasse, Dresner's magic touch remained ever so present. The place was an instant success until the decision was made to limit all restaurants to take-out and delivery only.

During the course of this pandemic, I have been opting for the take-out route. At Pigeon Café that is an excellent option as I recently found out for a fun pickup experience. When I arrived for the order there was a social distanced line stretching more than half a block to get in.

For breakfast, there are such items as steak & eggs, omelets, bagel and croissant combos, pancakes, smoked salmon avocado toast, with an array of side, coffees, smoothies and shakshukas.

Dresner has implemented a distinct Jewish/Israeli and Hollywood theme to the menu with Bubbie's Matzah Ball soup, Israeli salad and Israeli fried chicken, the Mensch panini (a six-ounce New York strip steak, with sautéed mushrooms, Swiss and harissa) and the Reuben (smoked meat, sauerkraut, Swiss and horseradish mayo). There is also the Larry David "crab salad," and The Ted Danson and Richard Lewis paninis, tributes to HBO's *Curb Your Enthusiasm*.

There is a big photo of David on the wall, with his trademark comment "Pretty, pretty, pretty good!" Dresner's wife Yana Badamshin painted the David caricature, as well as the bathroom walls. She is an artist whose work can be seen on Instagram@yanaverse.

There are numerous appetizers, pasta and other sandwiches and grilled paninis and we have not even gotten to the dinner menu yet which has such additional choices as full grilled Mediterranean Seabass, organic salmon, pan-seared scallops, a New York strip and braised lamb shank, Wow!

The lunch pickup was nicely coordinated by manager Sean Weis-Heitner: two mimosas with orange juice;



Jonathan Dresner, his wife Yana and son Leo (and Larry David)

spinach artichoke dip with grilled baguette; smoked salmon avo toast; Shoey's (that is Sean's nickname) breakfast bagel; The Mensch panini (a six-ounce NY strip steak, sautéed mushrooms and Swiss harissa); an order of breakfast potatoes; their to-die-for waffle fries and a piece of apple cake. This was unquestionably the best lunch we have had bar none since the start of the pandemic. We will do this again!

Pigeon Café is located at 5625 Monkland Avenue. The phone number is 514- 484-0062. Log on to pigeonespresso.com. Delivery is available via Door Dash and Skip The Dishes

Peter Morentzos opens new QDC Burger locations

The QDC Burger Experience: For restaurateur Peter Morentzos, COVID-19 may have spelled the end of La Queue de Cheval Steakhouse and Raw Bar on Avenue de la Montagne. However, the pandemic has not resulted in a total loss. In 2014, while he was preparing to reopen La Queue in a new building, Morentzos launched a new brand called QDC Burger in the back alley on Avenue de la Montagne. It was such a hit that he placed the burgers on the regular La Queue menu and then opened standalone locations at 210 St. Viateur Ouest in the Mile End District and another at Pierre Elliott Trudeau Airport in Dorval.

This is where Morentzos is focusing his attention now. The airport locale has been closed since the spring, but business at St Viateur is booming. I recently did a pickup for the family and it is an understatement to say how fabulous these burgers are. I dropped a classic half pound burger and fries at my mom's first and then went home. It was about 35 minutes door to door. At my household the selections were Lefty's Burger, the Steakhouse Burger and the Jefferson. I added the lobster roll sandwich for the following day as an extra treat.

Expansion is on the agenda. Another location will open in Old Montreal by the end of November.



"Classic" half pound burger

That will be followed in December by what Morentzos calls a "dream spot" downtown on Cyprus Street, between Peel and Stanley, right near Le Windsor ballrooms. In the spring QDC will land on trendy Monkland Avenue in NDG.

QDC Burger is located at 210 rue Saint Viateur Ouest. Opening hours are Wednesday to Sunday from



Peter Morentzos at QDC Burger

Noon to 9 pm, with a curbside service takeaway menu and delivery available via Uber Eats, Skip the Dishes and Door Dash. For more information go to www.qdc-burger.com or call (514) 312-0321

Mike Cohen's restaurant reviews can be seen at www.MtlRestoRap.com