

Merger with a mission: rebuilding lives



Photo: Gerri Barrer

Henri Lehalle applies skin tone acrylic to a leg prosthesis

Gerri Barrer

On Darlington Ave. just across from the Wilderton Shopping Centre stand two renowned health care pavilions dedicated to helping people with serious orthopedic and spinal cord injuries, as well as head trauma and stroke victims.

Pavillon Gingras used to be the French-speaking *Institut de réadaptation de Montréal* while Pavillon Lindsay was the English-speaking Lindsay Rehabilitation Hospital. Now they've become one bilingual facility through a merger that started in 2008.

"It was a form of speed dating," says executive director Jean-Philippe Cotton of the newly named *Institut de réadaptation Gingras-Lindsay de Montréal*. "Our teams of clinicians and researchers from the two institutions had to quickly get to know each other so they could adopt unified programs to reflect the best approaches for our clients," Cotton says.

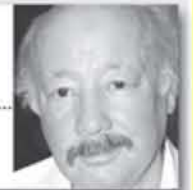
The marriage seems to be working well according to the technicians who customize prosthetics and orthotic devices in the institute's own lab. Before the merger much of the work was done by private contractors, but now it's all handled internally, paid for by Quebec Health Insurance. "We certainly have more clients and more work," says orthotic technician Johanne Labrie, "but I like the fact I get to practice my English," she says.

\$1.8M has been recently allocated to the institute for building renovations and updating wheelchairs and occupational and physiotherapy equipment. Work is still ongoing to ensure nurses, social workers and psychologists all use the same evaluation procedures in assessing clients needs and treatment.

Cotton says the merger makes perfect sense since the two former institutions, standing side by side, have the same mission: rebuilding lives.

A taste of CDN

Paul Shubin



"Hello, and Here's To Your Health"

If there's one thing I've learned from travelling it's this: when you discover a fabulous place don't expect to find 'it' when you get back home. It will be different. It will be close. But it won't be the same. There's something about the 'there' that we just don't have 'here.' And you can't bring 'it' home. Nevertheless, I'm sure it's all in my mind. There's pasta in Montreal that's just as good as in Rome. And stuffed vine leaves that are just as good as on Simi.

Ah, yes, Simi. A Greek island off the coast of Turkey where I was introduced to meze. Meze is defined as 'appetizer' but that's not giving it enough credit. Meze is a social event. Meze is a table full of family and friends, a few bottles of wine, lots of talk and laughter, and a seemingly endless parade of small dishes of... well, it depends on where you are, in which country, in which region, in which town, even in which village. Meze is everything from olives to meats and, while in Spain it's called tapas and in Turkey meze, one thing is sure: meze is all Mediterranean, from one end to the other.

So I decided to 'bring it home' by heading over to Yia Sou on Queen Mary Rd. to relive the experience by ordering only meze-sized dishes. The first thing to keep in mind when you order is that Yia Sou's "appetizers/meze" are bigger than Mediterranean meze, so start by ordering fewer rather than more dishes. On our first visit we ordered saganaki. It's a chunk of kefalogaviera cheese, flambéed with ouzo and sprinkled with lemon juice, and done at the table. Be aware that it's a little salty and a little spongy and a delicious beginning. The menu lists fried zucchini and fried eggplant. I wanted to try both, but that would have been overdoing things, so our waiter offered a half-and-half plate. They're done in a really nice, light tempura batter. Everybody liked them.

Next up, my favourite: stuffed vine leaves. Now ever since a friend who made his own stuffed vine leaves invited me to dinner well over 30 years ago, I have had this obsession with finding stuffed vine leaves to match his. (Refer to my Simi comment earlier.) Yia Sou's weren't the same of course but certainly rank among my top three. They were big, fat, somewhat loosely rolled, stuffed with rice and served hot. Usually they're served cold but hot is

a nice variation you don't find often enough. Now when you get a tightly wrapped stuffed vine leaf with the ends perfectly tucked in chances are pretty good that they came from a can or jar. Not these. I asked the waiter, but already knew what his answer would be: yes, they were handmade at the restaurant. They were so fresh I wanted to believe they made them especially for me.

On our next visit we kept to the meze theme by ordering grilled octopus, grilled sardines and a plate of Greek sausage. Now if you realize that octopus is a bit chewy you won't be shocked and think you've been fed old product. And it's served in a delicious "salad" of finely chopped red onion, capers, red pepper, banana peppers and olive oil.

I love sardines. On another island not too far from Simi the restaurant there offered eight styles of sardines. They were smallish... so I tried one of each. Yia Sou served us four large Portuguese sardines — twice as many as we needed for a typical meze, so be prepared to share. Also be prepared for the many tiny bones. You'd have to be a skilled fisherman to perfectly slice the sardine and pull out the spine, so as to not leave any bones behind, but try it: the taste (and satisfaction of succeeding) is worth the effort.

Finally, what would a relaxing Mediterranean dinner be without wine? Yia Sou has a nice light Greek white wine called Kouros. So have a glass. If you allow your lunch or dinner to go on for several hours (as a proper Mediterranean meal should) have several glasses but walk over or take a taxi — don't drive.

Hmmm. Maybe you can bring it home.

Name: Estiatorio Yia Sou
Address: 5375 Queen Mary Rd.
Hours: 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days a week
Access: Small step
Credit cards: Yes
Debit cards: Yes
Alcohol: Yes
Parking: Street
Portions: Huge
Cientele: Everybody and there's a childrens' menu
Prices: Considering the quality and quantities, very fair
Recommendation: Absolutely