

PÂTISSERIE S^TMARTIN

20th Anniversary: Food is a family affair!

By Pina Luscri

The employees and owners at Pâtisserie St. Martin do things differently. They make an effort to know their clients' names and pride themselves in customer service. Home-style cooking is their trademark. Their refreshing work ethic is a rare commodity, especially with large corporations taking over. Simplicity and old-fashioned values are what led them to celebrate their 20th anniversary this year.



Pâtisserie St. Martin's owners have known the business all of their lives. Joey and Salvatore Musumeci's father, Antonio, opened up Pâtisserie Aurora on Papineau in 1956, immersing their children early on in the world of pizza, bread and pastries. After Antonio had immigrated from Taormina, Sicily, in 1950, he worked as a bread deliveryman in the Notre-Dame-de-Grâces district. He then built Patisserie Aurora himself with the construction skills he learned as a child, and moved his family next door so he could be in close proximity to his work. He was one of the first Italian bakers in Montreal, and specialized in making taralli Barese, cannoli, sfogliatelle, Amaretti, Italian bread and pizza. Antonio's daughter, Mary Musumeci, has fond memories of Pâtisserie Aurora. She remembers the warm donuts sprinkled with sugar, which were here favorite, and how simple the cakes were. Antonio worked up to twenty hours a day, his workload included making sure all the delivery trucks that would sell bread from house to house were fully stocked; it was a job that would start at 3:00 a.m. Mary is carrying on the tradition, as she is now the manager of Pâtisserie St. Martin.

It was only natural for Antonio's children to take over the family business. They branched out on their own, opening Pâtisserie Léger in 1981. In 1989, the Duvernay area in Laval was developing and Joey Musumeci, Antonio's son, saw it as the perfect opportunity to open a new bakery. He wanted to cater not only to Italians, but also French-Canadians, who have a deep appreciation for Italian food. He regularly receive compliments and gratitude from French-Canadians, who aren't necessarily used to the hearty meals Italians can sometimes take for granted. He had an effective business strategy, one which still works to this day: basic family recipes and treating their customers with the same respect his father gave to his clientele in the 1950's. A social butterfly, he credits his success to his excellent people skills. He converses with everyone who walks in, and it's the one-on-one strategy that keeps them coming back.

It wasn't always smooth sailing at Pâtisserie St. Martin. It took six years of hardship before the success started. Rosario Muro, a baker, and David De Cotiis, a pastry chef, both started off as valuable employees for 15 years and eventually became partners. Rosario started working at Pâtisserie Friulano when he was 12 years-old, and learned the skills he needed to become a great baker. He specializes in traditional Italian recipes, and with his talent, he started working with Joey. David worked at a popular French bakery, and mastered the art to become a renowned pastry chef. Rosario and David opened up a second Pâtisserie St. Martin in the Vimont district of Laval in 2005, which carries on the same values and tradition. During some of their toughest times, head chef Dante Fallavollita had the idea of starting a catering division. Ten years after its conception, it is their most popular service.

Photos Gabriel Riel-Salvatore



When you walk into Pâtisserie St. Martin, the sweet aroma of pastries and cakes greet you at the door. Although they are known for their cannoli and pizza, they have over 30 varieties of cakes and dozens of pastries, including their award-winning zeppole to choose from. They take pride in their homemade stuffed pastas and sauces, and the array of cold cuts is much more vast than any grocery store. They also carry imported goods from Italy such as olive oil and aged balsamic vinegar, which can be tricky to find elsewhere. If you're lucky enough to be in the area around lunchtime, the freshly made paninis and hot meals create a frenzy. There is a dining area if you can't control your hunger, but take-out is available and is a popular alternative. Using the family matriarch's recipe from Sicily, Caterina Musumeci's arancini can't be kept in stock. The pizza selection can be overwhelming, but without a doubt in a good way. They make everything from spinach to sausage pizza and focaccia. Even the pickiest eaters can appreciate the plain tomato pizza.

When it comes to their catering services, the possibilities are endless. Joey along with partners David & Ross pride themselves on helping people in tough times, especially after a funeral service when cooking a meal is the last thing on a mourning family's mind. Pâtisserie St. Martin offers pre-made packages, or you can customize your meals. Chef Dante specializes in lasagnas, veal roasts and grilled vegetables. They also service weddings, especially when families gather at the house of the bride or groom before the ceremony. Always considerate, Joey is careful to include many finger foods such as sandwiches, cheeses and mini-pastries so the guests avoid spilling food onto their outfits!

Pâtisserie St. Martin is your one-stop shop for everything Italian and wholesome. With the perfect combination of homemade goodness and feeling right at home when you're there, you can't go wrong when it comes to indulging your taste buds. They will definitely have you coming back again and again. ❖

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