

The iconic Marathon Souvlaki simply gets better with time and three-plus locations

MtlRestoRap

MIKE COHEN



It all began for the iconic Marathon Souvlaki in 1978 with a small restaurant on Notre Dame Street in Chomedey, Laval, containing five tables and focusing mainly on takeout and delivery. The original locale expanded three times, ultimately growing to a comfortable 140 seats. This prompted the opening in 1996 of a storefront a few blocks away, on Cure Labelle, reserved exclusively for the takeout and delivery crowd.

As Marathon marks 45 years in business, there are two other thriving locations: one at the Galeries des Sources in Dollard des Ormeaux and another off Décarie Boulevard, near the former Blue Bonnets Raceway.

This is a family run business, noted for friendly prices, signature entrées, great salads, superb souvlaki and sizeable plates and combos. “The menu has virtually remained the same for more than four decades,” says Peter Christakis, one of nine family members



The popular chicken brochette

overseeing the operation. The others are Tom Klitirinos, Chris Klitirinos, Chris Constantinacos, Nick Kartsakis, Billy Rekas, Stefano Samonas, Peter Papadakos and George Caragiorgis. The late Felipe Klitirinos was the founder.

It is not uncommon to find all of the Marathon locations filled to capacity at any given lunch hour or dinner time. What is the secret to the restaurant’s success? Well, none of them are franchises. The family keeps a firm hand on operations, keeping their kitchens spic and span.

All of the products are replenished fresh each day. They bring in olive oil and olives directly from Greece. Their souvlaki has been voted Montreal’s best on numerous occasions in polls taken by different media.

A friend and I recently enjoyed a delicious dinner. We started off by sharing some taramasalata, with warm pita, a basket of garlic bread, a crispy plate of calamari and a large Marathon salad (lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, Greek olives, Feta cheese and their famous house dressing and oregano).

I ordered the four marinated lamb chops, with their trademark fries. It was a perfect medium, cut like butter and gets very high marks from me. My friend opted for the filet mignon brochette. He has been to Marathon many times over the years and usually favored the chicken brochettes and souvlakis. He was delighted with his choice and plans to make that his “go to” meal on future visits.

While we were both too full for dessert, we both took home decadent pieces of Marathon’s Chocolate Prestige Cake.



Peter Christakis is proud of the Marathon tradition

Marathon has a kids’ menu for only \$11.25 and terrific lunch specials. All plates are served with a Greek or Marathon Salad, fries or rice. Service here is lightning fast, with a family member of the management team always on location to supervise the experienced kitchen staff.

While take-out and delivery has always been a staple at Marathon, this picked up significantly during the pandemic. You can make your order via the three main food apps, Skip, DoorDash and Uber Eats.

The owners of Marathon also remain committed to their community and they contribute to many charities.

Marathon Souvlaki has locations at 3938 Notre Dame (450-681-7385) and 3940 Notre Dame (Express) in Laval (450-681-9449), 3313 boul. Des Sources in Dollard des Ormeaux (514-421-5825) and 5365 des Jockeys near Décarie (514-731-6455). Log on to www.marathonsouvlaki.ca.

Mikes RestoNotes: The new Randy’s Bistro in Montreal West; Billy K’s expands

For Ryan Silkey, opening a new restaurant on the main drag of the town he grew up in is special for many reasons.

Randy’s Bistro debuted last September on Westminster Avenue in Montreal West in the space that formerly housed Pasteizza. Owner Ryan Silkey, who grew up in the area, named the establishment after his late dad. His friend Tyler Casey serves as the head chef. Both men are restaurant veterans.

The spot is open from Noon to 10 pm Tuesday and Wednesday, and Noon to 11 pm Thursday to Saturday. Everything here is made from fresh ingredients. I dropped by for lunch and I also took an order to go for home later on. Ryan started me off with a piping hot bowl of tomato soup. It was delicious. I then sunk my teeth into their already trademark grilled cheese and bacon sandwich. For dessert, the warm beignets with chocolate and strawberry dipping sauces, was oh so fine. The latter was enough for three people to share.

Later on, we enjoyed a steak bavette with fries and a plain thick crust pizza with tomato sauce, mozzarella and basil. I have never had a pizza categorized as “plain” so tasty! There is plenty to choose from on the menu. Besides a weekly table d’hôte, as well as oyster and themed nights, you can enjoy a variety of salads, their popular fish cakes, nachos, the Silk-fil-A fried



The silk-fil-a chicken sandwich at Randy’s

chicken sandwich, popcorn chicken, chicken wings, chili and whistle dogs, fish and chips, nachos, mussels, short ribs, pastas, some other flavored pizzas and more. The MTL pizza, with grainy mustard bechamel, smoked meat, pickles, mozzarella and red onion, will be one of my future selections.

Randy’s Bistro is located at 45 Westminster North. Delivery is available via Uber Eats and DoorDash. For more information call (514) 481-7731 or log on to www.randysbistro.wixsite.com/my-site

Billy K’s expands: Readers should recall my article last May about the evolution of Billy K’s Burgers. Tom Bountis, the founder and creator of the Allô! Mon Coco



Tyler Casey and Ryan Silkey of Randy’s Bistro in Montreal West

chain (which he sold to the MTY Group in 2019) also heads Mr. Puffs and Shawarmaz. He and some partners purchased the original Billy K’s in Cornwall. Last year they began expanding to Vaudreuil, St. Léonard and downtown near UQAM. At the end of March, they debuted on the West Island at 46-C Brunswick Blvd. Billy’s specializes in AAA Angus beef burgers, hand cut fries, poutines, subs wraps and other comfort food. Info: www.billyks.com/en/menu