

# Au Vieux Duluth opens a new franchised location on Newman Boulevard in LaSalle

**MIKE COHEN**

**FYI**

Following an absence of more than a decade from the area, the popular Au Vieux Duluth restaurant chain has returned to LaSalle. Other locations are to follow soon. The original LaSalle location was in a strip mall on Dollard Avenue. This new spot, which opened in July, is on Newman Blvd. next to Petinos. It has a large seating capacity. Work began last winter converting the former Newman Steakhouse into a prototypical Au Vieux Duluth, with its mix of tables and booths and very bright lighting.

James Klauser, Bobby Avgenikos, Bala Baskaran and Dinkaran Murugesu are the franchisees, each of them longtime members of the Au Vieux Duluth family. Even Thérèse, who serves as the hostess, has 18 years of experience with this chain. Our server Liam spent the past three years at the franchise in Vaudreuil-Dorion, which is also owned by Avgenikos. When his boss asked if he would make the daily 30-minute commute to LaSalle he did not hesitate. "This might be a newly opened franchise, but everyone on our team is very familiar with the brand," said Klauser.

Au Vieux Duluth was established in 1982. Each restaurant offers grilled specialties and seafood dishes, generous servings, great value and the Bring Your Own Wine/Beer concept. The menu offers their famous butterfly shrimps, tender chicken breast and brochettes, souvlaki,

shish-kebab, spanakopita, oven-baked salmon, filet of Doré, surf n' turf, as well as signature certified Angus Beef filet mignon. There are salads, a soup of the day, calamari, mozzarella cheese sticks and more.

The Montreal chain of Greek style casual dining restaurants "Bring your own wine or beer" has made its mark since the day she lit her first grill in 1982, with the commitment to offer generous portions at an affordable price. Well established for more than 40 years in Quebec and Ontario, Au Vieux Duluth has built a solid reputation thanks to the quality of its cuisine, its service, its decor, its festive atmosphere and most importantly, the satisfaction of its customers that makes them come back year after year. Today, the menu of Au Vieux Duluth Restaurants continues to offer its delicious Greek specialties such as the oregano flavored tender chicken breasts, brochettes, its signature Beef filet mignon and its famous homemade butterfly shrimps.

I visited during a weeknight and business was booming, with a lot of walk ins and a few large tables celebrating special occasions. We started off with some appetizers: escargots a la bourguignonne, sauteed with garlic, white wine sauce and parsley; Tarama, a creamy blend of carp eggs with pita bread; and an ever so fresh plate of smoked coho salmon garnished with capers, red onions, olive oil and served in lettuce.

For the main course, I chose the suc-



Server Liam has worked for the chain for three years.

culent charbroiled filet mignon, expertly wrapped in crispy bacon for an extra layer of savory richness, and elegantly topped with a velvety wine sauce. This dish combines the tender, buttery texture of the filet with the smoky depth of the bacon

and the nuanced complexity of the wine reduction, creating a harmonious and indulgent flavor experience. My friend opted for the butterfly shrimp, served with garlic sauce. It was a large serving, and he was quite pleased.

For dessert I saved room for the decadent double chocolate cake. Next time I will consider the crème caramel, a brownie, ice cream sundae, the fresh apple crumble pie with ice cream, cheesecake, baklava, carrot cake or berry bliss Greek yogurt cheesecake.

Au Vieux Duluth also offers online delivery for each of its restaurants. Six of their other locations are in the Greater Suburban Montreal area: St. Laurent, Dollard des Ormeaux, Laval, Pointe-aux-Trembles, Repentigny and Vaudreuil-Dorion. Take-out is also a popular choice. In LaSalle there is a large parking lot which makes visiting this location much more convenient.

From Monday to Friday (11 a.m. to 3 p.m.), participating Au Vieux Duluth locations offer excellent lunch options. As for the kid's menu, which for \$8.95 also includes ice cream and one drink, it is so popular that adults with medium appetites can order from there as well, albeit for \$18.95.

The team here is very pleased with its quick success rate. The restaurant is drawing clients not only from LaSalle, but nearby Ville Émard, Verdun, Lachine, Montreal West, NDG and Côte Saint-Luc. Added Klauser: "We certainly and many people from those areas who missed the Au Vieux Duluth experience, and we have been able to deliver that to them."

*Au Vieux Duluth's newest location is at 7195 Newman Blvd. You can call 514-474-2200. For more information log on to <http://lawieuxduluth.com>.*



Franchisee James Klauser