

Discovering the delicacies of Old Montreal's trendy Tommy Café + Apéro

MtlRestoRap

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It is merely the latest success story from the powerhouse Foodtastic Group, which continues to add brands to its stable.

Tommy Café made its debut about five years ago on Notre Dame Street in Old Montreal, serving mainly different coffees and teas. It has since expanded a few blocks away to St. Paul Street, on Mount Royal twinned with a Baccaro pizza spot and in Oakville, Ontario. Expansion is on the way to St. Bruno and Fairview Centre in Pointe Claire.

With the exception of Notre Dame, all of the new Tommy startups have full kitchens and they serve a very refreshing assortment of breakfast items from as early as 8 am until late afternoon. The plan is to



remain open into the evenings when life gets back to normal.

David Di Raddo, who oversees Tommy, Second Cup and Copper Branch for Foodtastic, wanted to show me the St. Paul Street location. Giselle Serpa, a talented culinary expert who came here from Brazil, manages this spot and she is responsible for many of the ever so creative menu items.



The S'mores waffle.

Avocado toast is the Tommy trademark and it comes in different incarnations. During the pandemic Tommy kept on trucking with a steady take-out and delivery model. They have a nice assortment of ice coffees, teas, espressos, cappuccinos, smoothies and even hot chocolates.

From the menu you can order scrambled eggs, croissants, croque (Monsieur) Tommy, French toast, bagels, eggs benedict, omelets, waffles and more. Just so you know they all come served with very different and delicious twists. The S'mores waffle is to-die-for, stuffed with marshmallow, graham crackers and Nutella.

For instance, the salty brioche French toast includes a scrambled egg and a choice of bacon or sausage and maple syrup. The Tommy Benedictine contains a poached egg, prosciutto, cheese, mushroom, truffle hollandaise sauce and grelot potatoes. From the avocado toast selections, the one with salmon draws raves. There is also the Goat; Goat cheese and mushroom with truffle and honey. The Greek Omelet has tomatoes, onions, feta cheese, cucumber served with a salad and baby potatoes.

You can get a Tommy Crêpe with vanilla mascarpone, maple syrup, fruit and graham crackers or an Amanda croissant, stuffed with fresh fruit and mascarpone.

There are also lunch and drinks menus, with salads, paninis, sandwiches and even Mac and Cheese.



Tommy Café and Apéro Manager Giselle Serpa brings two delicious dishes to the table.

Growing up in Brazil, Serpa was not originally a foodie. She worked at a bank for 11 years, got bored and switched teams to a bakery. Here she had found her calling. She landed in Montreal seven years ago, not speaking English or French. At school she met someone who worked at Tommy and got some part-time work there. Di Raddo now calls her an integral part of the company, a visionary in the food department who will help establish kitchens at subsequent kitchens.

The St. Paul Street Tommy is near the corner of St. Sulpice. It is normally a prime location for tourists. And since the start of the summer tourists from other parts of Canada as well as people who work and live in the area have been flocking to the place. It is a venue for which when you come once, you will definitely come back for more.

Tommy Café and Apéro is located at 151 Saint-Paul St W. It is open seven days a week from 8 am to 4 pm. For more information log on to tommycafe.ca or call 514-419-8522 or order via doordash.com, ubereats.com or skipthedishes.com

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The now famous Tommy Avocado Toast.

Resto Notes: Cattlemans Retro via the Q-ZN ghost kitchen

Like many people who grew up in Côte Saint-Luc, I enjoyed many great pizza lunches and dinners from the Cattleman's Restaurant at the Cavendish Mall (now Quartier Cavendish).

The food court favorite was owned by Aaron Blutman. His two sons, Mark and Kenny, were always involved in the business and played key roles in driving the younger generation over there. As a teenager, Dan Vigderhaus worked at Cattleman's, doing everything from making the food to organizing birthday parties and doing deliveries.

Last year Dan called me to say that he was going to build a ghost kitchen; a food preparation and cooking facility devoted to preparing delivery-only meals. They have no dining rooms, no counters, no tables, and no drive-thru. Customers place their orders online and the dishes are delivered using Uber Eats, DoorDash, and other third-party delivery platforms.

Q-ZN, as it is cleverly called, recently opened in the industrial sector of St. Laurent. When Dan and his partners, Jason Nishmas, Jason Martin and Steve Merling,

were putting the concept together and approaching restaurants he began waxing nostalgic about Cattleman's. Before you could say "pepperoni," a plan was in place. He approached the owners of Quebec Pizzeria in Laval (order.quebecpizzeria.ca) and with the blessing of the Blutman family he gave them the Cattleman's (now reborn without the apostrophe to please the language police and known as Cattermans Retro) pizza recipe. The Papa family from Quebec Pizzeria nailed it.

I recently dropped by to taste the pizza, a "Special Cattleman" all dressed with bacon and onions, and crispy fries. It was just as good as the days when noted Cattleman pizza chef Frank made it.

You can order from Cattermans Retro via Uber Eats, Skip the Dishes, DoorDash and at www.quebecpizzeria.ca. A minimum order of \$10 before taxes is required. If you want to have your restaurant under the Q-ZN roof, go to www.q-zn.com for more details or e-mail info@q-zn.com



Q-ZN's Dan Vigderhaus and Stamati Papa