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Le Blumenthal, an example of the new school of Montreal restaurant written about in our 2010s food scene retrospective.

Photo by Clayton Sandhu

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Cult Mtl is...

Lorraine Carpenter
editor-in-chief
lorraine.carpenter@cultmontreal.com

Alex Rose
film editor
alex.rose@cultmontreal.com

Nora Rosenthal
arts editor
nora.rosenthal@cultmontreal.com

Clayton Sandhu
contributing editor (food)

Chris Tucker
art director

Advertising
ads@cultmontreal.com

Contributors:

Johnson Cummins
Ryan Diduck
Rob Jennings
Erik Leijon
Madeline Lines
Darcy Macdonald
Keeghan Harrison Rouleau
Justine Smith
Al South
Mr. Wavvy
Sasha Zeidler

General Inquiries + feedback
info@cultmontreal.com



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cultmtl.com

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to-do list

For the daily To-Do List, visit cultmtl.com



Caveboy

To Feb. 8

It's the final three-day weekend of Igloofest promises to pack their outdoor Old Port space with dancing masses and a roster of local and international DJs.

→ Jacques Cartier Quay (Place Jacques Cartier & de la Commune E.), 7:30–11 p.m. (till 12:30 a.m. Saturdays), \$25/\$89 VIP

To Feb. 9

The Geordie Theatre Fest showcases works in Theatre for Young Audiences with staged readings in partnership with the National Theatre School of Canada and 2Play touring shows (*The Water Chronicles* and *Fear of Missing Out*) on a mainstage platform.

→ 3680 Jeanne-Mance, various times, PWYC

To Feb. 29

A wide range of Black History Month events are happening across the city, from art exhibitions and film screenings to panel discussions and theatrical performances. See our event highlights on pp. 34–35.

Feb. 6

At the Canadian Centre for Architecture, check out the vernissage for the third installment of the Out of the Box exhibition series, showcasing the writings, photographs,

films, correspondence and select artworks of architect and conceptual artist Gordon Matta-Clark, as selected by Kitty Scott.

→ 1920 Baile, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

Feb. 8

Montreal dream pop trio Caveboy launch their debut LP *Night in the Park, Kiss in the Dark* with a show at Phi Centre.

→ 407 St-Pierre, 8 p.m., \$18.54/\$21.82

Feb. 8–9

Of course Montreal has a chocolate festival. Resto Montreal presents *Je T'Aime en Chocolat* at Bonsecours Market.

→ 350 St-Paul E., 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Feb. 17–29

Genre-hopping Montreal songwriter/producer/crooner Sean Nicholas Savage and Ballet Opéra Pantomime present *Please Thrill Me*, an ambitious musical with one foot in 1950s movies and the other in a 21st century urban reverie. Happening at la Chapelle, in English with a couple of dates featuring French surtitles, the play was directed by Sophie Cadieux and also features Rollic Pemberton (aka Cadence Weapon) and Jane Penny from TOPS. See our feature story about the show at cultmtl.com.

3700 St-Dominique, various times, \$33.50/\$28.50/\$23.50/\$18.50

Feb. 26–March 7

The annual Rendez-vous Québec Cinéma festival screens over 300 films, including roughly 100 premieres of new feature and short films made in this province as well as some of the best from the past year. The 2020 programming had not been revealed at press time, but English titles will include *The Death and Life of John F. Donovan*, *The Hummingbird Project* and *Twentieth Century*.

Feb. 20–March 1

The 21st edition of Montreal en Lumière offers the usual hivernal hibernation bail-out, connecting the dots between the culinary arts, outdoor winter fun and, with Nuit Blanche on Feb. 29, most of the visual and performing art disciplines, craft practices and nightlife activities you can think of. (Look for our annual Nuit Blanche guide at cultmtl.com later this month.)

Feb. 21

Jazz Mofos play a special show at Southwest pub Annexe St-Ambroise to celebrate Mardi Gras.

→ 5080 St-Ambroise, 8 p.m.

Feb. 28–March 1

The second installment of Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* saga, *The Two Towers*, will be screened at Place des Arts's Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, with Howard Shore's award-winning score performed live by 250 musicians.

→ 175 Ste-Catherine W., 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday afternoon, \$104.98–\$163.97

Feb. 29

It's Nuit Blanche! Among the many many many events happening around the city tonight is the *Cult MTL* co-signed Simulation/Accélération party at Phi Centre, with DJsets, a participatory installation and performances. (Look for our annual Nuit Blanche guide at cultmtl.com later this month.)

→ 407 St-Pierre, 9 p.m.–3 a.m., free

March 3–12

At Usine C, check out a Brazilian interpretation of Michel Marc Bouchard's play *Tom à la Ferme, Tom Na Fazenda*, by director Rodrigo Portella. The play will be performed in Portuguese with English and French surtitles.

→ 1345 Lalonde, various times, \$34/\$36/\$40

March 4

Straight outta Hudson, Canadian singer-songwriter Matt Holubowski goes large, playing MTelus with opener Dan Mangan.

→ 59 Ste-Catherine E., 8 p.m., \$39.75–\$44.75

March 5–7

Not Your Babe Fest is "a feminist festival promoting a safe space for women, non-binary/genderqueer and trans people in the counterculture scene." The fourth edition will feature local and touring bands playing Casa del Popolo, la Sala Rossa and B-Ward over the course of three days, with a complementary series of workshops and a flash tattoo day.

→ Various locations and times, ticket details TBD



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:persona mtl



Jean Olivier Dalphond

BY LORRAINE CARPENTER

Jean Olivier Dalphond is the president of PixMob, the Montreal company that has popularized the use of LED wristbands at major music and sports events over the past decade.

Their wristbands have been incorporated into events ranging from the Sochi Olympics to the 2019 NHL Playoff finals, Cirque du Soleil's Microsoft Kinect launch (their first gig) to Arcade Fire's 2011 Coachella performance (in conjunction with fellow local light-show company Moment Factory).

Their work was most recently seen by over 100 million people during the Super Bowl halftime show, where their recycled-plastic wristbands lit up the crowd and their lighting technology was used in on-field props.

Dalphond joined PixMob two years after its founding in 2010 by Vincent Leclerc and David Parent. Born in Quebec City, he attended Pearson College in Victoria, B.C., studied environmental development at McGill and worked on sustainable energy at the Ontario Power Authority in Toronto.

"I was working in a beige office in Toronto and I decided I wanted to do something else with my life. I had a choice between a corporate job that would pay a corporate salary or a start-up that didn't have any money. I decided to do this for a year and give it a shot because the two guys who founded (PixMob) are very smart."

Of the work that PixMob has done with other Montreal companies, Dalphond says, "I think it speaks to Montreal's ecosystem of collaborative creative industries that help each other out without directly competing. A lot of that is through the friendly big brother figure Cirque du Soleil, who helped us out. They give a lot of small players a chance."

Dalphond spoke to us just prior to the Super Bowl, when the company's involvement with the event, as well as the contents of the show, was top secret. The way the wristbands would be implemented was fairly obvious, but the arches that PixMob lit up were fashioned into "cages" containing children (including Jennifer Lopez's 11-year-old daughter Emme), alluding to the Trump administration's border detention/family separation policy.

"Every fan is going to be brought together in a moment of unity together with all the performers," Dalphond said. "There's going to be this moment where everybody's going to connect through light, and this goes back to what we see as our purpose, the essence of what we do: creating togetherness. You're not on your phone, you're not holding a device, you're not wearing AR glasses. We reinvent what we think of as a new fire ritual."

:rant line™

THIS WEEK: White lines, SQDC lines, smog!

PLUS: Rats said to be overjoyed about city's new deposit-return system!!

"edited" by AL SOUTH

F Hello, I just wanted to say that I can barely see out my window today because of what I'm being told is SMOG. It would be okay if it was FOG. I lived in England for a while, I'm okay with fog. But this is smog, and the main reason for it, I'm told, is people burning wood stoves and FIREPLACES. If this is true, then there should be a total ban on fireplaces. The government should hire people, a team of people, squads of people, to go into the places where people are burning wood in fireplaces — especially rich people with big ornamental fireplaces — and FILL THEM UP WITH CEMENT. If it's so bad we can see it, we should stop it. [BLEEP!]

F Hello. I saw there was a story online about the TOP 10 companies hiring people in Canada, and it gave a list of the companies hiring in Montreal, and you know, I could use a BETTER JOB. So I went over the list. Here we go: #1: Hydro Québec. It says they have over 20,000 employees. Sure. Problem: do any of them have English names? #2 ABB. Hmmm, never heard of it, but it says it's a top electrical engineering firm. Guess I should have listened to my father and got a degree in something more useful? #3 Air Transat. Yes, sure. Work the phones and listen to people screaming and crying because their flight was delayed and their vacation was terrible and they want their money back. #4. Ubisoft. They're looking for GAME TESTERS. I don't know, isn't game testing the job that sounds like it would be the most fun in the world and turns out to be the most boring horrible job you have ever had or ever will have in your life? I could go on but never mind, I'll be late for the shitty job that I at least have. Bye. [BLEEP!]

M I want to talk about another BAD IDEA coming from the Legault government. Like it needed any more bad ideas. Yes, I am talking about dépanneurs and stores being forced to take in everybody's bottles and cans and now even fucking WINE bottles and JUICE and MILK cartons, because, well, the REAL RECYCLING PROGRAM went TITS UP. So now, dépanneurs are going to be even more cramped and jam-packed than usual. The average small-time corner dep does not have the time, space or money to operate the government's recycling program! And what's going to happen in the summer? People are idiots, they're not going to clean out their milk cartons and juice cartons — that is part of the reason the rest of the world did not want our recycling, because it was a fucking mess. So now, instead of going somewhere else to stink, the dirty fucking recycling will sit in the dépanneur and STINK. The only ones who are going to be happy about this are the RATS. [BLEEP!]

M Hi. I've always wanted to open up a dépanneur called JOHNNY DEP. Pictures of Johnny Dep, every movie he's ever been in, the whole business. And also have a poster of Homer Simpson, who says, "Welcome to Johnny Dépanneur — alcohol the cause and cure of all of man's problems." It would be a nice PASTICHE, no? [BLEEP!]

M Hello Rant Line™, I would like today to talk about WHITE LINES. No, not the old rap song (sings, loosely, a few bars). No, not what we used to do in bars back in the day. I mean the white lines on the roads. Or more what I mean, the white lines that are NOT on the roads. So the Turcot exchange has been in the news, because it's really obvious there — cars are weaving in and out and practically spinning off the highway, like on one of those old road racing sets, because you can't see the lines at all. It's a free-for-all there — like the Indy 500. But that's just one place! Lines come and go and disappear all over the city. You can be driving along and suddenly, NO LANES. Go wherever you want! Figure it out on the move! I mean, come on, shouldn't this be important? To have lines telling cars where to go? And how expensive could it be to fix? You just need a truck with a PAINT BRUSH, right? It's not like you have to move snow and pick it up and dump it, you just need to paint a line. And it's got to be cheaper than fixing potholes. Oh yeah, the city doesn't fix those either. [BLEEP!]

M Why is it that now we can cross Canada on Tesla's supercharging network and it's not reported on THE NEWS? We can now cross Canada and we don't need any gas, we can do it on electricity. All right, go Canada! But news networks, where are you? Why aren't you reporting this? [BLEEP!]

M The fucking people in line at the SQDC who take for fuckin' ever to make an order! Like, why can't you make up your mind when you've already been in the line for 20 minutes! There's a line-up all the time at the SQDC and you always have time to decide on the prices. They're in big fucking bold on neon yellow paper, you can't miss it. But for some reason people have to take 20 minutes to know about every single brand and every single EFFECT RATE that they have and the THC level — it's like, fuck! Everything the government has ever run is always shit and it always takes forever. And another thing in regards to the SQDC: It's apparently mandatory now to have a PIECE OF ID before you go get your shit. It's like the government is willfully trying to drive you back to the BLACK MARKET. I mean, come on. Whenever I go see my dealer, I don't need to show an ID. I give him the money, he gives me the shit and that's all there is to it. Done deal. In and out in five minutes. I don't understand why the government is so dedicated to fucking up everything they do constantly. [BLEEP!]

GOT AN OPINION ON THE LOCAL SCENE?
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:inspectah dep



BY THE DEPSET

The Sainte-Marie sector of Centre Sud, a rather bleak stretch of the city between the Jacques-Cartier Bridge and the Hochelaga railyards, is certainly not a foodie destination. It's more known for its auto shops, cigarette factory and the rather ominous-looking Sûreté du Québec headquarters. But it does have one little gem that few Montreal neighbourhoods can claim: a dépanneur with a full-service restaurant menu.

Dépanneur signs are not always the most honest — the uninitiated should take neon lettering announcing "charcuterie," "fromage," "café" and "fruits et légumes" with a grain of salt — but Dépanneur Idéal's claims to having "metscuisinés" are perfectly legit. The establishment located at the corner of Logan and Iberville (2501 Logan) serves a delightful array of Thai and Asian choices from a modest counter behind the cash. Their pad thai makes for a satisfying lunch or late-night snack with options of chicken, shrimp or veggies. What's more, it costs a paltry \$7. Add on a couple of \$1.25 egg rolls and you'll have a real feast. Other Thai items include the pad sew, spring rolls and peanut chicken, while Chinese items like wonton soup, fried

rice, General Tao chicken and beef and chow mein are also offered. They even have a pho!

There are two bar stools in the corner of this tiny dep next to a widescreen TV playing live sports if you want to eat in. If you live within a few blocks, you can also order delivery (don't forget to add all of your regular dep delivery items like beer and smokes to the bill!). All menu items cost less than \$10, and one dish will feed all but the most famished.

Like most dépanneurs, this one has also got you covered for basic grocery needs, 25 cent candy, chips,

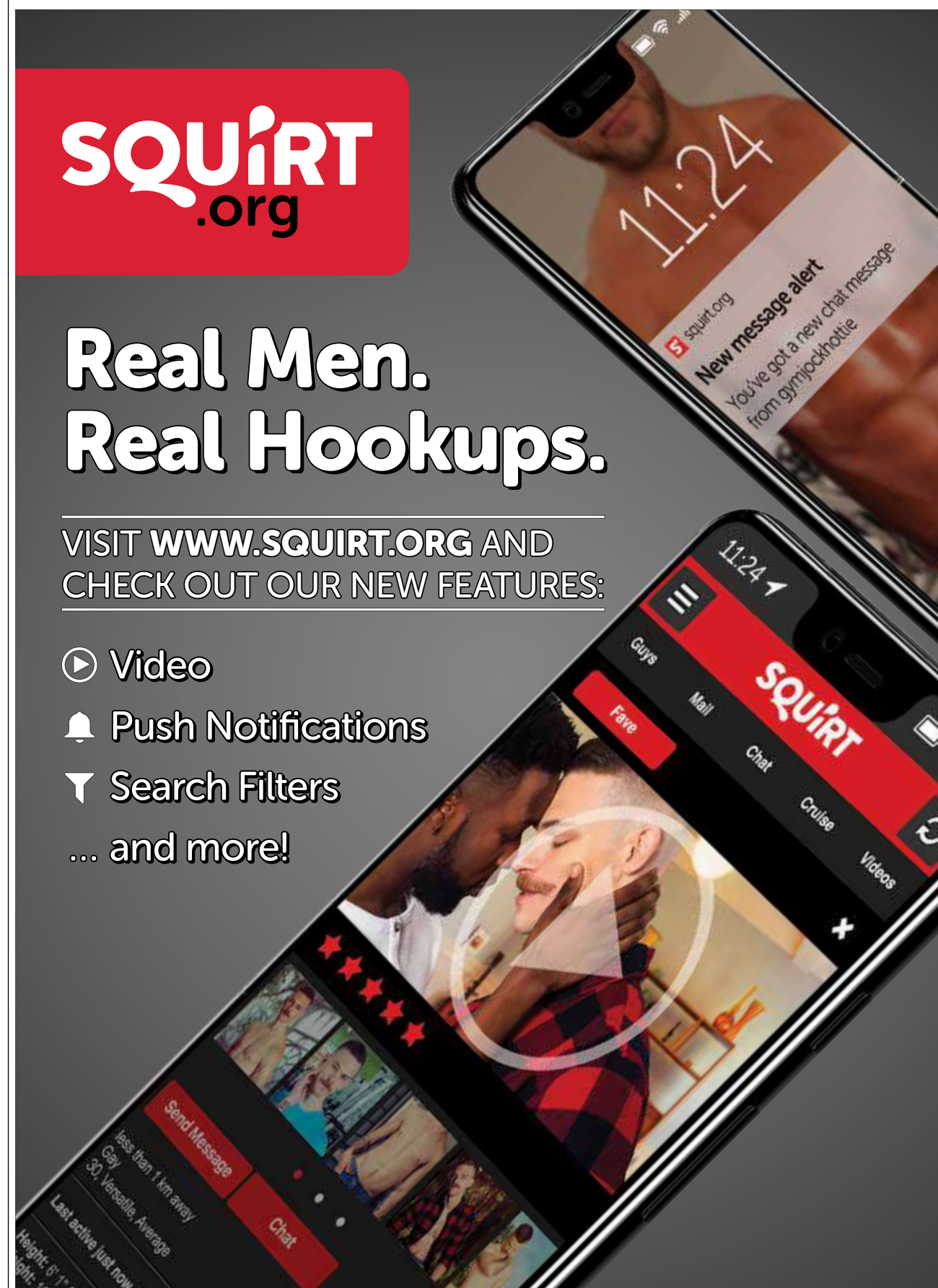
lottery tickets and the standard selection of beer and wine, and it's well kept and tidy. But it's the Thai menu that keeps locals coming back. If you're not in the area, it's worth a trek to Frontenac metro to check out a Montreal dep that actually serves decent food. It's places like Dépanneur Idéal that shine a warm hopeful light on the less well-served areas of town.

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food & drink

Year round



Marcus

BY LORRAINE CARPENTER

With the opening of Montreal's Four Seasons Hotel last spring, an ambitious addition to the city's restaurant scene came to light.

From its delectable seafood dishes to its gorgeous design, the Marcus restaurant and bar on the hotel's third floor is like something out of a dream. The restaurant — with its open kitchen and contrasting wood, marble and metal fixtures, plush seating and wall of plants — is as inviting on a summer's day, when fresh air and a terrace are in play, as it is on a winter's night, where a DJ's music and dim lighting shift the ambiance towards something resembling a superclub. But not a superclub. That's too dirty a word to describe this place.

Marcus Samuelsson has opened a dozen restaurants, notably New York City's Red Rooster, but Montreal's Marcus is the first to share its moniker with the chef. Samuelsson has worked around the globe, prepared a meal for President Obama and company at the White House, hosted TV shows, written cookbooks and an autobiography. With this endeavour, he aimed to let the Nordic aspects of his Ethiopian/Swedish roots shine.

"I grew up on a seafood island, a fish island," he says. "There's a lot of technique that fits my early years of cooking — seafood, very light touches, letting the product shine — but also what I did when I worked in Japan and Europe. It's all really about focusing on the ingredients and making sure the dishes taste delicious. There's a lot of elements from Canadian cuisine coming through as well: pickling, preserving, the tartares."

At the media unveiling of the restaurant last April, Samuelsson spent nearly all his time on the mic lauding his team. He collaborated closely with a local crew of food and hospitality experts to make a mark on Montreal's food scene, notably entrepreneur Andrew Lutfy (one of the key figures behind the Four Seasons project) and chef Nicholas Bramos (Toqué, Monkland Tavern etc).

"We wanted something that could honour but also add to the spirit of the city," Samuelsson says. "Andrew, being so passionate about the city, he gave us a lot of clues. We talked about the past a lot — he went all the way back to Globe — about precedent and what we could contribute."

"We also wanted to create an independent restaurant that didn't feel like a hotel restaurant. We focused on the flow, understanding the two bars, building an eating bar so you could look into the kitchen. We talked about seafood and light cuisine, because Montrealers are very often in motion when they're downtown, going to an event or coming from a conference."

The Parisian brasserie, with its long opening hours, big menu and large booths, was a key inspiration in the restaurant's conception. Though the place is undoubtedly elegant, and some of the prices point to upscale (especially for wine and cocktails, which verge on prohibitive), Marcus is accessible, offering a range of price points and diversity of ambiance. It's not a bistro, nor is it fine dining per se, and that's something that Samuelsson recognizes as the sweet spot of the city's food scene.

"For me there are three types of restaurants in Montreal that are really exciting: first the immigrant restaurants that are more mom-and-pop, unknown and underexposed. It's a layer of the scene that I got to know and I love that, whether it's Korean or it's Lebanese or whatever."

"And you have the very well known restaurants like Joe Beef or Normand (Laprise)'s restaurants, but then you have le Filet and Provisions, or (Charles-Antoine Crête)'s restaurants; super high-quality neighbourhood restaurants — brilliant, genius! There's a very thriving food scene, hospitality scene, iconic places like Milos were birthed there, and that shows that Montreal is a city that exceeds its weight in terms of size. It's up there with cities with a population of six or seven million people. People in Montreal are open to creativity, and there's a strong tradition so if you're a young cook or young server you can really learn the craft and all its nuances. That's exciting. That's the reason I picked Montreal: it's a city that enjoys that level of dining. To me it was very clear that there was an opportunity there."

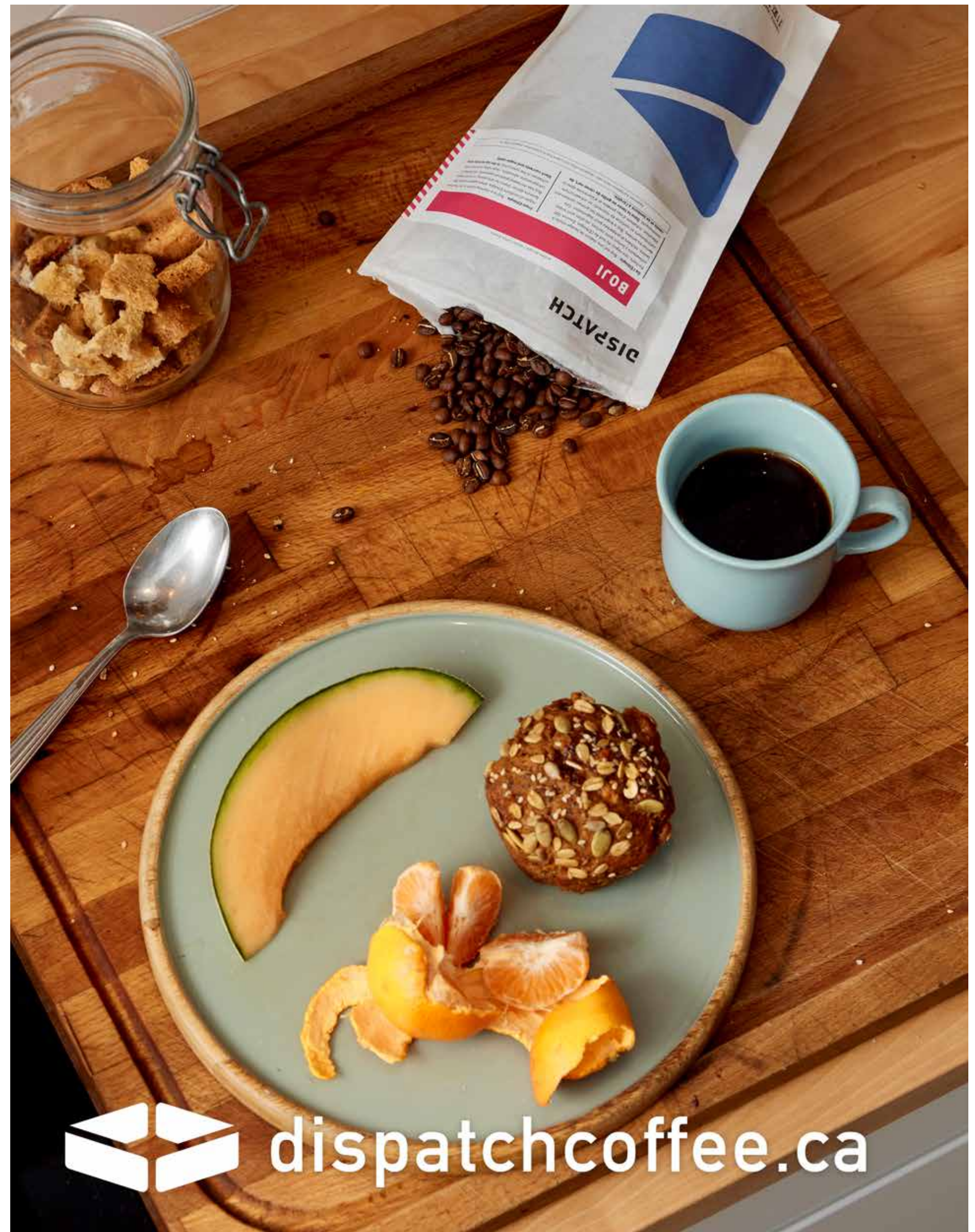
Nearly a year later, Marcus has been recognized more for its aesthetic prowess than for its food, but perseverance is part of the game, and strong word of mouth has built their clientele well beyond hotel guests.

"Becoming an independent restaurant that Montreal takes to heart, that takes time, and I'm willing to do the walk together," Samuelsson says. "There's never a landing station, like, 'Oh, we've arrived!' The red rooster has been open nine years and we work hard on it every day, and in Montreal we're working hard on it every day. I'm sure David works extremely hard on Joe Beef every day because that's how he tweaks and tweaks and tweaks and tweaks and makes it special for the community. When you stop working on something, the audience is gonna notice. I work with that level: fear of and respect for the clientele. I'm asking for your time, and if I'm doing that, I'm going to deliver because I want you to have a great time."



Marcus Samuelsson

Paul Des Omeaux



dispatchcoffee.ca

Food hall taste test



Le Cathcart

BY ERIK LEIJON

Montreal's abuzz over a new spate of trendy, gourmet food courts...nay...halls, which have descended upon the downtown landscape. They offer a broad selection of reasonably priced, slightly elevated grub under Instagram lighting in a quick-paced setting.

The long-term economic viability of these food halls might become more of a story as the new car smell wears off, but we'll cross that bridge in a year. For now, it's full steam ahead with our shiny new things.

Le Central has been open on the corner of Ste-Catherine and St-Laurent since October, with Time Out Market Montreal hitting the rafters of the Eaton Centre a month later. Le Cathcart is the crown jewel of a massive Place Ville-Marie reno job and opened this January, while Artisans has been doing its own market/takeout hybrid thing for a while in the facelifted Queen E.

Having had the opportunity to spend some time at le Central, Time Out Market and le Cathcart, it's fair to say all three offer their own spin on the fancy food court concept without stepping on each other's toes. Perhaps there's room for everyone.

Le Central was incomplete both times I went, but the unfinished areas really didn't look out of place given the hall's concrete and concert poster hodge podge look. Central is inviting, with colourful, individualistic kiosks in contrast to Time Out Market's imposing monochrome design. There's a busy train station din when it's full, with crowds that arrive and disperse quickly. From a bells and whistles perspective, it's not distracting enough to give a sense of destination eating. Basically, if I'm working/studying in the area or prepping for a concert nearby and have had my fill of Pool Room, I wouldn't feel sheepish about grabbing a quick bite and immediately bouncing. It would also be my choice for a casual night out among friends, since it's easy to buy and consume alcoholic beverages on the premises.

Time Out Market, on the other hand, is deep within the Eaton Centre's innards, so there's some sense of achievement when you finally hit the elevator. Once you've arrived, it takes a second to adjust your eyes as the stalls line the walls, and they all have the same black awning with white letters. You'll notice the names of big chefs attached to many — the market was curated with connoisseurs in mind. There's a uniformity to ordering, too: you get a buzzer and enough time to find a seat before it goes off. The room is dark, but the long tables look great on the edges of an Instagram photo and the lighting is just enough to capture the essence of your dishes. Everything in Time Out Market has been calibrated to look great, and you can feel the effort. If you want beer, wine or a cocktail, though, you'll have to go to a separate area.

Under a ginormous ceiling of glass, new kid le Cathcart is naturally lit and feels constructed for the long haul, but it's also the most utilitarian of the three. Place Ville-Marie is a big complex with hungry businesspeople to feed, so the prices are a tad lower to encourage daily visits — many dishes coming in the \$12-\$14 range — and there's an open Biergarten section with attentive servers where the white collars can tie a few on before hitting their homebound trains.

On a real basic level, you could say le Central was designed for locals and Time Out Market for the cosmopolitan/tourist set. Le Cathcart has the built-in Place Ville-Marie crowd to cater to.

BUT HOW ABOUT THE FOOD?

At le Central, start with a margarita at Mexican eatery Bonito's Taco and Deli or wine and oyster shots at Chasse-Galerie outpost Mignonette. After that, soak the booze up quickly with a squared slice of pizza topped with cured meat fresh from Morso's oven or fried chicken in a waffle cone smothered with maple sauce from Ho Lee Chix. Once you're ready for more, the highlight of the hall is Thip Thip, the city's first Laotian snack bar courtesy of Athiraj Phrasavath. Thip Thip's jerky and sticky rice combo is the perfect fast, addictive eat, but if you're more peckish, get the papaya salad and a rice noodle dish. For dessert, there's pint-sized doughnuts from local fave Trou de Beigne, which also serves a surprising number of non-dairy milks on tap. Bromont brewers West Shefford have a bar there, adding another watering hole to the area. Indian snack bar le Super Qualité was under construction when I went, but it's open now. Their original Rosemont location is beloved.

There's no shortage of options at Time Out Market, so to get the most out of your experience, invite a buddy or two and share two dishes per person. Start at Paul Toussaint's counter for Haitian dishes griot and fried conch fritters. After that, flip your tastebuds in another direction with a ramen or donburi from Marusan. Last time I visited, the Demo Kitchen was serving up an enticing raclette bowl, which was basically a deconstructed version of the Alpine classic. If you're using Time Out Market to test out restaurants beyond your budget, Charles-Antoine Crête and Cheryl Johnson of Montreal Plaza fame have done a fine job of bringing fine dining sensibilities to new food court digs. I had their pork and cheese sandwich encased in two charcoal black pieces of Hof Kelsten bread, and although it's hard to explain how it tasted, I can say safely say it was worth it. Once you've had enough, wash it all down with a homemade lemonade from the Soda Bar.

And be sure to do all of this while keeping a watchful eye on Normand Laprise's Burger T. The line-up at the lauded burger joint fluctuates a lot and patience is a virtue if you've got nowhere else to be. Seriously, if there are 10 people in line, give it five minutes.

On a weekday, one would expect le Cathcart to be a madhouse. On the weekend, it's quite calm, but it also meant a few stalls didn't open, limiting the already tight selection of nine kiosks. The longest queue formed around famed Montreal fast food burger joint Uniburger. If you've never been, go for it. Otherwise, it offers the same food as the other locations. Like Uniburger, Southeast Asian resto HÂ comes in from the outside world as a sure thing, and their steamed buns are the perfect shareable appetizer. Mexican spot Tulum has a tortilla soup they call a pozole, even though they're two different things, and their al pastor burrito was more lunch-sized than mortar shell. Partner Antonio Park is looking after the health of Montreal's business elite: Dirty Greens' salads, Karma's poke and Omnivore's Lebanese classics emphasize fresh and hearty greens. The Park touch is also felt with the inclusion of Chinese institution Mon Nan, which makes a generous thai red curry with the right amount of spice for lunchtime.

There are plenty more offerings at le Central, Time Out Market and le Cathcart, so check out their websites for more info on what's available.

PHI

MIRAGES & MIRACLES

EXHIBITION-EXPERIENCE

BY ADRIEN M & CLAIRE B

18.02.20 — 05.04.20

TICKETS: \$12 - \$15



CAVEBOY

08.02.20

The official release party of the Montreal alt-pop trio's debut album

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20.02.20

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A decade in the scene

BY CLAYTON SANDHU

The 2010s, though it feels strange to short-hand it that way, was a very important decade for me. I moved to Montreal in 2009 and started working in restaurants in 2011. I still work in restaurants now. In my time behind the scenes, I've worked as a dishwasher, a late-night burger flipper, a line cook, a sous-chef, a waiter and a bartender.

Near the end of this decade I became a restaurant critic, which gave me the opportunity to comment on an industry that I not only love but one I've been a part of. In my view, the past 10 years marked the evolution of Montreal's restaurant scene from its French-centric adolescence to a dynamic industry respected and revered around the world. For this take on the decade I'm going to try and keep my reflections limited to what were for me, the big trends, and the restaurants, people and events that had the greatest impact on the restaurant industry. To the best of my ability I'll also try and keep the events and trends in chronological order.

2011:

Chefs Fred Morin and David McMillan, along with author Meredith Erickson, penned their first cookbook, *The Art of Living According to Joe Beef: A Cookbook of Sorts*. The book, wherein David Chang of New York's Momofuku named Joe Beef as his favourite restaurant in the world, essentially positioned Joe Beef as the most important restaurant in Canada. Chang's acknowledgment undoubtedly helped put Montreal on the map as a world destination for food. Over the next eight years, Joe Beef would expand its empire to include a second cookbook, three more restaurants (not including Liverpool House, which was already a success by the beginning of the decade), and a ranking amongst the top 100 restaurants in the world.

That same year, Anthony Bourdain's show *The Layover* re-introduced the world to Montreal. Hosted by Dave McMillan and Fred Morin, Bourdain, along with Martin Picard (Au Pied de Cochon) and Normand Laprise (Toqué) is taken on a booze and food-fuelled tour of the city that glorified the overindulgence synonymous with the identity of Joe Beef and Au Pied de Cochon. Bourdain best exemplifies this identity in his description of the most emblematic dish of the 2010's, Joe Beef's foie gras double-down, "What's not to like? It's an obscenity and a crime against God and all that is decent. But it's delicious." This episode propels Montreal into an era defined by gluttony and bacchanalian gorging.

2012:

Frédéric Simon begins to make waves in the Montreal natural wine world with his project Pinard et Filles. Although his first released vintage wouldn't be until 2015, Simon, along with Michael Marler and Véronique Hupin at les Pervenches and a few others would delineate the moment when the natural wine movement and Montreal's restaurant and bar scene became inextricably linked. Natural wine may have already been available, but it was when Quebec became more than just a drinker of natural wines and became a producer as well that the scene fully exploded. Today it's hard to imagine a serious restaurant in town that doesn't have a strong natural wine selection.

2013:

Le Vin Papillon opens and co-owner and sommelière Vanya Filipovic begins her ascent to the throne as queen of the

natural wine scene. Along with Ryan Gray at Nora Gray, Filipovic and Vin Papillon would come to be the leading tastemakers and champions of the development of the natural wine movement.

The same year, Marc Cohen and Sefi Amir (Lawrence) would open Boucherie Lawrence. The butchershop would set a new standard for consuming and sourcing animals, forcing restaurants across the city to think harder and work better when it came to cooking meat.

2015:

Toqué is named best restaurant in Canada two years in a row. Montreal is at the top of its game in 2015. Most would consider Montreal to be Canada's greatest food city bar none during this golden era.

The same year, Antonin Mousseau-Rivard opens le Mousse. The minimalist restaurant with a rap-heavy soundtrack was met with boatloads of praise for its meticulously plated menu. Its opening signaled the decline of large single servings of weighty bourgeois cooking and a revival of the long forgotten tasting menu. Maybe more important, however, was le Mousse's effect on the relationship between restaurants and social media. Having never worked for any big name chefs, Mousseau-Rivard's notoriety was built on a massive Instagram following which was centred around one polarizing hashtag: #TheArtOfPlating. Today, a good Instagram is as important as a good menu, and in some cases, maybe more important.

2016:

As tasting menus continue to become more relevant, so too are small plates. Le Vin Papillon, and newcomer Larry's amongst other standards like Hotel Herman and le Filet, become the go-to destinations. Larry's and Vin Papillon in 2020 are still considered amongst the best places to eat in the city.

2016 was also the year of the highly controversial opening of l'Atelier Joël Robuchon at the Casino de Montréal. The \$11-million project (paid for with public funds) was highly contested by the Montreal restaurant scene and in particular restaurant critic Lesley Chesterman, who argued the funds would have been better used to promote the world class talent within the city rather than importing the concept of a French multi-millionaire. The project raised serious questions about Quebec's support of its own culinary scene. It also drew attention to the influx of big-name foreign chefs entering the Montreal restaurant industry, including the likes of Gordon Ramsay (Laurier BBQ, RIP), Daniel Boulud (Maison Boulud, 2011) and Marcus Samuelsson (Marcus, 2019).

2017:

The beloved Mile End restaurant Hotel Herman is forced to close as their landlord refuses to renew their lease. No specific reasons were cited. Three years later, the location where the restaurant was housed remains vacant. This closing stands as a foreboding symbol for the future of small business in the area.



L'Express

Clayton Sandhu

2018:

Two of the principal owners of Nora Gray, Emma Cardarelli and Ryan Gray, along with Marley Sniatowsky, open Elena, a Neapolitan pizza place in St-Henri. Quickly, the restaurant and its branding becomes a trend magnet. The restaurant has been featured in nearly every best-of list since opening, and has been the subject of a feature in the wildly popular food magazine *Bon Appétit*. In 2020 Elena is the bellwether for restaurant trends to come.

In the same year, Prince Edward County star winemaker Norman Hardie is accused of sexual assault. The wine industry in Quebec cuts ties. The #MeToo movement begins to uncover the often malicious and predatory nature of the food and beverage industry. Ultimately wine buyers are forced to think more critically about the producers they work with and the restaurant industry begins to look in on itself and its conduct historically. Much more self-reflection is still needed.

For natural wine, 2018 is a banner year as Montreal becomes the newest addition to RAW wine, the world's largest natural wine salon. This induction in some ways officially signalled Montreal's ascent to ranks of elite natural wine markets across the globe.

2019:

The Joe Beef empire enters a new chapter. The era of excess is ended, Dave McMillan and Fred Morin are now sober and are very vocal advocates for sobriety in the restaurant industry. Sommelière Vanya Filipovic and chef de cuisine Marc-Olivier Frappier part from the Joe Beef group in order to pursue a single venture: Vin Mon Lapin.

Restaurant l'Express celebrates 39 years in business. It remains one of Montreal's finest restaurants. Its old-school approach to restauration is as relevant today as ever.

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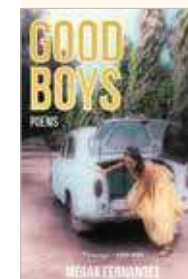
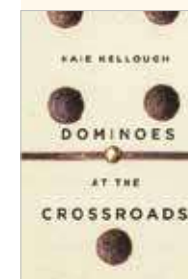
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Megan Fernandes launches
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Alexei Perry Cox and Joshua Neves

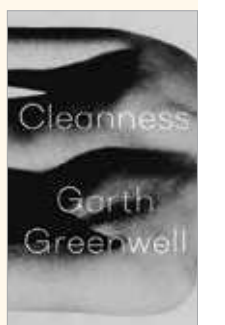
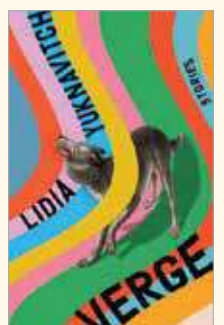
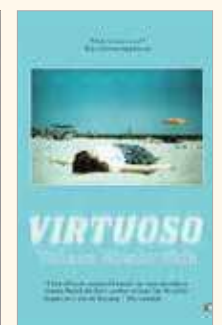
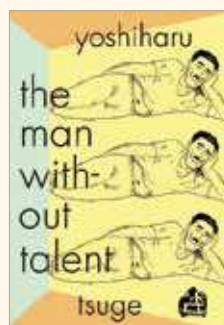
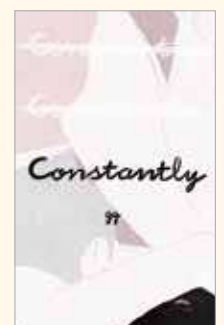
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- FEB 13, THURSDAY **GRAPHIC NOVEL BOOK CLUB**
BTM FDRS by Ben Passmore and Ezra Clayton Daniels
- FEB 17, MONDAY **TRUE READS BOOK CLUB**
The Undying by Anne Boyer
- FEB 26, WEDNESDAY **NEW READS BOOK CLUB**
Frying Plantain by Zalika Reid-Benta
- FEB 28, FRIDAY **TEEN BOOK CLUB**
Hot Comb by Ebony Flowers

NEW AND EXCITING THIS MONTH



CULT Restaurant Guide

BASTERD

This cozy Jarry Park-adjacent spot with the way-Instagrammable indoor sign may be sleepier now than it was last summer, when the tennis crowd and park lifers at large were drawn in in droves by Basterd's reliable market cuisine, refreshing cocktails and casual vibes. This is the restaurant's second winter, a return to heavier offerings with a continuing dedication to staples, for brunch, lunch, 5à7 and dinner. These days it's things like clam chowder, Philly cheese steak sandwiches and braised beef pastas, well-executed dishes that somehow retain a light touch despite their satisfying heft. Also heavy: the front door. You'll work up an appetite just getting in. (Lorraine Carpenter)

→ 260 Gary-Carter
restobasterd.ca

BEBA

The unlikely combination of Argentinian, Spanish and Italian cuisine may very well be the recipe for Montreal's most exciting restaurant. Operated by brothers Pablo and Ari Schor, Verdun's Beba veers from the big pieces of grilled meat so synonymous with Argentinian cooking to focus on the Spanish and Italian-influenced food from the brothers' childhood. Ari might be most familiar to Montreal diners as the chef-de-cuisine of Liverpool House, a position he held for the better part of six years. Suffice to say, this experience transfers easily to his cooking at Beba, which combines the sensibility of Liverpool House and the vibrant and powerful flavours of South America and the Mediterranean. (Clayton Sandhu)

→ 3900 Éthel
restaurantbeba.ca

DANDY

Michael Tozzi, the former chef of Olive and Gourmando, heads up this haute-gamme brunch/lunch restaurant in Old Montreal. A strictly daytime affair, Dandy elevates midday dining and makes a convincing argument that excellent food, in a beautiful room, need not only be reserved for lavish dinners. Ritchie Nguyen leads a kitchen team that puts out elevated breakfast classics early in the morning. Into the afternoon, the fare leans Italian with beautifully composed dishes like fresh corn agnolotti and roasted halibut. With a wonderful coffee program and an even better wine list by Kaitlin Doucette (Foxy, Un Po di Piu), it's no wonder that Dandy describes itself as the cure to your "resting brunch face." (CS)

→ 244 St-Jacques
dandymtl.com

ÉPICERIE PUMPI

Montreal's Thai scene has long been dominated by Asian fusion counters serving a limited selection of pad thai and similar noodle-based dishes. When it opened in 2017,



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Farsides

Little Italy's Épicerie Pumpui was a breath of fresh air. Their chalkboard menu features a small, curated selection of regional Thai curries, like Gaeng Gari Gai (a yellow chicken and potato curry) and Gaeng Hung Lay (a pork belly curry from the North) — be advised, these are very spicy. They also do portions of Thai fried chicken and mango papaya salads, as well as stocking a few shelves of imported Thai specialty foods. The vintage diner-style booth seating and décor makes it a great place to eat in, while their sunny terrasse is a real pleasure come summer. They also have a selection of microbrewery beer for takeout only.

→ 83 St-Zotique E.
pumpui.ca

FARSIDES

There's been a hole in the city's soul since the demise of cheesy/beloved all-you-can-eat resto Jardin Tiki by the Big O. We were once as fascinated by the fruity flavours and tiny parasols of Tiki-American cuisine as anyone, and while the playful Farsides strives for its own lane by fusing together Thai and Hawaiian food with a generous side of '90s golden era hip hop, the midpoint between those two places is pretty much Polynesia. From the creators of Bord'Elle, the high-ceiling'd Old Montreal locale looks amazing. The resin bar encases '90s ephemera like toys and CDs, a black basketball net hovers over the entrance and plates with famous rap album covers adorn the walls. The food and drink also strive for a certain wow factor, but remained a work in progress a month after opening. Salty Mai Wei pad thai represented the Thai half (there's a luxurious one with lobster, too), while the signature big money dish of coconut shrimp and jasmine rice served in a pineapple with picnic macaroni and potato salad on the side was, as you can imagine, unfocused. The trendy papaya salad and Baby I Like It Raw sashimi apps hit the spot alongside the generously fruity and boozy cocktails, so start small and work up. (Erik Leijon)

→ 690 Notre-Dame W.
thefarsides.com

FERREIRA

You might think of Ferreira as the Portuguese Milos. Both are upscale Montreal staples specializing in fish and seafood and modernized takes on a particular style of Mediterranean cuisine. They both have reduced-price lunch and late-night menus, an olive branch to those of us who'd rather not splurge on a meal out. And like Milos, Ferreira is renowned for great service. But Ferreira is also famous among sommeliers and wine aficionados for its literally cavernous wine cellar, and among gourmands for dishes like blackened cod and grilled chicken, seafood casseroles and bouillabaisse, tartares and delicate but decadent desserts.

→ 1446 Peel
ferreiracafe.com

GIBBY'S

In the category of old-school special-occasion family dining destinations, Gibby's has few peers in this city. Moishes and Rib & Reef might qualify, but Gibby's packs in a lot more appeal than its Plateau and Decarie Expressway-side equivalents. I mean, there's the aesthetic alone. Housed in a 200-year-old building — which always strikes me as a little at odds with the orange bong-bubble Gibby's signage — the restaurant's stone walls, wooden beams

THE PUB

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Uber Eats



Slice and Soda

and fireplaces add a touch of 19th century charm to the heavy surf/turf experience. While the meals are notoriously expensive, the included appetizers and sides and complimentary bread, pickles, bacon bits, croutons, between-course sorbet and after-dinner mint chocolates will ensure that you roll out the door satisfied. (LC)

→ 298 Place d'Youville
gibbys.com

LUNA

A small neighbourhood bistro in the Plateau, opened by a couple who met in Paris, a student and chef cutting his teeth in some fine French restaurants. The couple, Na Young Park and Chef Hyun Seok Kim left Paris together to return to Seoul, emboldened to open a restaurant dedicated to traditional Korean food, with the finesse of French cooking. Fast forward a few years and the couple has transplanted their vision to a quaint location on Rachel. Formerly the French Bistro Au 917, it's fitting that the new owner's vision was of a bistro with a Korean identity. The food is bright, flavourful and unlike much of the Korean food on offer in the city. According to Na Young Park, it's because it's traditional and made exactly the same way as in their restaurant in Seoul. (CS)

→ 917 Rachel E.

MANO CORNUTO

Griffintown's best neighbourhood joint. A relative tour-de-force as alumni from le Bremner, Garde Manger, Foxy and Monkland Taverne join forces to give you the best of Italian happy hour. Simple pleasures — in the most Italian of ways — dominates everything from the Focaccia and pasta-dominant menu, to the Amari and Aperitivi heavy cocktail list. Mano Cornuto is where you'd go to watch the Inter Milan game, the spot you double-park in front of as you dash in for an espresso. It's where you stop in for a drink with a friend but stick around for a few more of the former and leaving with a few more of the latter. (CS)

→ 988 Ottawa
manocornuto.com

MARVEN'S

A Parc Ex classic, Marven's has been a reliable go-to for Greek staples for decades. They're probably best known for calamari — a consistently perfect balance of crisp and chewy, crunchy and soft seafood morsels — but Marven's wield wonders souvlaki pitas and Greek salads, too. A few years after an interior redesign, the restaurant's relatively modern aesthetic hasn't done anything to kill the old-school, no-frills Greek restaurant charm. Marven's remains a neighbourhood favourite, and their no-reservations policy (they're also cash-only) means you may have to line up during busy dinner hours.

→ 880 Ball
marvensrestaurant.com

NORA GRAY

Un incontournable. Nora Gray is a long-standing contender for Montreal's best Italian restaurant and is considered one of the best in the scene by any parameter. The restaurant, which originally opened in 2011, suffered a devastating flood in 2018, resulting in a prolonged hiatus. Since reopening in April, the crew at Nora Gray is proving its reputation is more than well-deserved and may very well be the best version of itself in years. Chef-owner Emma Cardarelli and chef de cuisine Kira German put out thoughtful and deeply flavourful Italian classics, not the least of which is the incredible handmade pasta program. Sommelier and co-owner Ryan Gray puts together an incomparable wine list studded with bottles that would delight oenophiles of any type, although it should come as no surprise, it's been Gray's M.O. since his days at Liverpool House nearly a decade ago. (CS)

→ 1391 St-Jacques W.
noragray.com

NOREN

Japanese food in Montreal is generally (and woefully) relegated into the few pigeonholed categories of sushi, ramen and loosely defined Izakaya. Noren is the remedy. This 10-seat restaurant is the passion project of Elise Garand and Hidenori Tsuda. The small menu, composed of a few staple items and a rotating dish of the week, are all excellent. To eat at Noren is like being a guest in a Japanese home. Add to that a small list of decent sake and the genuine hospitality of Garand and Tsuda and you have the makings for one of Montreal's best restaurants. (CS)

PHO NGUYEN PHI

The undisputed heavyweight champion of the Pho scene. Okay, maybe the jury is still out on that one, but ask anyone who eats at this Côte-des-Neiges soup shop and you might just well be convinced. Expect all the classics, decent spring rolls, hot tea, fast service, but those in the know including some of Montreal's best chefs will tell you, the deep and powerfully flavourful broth at Nguyen Phi sets it apart from the rest. (CS)

→ 6260 Côte-des-Neiges

PUNJAB PALACE

Although it may not get as much attention as its neighbour across the road, Punjab Palace is the rightful kingdom of North Indian cuisine on Jean-Talon. You'll find all the classic dishes, like *murgh makhani* (butter chicken), aloo gobi and samosas, but those in the know (notably the many turban-clad Sardars) opt for the excellent chana samosa, pani-puri and the wonderfully fragrant and spicy biryani. As for meat dishes, anything in rich, fiery-hot gravies will hit the spot, but Punjab Palace gets special mention for their tandoori dishes in which all types of meat, fish and bread are expertly roasted in the Punjabi clay oven and enter the dining room engulfed in a powerfully aromatic plume of steam. Utterly intoxicating. (CS)

→ 920 Jean-Talon E.
punjabpalace.ca



Dandy

USINE G

Rodrigo Portella
Tom na Fazenda
by Michel Marc Bouchard

MAR 3 → 12

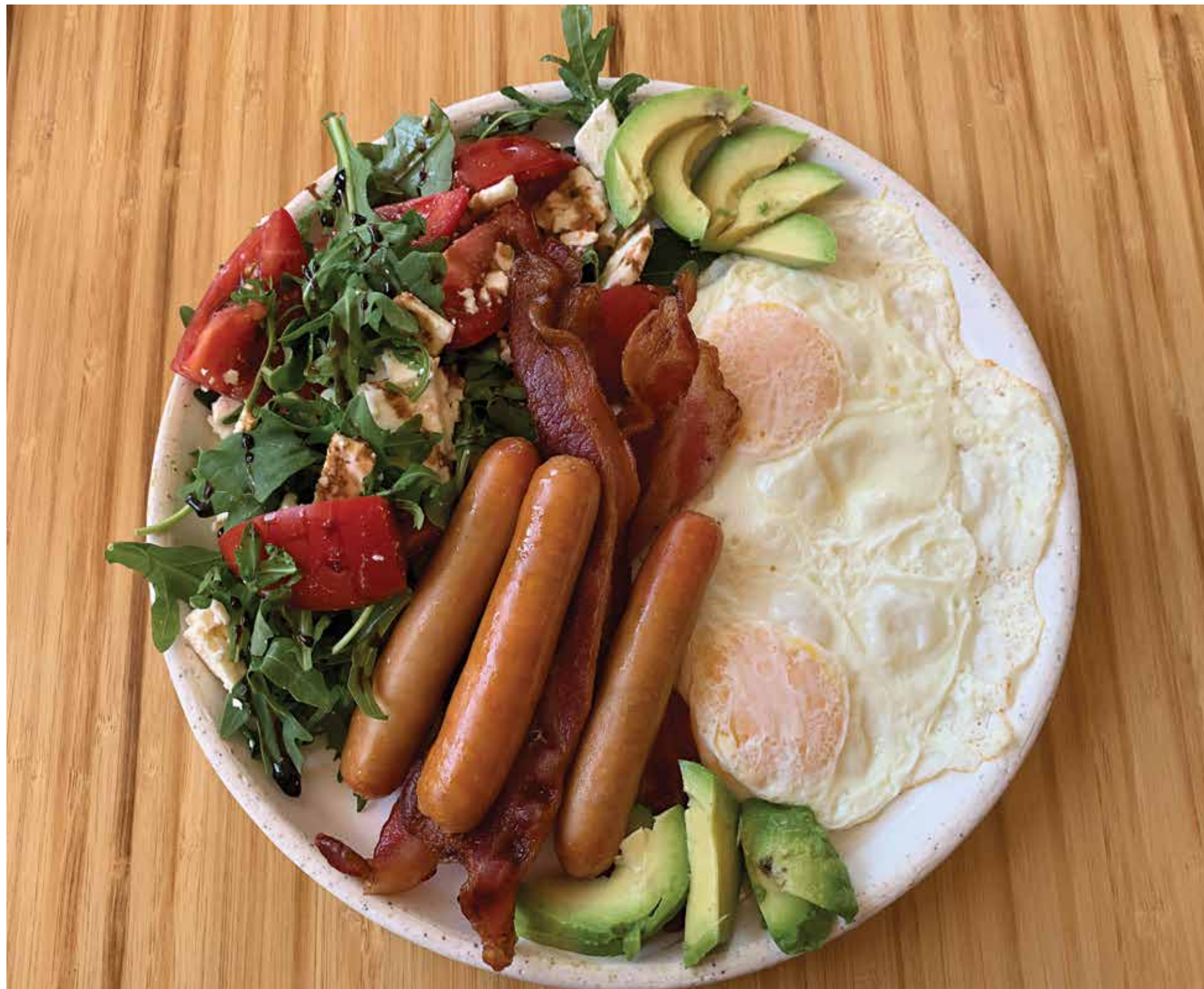
« All mud, blood, sputum and murderous passion »
Montreal Gazette

usine-c.com

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Basterd

ROCH LE COQ

Amid the Popeye's fried chicken sandwich craze in 2019, Montrealers were feeling a little left out. Around that time, a shoebox-sized slinger of greasy goodness in buckets from an experienced team of local restaurateurs behind a cramped counter opened up shop in Outremont. The pun-y name didn't augur well, but my concerns were unfounded: Roch fries a mean bird. The outer casing has enough crunch and taste without taking over the chicken, which was perfectly juicy underneath. It still felt like a real piece of meat. The bucket (white, dark or both) comes with dipping sauces, ample fries and a fresh, palate-cleansing cilantro-loaded side slaw, feeding my small family with ease. The Popeye-deprived can go for the Rochy, their version of the sandwich. Wash it down with a Labatt 50 and order a crispy-yet-soft waffle smothered in syrup for dessert. Delivery and pick-up are options here, and you may want to take advantage — it's a tiny place with a fair bit of cold air coming in and out. (Erik Leijon)

→ 1541 Van Horne
pouletfritmontreal.com

SAN GENNARO

Little Italy's local. A drop-in spot for excellent coffee, decent pastries (shout-out to the pistachio bombolone) but most of all some of the best Al Taglio pizza in the city. The newest addition to the Covone family restaurant group (Bottega, and the now sadly closed Hostaria) is a place for people in the neighbourhood to meet up with old friends, have an espresso and a warm slice of potato and caciocavallo pizza. Fabrizio Covone, obsessed with Roman pizza took his obsession to Rome, where under the tutelage of Gabrielle Bonci (considered by many to be Italy's best pizzaiole) learned the craft. Come for the pizza and coffee, stay for the camaraderie (and for second slice). (CS)

→ 69 St-Zotique
sangennaro.ca

SLICE + SODA

During this very publication's infancy, we ran an article condemning the city's cheapo pizza culture, which was dominated at the time by grimy 99 cent spots. Well, that monolith has crumbled and in its dust, we've seen the rise of a supposedly fancier pie. Adamo in St-Henri set the standard for by-the-slice in this town, and you'd be forgiven for thinking this new Old Montreal spot is a grumpier Adamo outpost (adjusted to neighbourhood inflation) down to the Beasties wall and wooden pizza enclosure. It's not, and the titular foldable, structurally flimsy slices don't achieve that consistent standard, either. The homemade sodas, which generously get equal billing here, aren't too sweet and actually have some intriguing flavour combos, including the Spring Fever with blackberry, raspberry and elderberry syrup one I was encouraged to get. In a sea of overpriced sit-downs on St-Paul, Slice and Soda has convenience in its favour, though it won't make you feel like we're all that removed from Montreal's pizza desert of the past. (EL)

→ 201 St-Paul W.
sliceandsoda.ca

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UNIBAR

Tried and true Uniburger offers the city's best fast food burger in a no-frills setting, yet this Old Montreal basement bar team-up with neighbourhood mainstays Tommy Café opts for something different: compact smash-style sliders in a chic speakeasy environment with natural wines and microbrews. There's a ceremony to consuming the melt-in-your-mouth Unibar burger, starting with a regular bite, followed by gradual inclusions of the side pickles and the In-N-Out-indebted Uniburger sauce. For the Instagram set, there's a soaring burger tower for groups, topped with party

sparklers. It's nice to see the workmanlike Uniburger with a little razzle dazzle, but the restaurant also has a warm and unpretentious charm, and it's not uncommon to see a mix of clubgoers and locals hiding from tourists taking advantage of the dim lighting and comfy couch set-up. The menu is purposely austere, although they've added Beyond Meat since opening. I wouldn't pit the more robust Uniburger and the punchy Unibar burger against each other — they suit different moods, and I've found myself craving each at different times. (EL)

→ 404 St-Sulpice



Manu Cornuto

VESTA

Another pizza place, but not like the others. Neapolitan pizza, if it hasn't reached the point of full saturation, is damn close, which is why Michele Forgione and Stefano Faita (Impasto and Pizzeria Gema) focused on the other type of pizza: American. Yeah, it's still a personal pie type of place, except for the delivery options which promise crispy, hot, pies delivered straight to your door. Vesta focuses on New York style pizza which has a crispy, slightly sweeter crust that provides the perfect grip for that New York fold. On top of great pies, they also do some Italian American classics like meatballs and mozzarella sticks, all prepared at the highest level but with just the right amount of respect for nostalgia. (CS)

→ 206 Jarry E.
 vestamtl.com

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- TUES. FEB. 11 - MIKE HAND
- WED. FEB. 12 - MIKE BERTINI
- THURS. FEB. 13 - JONO TOWNSEND
- FRI. FEB. 14 & SAT. FEB. 15 - DANNY REBEL AND THE KGB
- TUES. FEB. 18 - AVERY JANE
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- THURS. FEB. 20 - STEVE CREEP DUO
- FRI. FEB. 21 - BUD RICE BAND
- SAT. FEB. 22 - ONLY THE LONELY
- TUES. FEB. 25 - JIMMY KARANANIS
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music

Ballad of a Thin Mind



Wolf Parade

Pamela Evelyn & Joseph Yarmush

BY ERIK LEIJON

Indie rockers Wolf Parade were on hiatus from 2011–2016, which means they basically missed the entire social media revolution.

But they're good at it now. Guitarist Dan Boeckner's Twitter feed is a must and keyboardist Spencer Krug is dropping new material on his Patreon. Also, let's not forget that their core fans kept the flame lit during those fallow years by congregating around Maria Carullo's fansite.

Like a lot of us, the band is torn about what social media has done to our collective attention spans. That friction abounds on their new record *Thin Mind*, the second album from their 2.0 comeback, and first as a three-piece since their earliest days in Montreal.

"We're old dudes from a different time," says drummer Arlen Thompson. "We were really late to all this social media stuff as a band. We were quite agnostic to it at first, and it's taken us a long time to come around.

"Social media is rad because you can keep contact with people and it's especially important for artists. But at the same time there's the way it's used politically. We were sold on a utopian vision, but it manifested itself in a much darker

way. How do you navigate that as a human being in 2020?"

"Thin mind" is Krugianspeak for the effect of over-communication online and how ideas and opinions are floating about, but little of it is of substance. The album also comes from Cedar, British Columbia on Vancouver Island, a battleground between pristine temperate rainforests and encroaching suburban development. Thompson moved back there from Montreal a decade ago, Krug a few years back, while Boeckner remains in Montreal but returned to his old stomping grounds to record.

"Dan's very much a city boy, so this place might drive him a little crazy," Thompson admits. "He also grew up near where we worked on the record, so I think for him there are a lot of old ghosts."

Luckily for Wolf Parade, ghosts have always figured prominently in their music. Former bassist Dante DeCaro was something of a spectral presence as well, since the remaining trio had to figure out how to sound like Wolf Parade without him.

"He's such an amazing multi-instrumentalist, and would pick up things and fill in gaps, so going back to a three-piece, it was like going back to the beginning of Wolf Parade," says Thompson.

They returned to what might be considered the classic Wolf

Parade sound, with Krug on bass synth and Thompson on drums forming the rhythm section.

In other respects, *Thin Mind* is unlike anything they've done before.

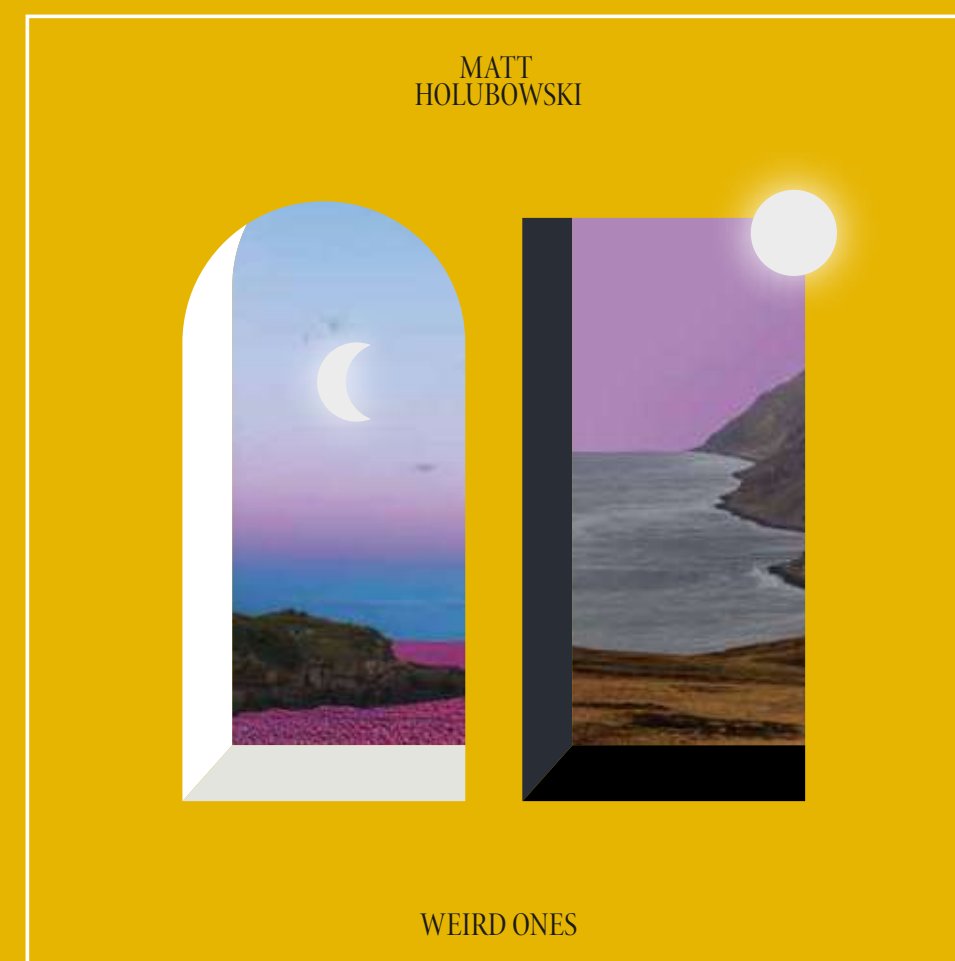
"On our last album (*Cry Cry Cry*) we really dug into more natural tones like full grand piano, Hammond organ and horns," explains Thompson. "But on *Thin Mind* it's more electronic and synth-heavy. It even has electronic drums, which is a new thing for me. 'Against the Day's' drums are programmed entirely on computer. On *Thin Mind* we embraced production tricks more than ever."

Where Wolf Parade always stay true to themselves is the last song on each record, selected for maximum effect. *Thin Mind* closer "Town Square" lives up to the precedent set by "This Heart's on Fire" and "Kissing the Beehive" with an epic mid-song breakdown and rousing Krug lyric about reaching for the light.

"Sequencing tends to be the hardest part of us making a record, and the last song is usually the one we agonize the most over," says Thompson. "This record I submitted the sequence we ended up using, but that was unusual. We've done it so many different ways with so many inputs — even third parties — but all the blame can go to me this time."



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Brothers in acid



Black Lips

Dani Fujate

BY SASHA ZEIDLER

If the Black Lips is the band you'd play when you're dropping acid at a honky tonk, Warish is the soundtrack for dropping acid and starting a riot in the catacombs.

Following the release of a highly anticipated country-influenced album, garage-rock icons the Black Lips are joined by heavy rock trio Warish as they bring a fuzzed-out country twang eargasm to Montreal later this month.

The Black Lips' *Sing in a World That's Falling Apart*, which was released on Jan. 24, is in a league of its own compared with their previous work, mainly due to its significant Southern twang. But as vocalist Cole Alexander explains, that twang has deep roots in punk and garage rock.

"We were really trying to highlight that there's a lot of country that people really don't know about. There was a time when country was a lot more experimental and a lot more politically open minded," says Alexander. "The fuzz guitar, which is so pivotal in punk rock music, was invented by country artists."

The band's ninth full-length album was recorded at the legendary Valentine Recording Studio in Laurel Canyon, which hosted the likes of Bing Crosby, the Beach Boys (recording with Charles Manson) and Kenny Rogers & the First Edition.

"It was like working in a period piece film. I feel like Scorsese could have easily, and should have, shot in there," says Alexander. "It felt like there were ghosts there. The people who were doing these things that all lined up in the past, and what we were doing there — it was great."

While this tour showcases the Black Lips' experiments and homage to country roots, they'll be joined on the road with a band that veers in the opposite direction: Warish.

The trio from Oceanside, CA, led by professional

skateboarder Riley Hawk, are ready to throw down some heavy distortion, fuzzed-out hard rock sounds sure to get any crowd rowdy. Bottom line: they kick ass.

Their first full-length album *Down in Flames* was released in September, less than a year after they formed. The band formed through Hawk and drummer Bruce McDonnell, who had previously played together in the band Petyl.

Inspired by early Nirvana, Misfits, the Spits and *Masters of Reality*-era Sabbath, Warish was intended to be heavy and simple while allowing Hawk — vocalist, guitarist and primary songwriter — to express a more personal side to his music.

"[Warish] wasn't even really supposed to be a band. It was more just me trying to get a couple of songs out of my head and record them," says Hawk. "When we put it out, we hadn't even really talked about playing or doing a show or having a bass player, but the response was sort of better than we were anticipating, and that's when we figured, 'Why not?' Fast forward and here we are now."

Having spent the majority of his adult years in cramped vans on skateboarding trips, Hawk is used to the touring lifestyle. But the nocturnal living that comes with performing wasn't what he was used to.

"Skating is all in the daytime and by the end of the night, you're dead and ready to get in bed and wake up at 8 a.m. and do it again. Touring band stuff, you've gotta try and survive the days so you can try and stay up as late as you can cause it's gonna be a late night every show," he says. "I've done trips where it's been both and it's kind of almost impossible to maintain that level of activity, otherwise your body just shuts down."

It's important to note the Black Lips' long-standing connection to the skateboarding world. Their music has been featured in countless skateboarding videos, and more recently their song "Raw Meat" was the opening theme for the *Thrasher/Vice* series *King of the Road*.

Alexander recalls seeing their album artwork for *Satan's Graffiti* or *God's Art?* on a Baker Skateboards pro model.

"It feels like a bit of a validation from that world, at least with the music," he says. "I found music through [skateboarding]. There's people giving mixtapes as skaters. Like when I was a kid, they made a dub of certain skater punk songs on cassette. So it could lead the way when you're young and trying to find your identity."

The Black Lips and Warish have forged their paths through parallel worlds, but they expect their contrasting styles of music to make their gigs truly gratifying live experiences.

"It's cool to see different sounds when you go to a show. Otherwise, if it's all the same, it can get a little bit redundant and a bit boring," says Hawk. "I have a humongous taste in music and I like the Black Lips and I like stuff that's completely in the opposite direction."

"I always invite a band that kicks ass. I'd rather have a band that challenges us and makes us want to perform better," says Alexander.

When asked what to expect from a Warish show, Hawk immediately responds with "a punk rock show." "As long as people are up and moving and the beats are up-beat and everyone's having fun, that's kind of the goal," he says.

Not only is there a new country sound to the Black Lips, they're also touring with new "first pick of the draft" guitarist Jeff Clarke, who you may know as a member of Montreal's *Demon's Claws*. With a new sound, new blood and a new album to get people hyped about, Alexander's enthusiasm was impossible to contain.

"I'm getting excited just thinking about it, 'cause I love Montreal. That's one of my favourite cities in North America," he says. "I honestly haven't been this excited for a record in a while. The fact that in this moment, right now, people are really open to the sounds we happen to be doing. If you're into us, it's really the time to see us. The odds of it being a more spectacular show are up tenfold."

→ The Black Lips and Warish perform with Hood Rats at Fofounes Electriques (87 Ste-Catherine E.) on Friday, Feb. 28, 8:30 p.m., \$29.25

:hammer of the mods

BY JOHNSON CUMMINS

K, listen up punkers 'cause I'm only gonna say this once: the 1979 debut Teenage Head record is easily one of the best slabs o' wax to burst out of the death rattle days of punk rock. End. Of. Fucking. Story.

A near perfect mix of New York Dolls, '60s bubblegum and Ramones, these Canadian brats from the non-punk locale of Hamilton, ON could easily wipe the floor with any of the acne-ridden humps that were taking up space on CBGB's rickety stage.

Of course in the pre-hardcore days of 1980, the only people who were still playing smash and bash punk rock were lunkheads (D.O.A.) who never got the memo that skinny ties and dangling earrings were now being issued to every street urchin. Most of the power pop that was coming out around that time was tailor made for babysitters, but resting in the mire there were indeed some shining diamonds.

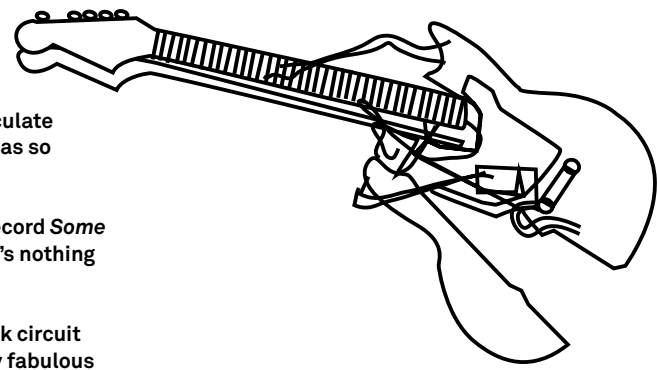
The sophomore Teenage Head rekkid *Frantic City*, released mere months after their debut, provided the perfect 1-2 combo and delivered pop-punk-encrusted gems with a nice dose of rockabilly added for good

measure. Truthfully, it's not as good as their immaculate debut, but fuggit, the record closer "Disgusteen" was so fuggin' good, even Kurt and co. ripped it off.

Here's where the slide really starts as their third record *Some Kinda Fun* was (ahem) *Some Kinda Crap*. And there's nothing worse than bad head – amiright?!!

Once the Head started slogging the ice-skating rink circuit and beer swillin' biker bars in the not so absolutely fabulous locales of Southern Ontario, the cracks were fully formed. If you doubt just how much the Head were dumbing it down for a fanbase consisting solely of gas station attendants, beauty school dropouts and shipping and receiving cretins, they actually had the iron clad cajones to call a song "Rock With Rock." As our friends on the West Coast would say, the tokes were indeed very harsh.

Their fourth release, the 1983 six-song EP *Tornado*, gets a deluxe reissue this month and admittedly I was a bit meh about it, but after going online and checking out the remixes and the demo versions, my big toe started curling up in my boot. I'm sure even the band would admit the original version gargled balls, but all of the '80s bells and whistles are left off on the remixes while the demos beat the final takes by a country mile. With the inclusion of the new remixes and demos, *Tornado* actually (gulp) does not totally stink (note for record company: feel free to use that as pull quote for the record's hype sticker). The New York Dolls/early Kiss New York Groove of "Dangerous Imagination" rings out all the glitter and glam Hamilton could possibly squeeze out. And in true Canadian spirit, this glam swagger all appears 10 years



after the silver platform boots had been shuffled off in mothballs.

This humble column gave away a copy of the Teenage Head debut when it was reissued last year and once again I have chatted up the fine reps at Universal to give away a copy of Teenage Head's slightly disappointing but much improved version of *Tornado*. I'll fess up and admit it's not gonna blow yer little lid into smithereens, but it's free, so fuggit. And hell, it's the cream of the crop of mediocrity, the most shining shade of beige.... it's free, ferfuksakes!

Contest time: The first person to name the singer from Teenage Head (one of the best punk rawk frontmen of all time) gets their own copy of *Tornado* mailed directly to their home. Hit me up at the email address below.

Current Obsession: Pointed Sticks, *Waiting for the Real Thing*
jonathan.cummings@gmail.com

Album reviews



Kaytranada, *Bubba*
(RCA/Kaytranada Ent)

Dropping so casually late in 2019 that it couldn't make most year-end lists (other than, ya know, Barack Obama's), Kaytranada's sophomore achievement appeared as if to stake its claim for timelessness, with the element of surprise on *Bubba*'s side. The Montreal

producer, DJ and suave sample-seeker comes correct with a purity level even higher than that of 99.9%, his beloved 2016 LP debut. Kaytra has long since come into his own, and *Bubba* finds him in his essence. If it's possible for an artist to be more quintessentially themselves, then he does it here with sophistication, an accent on the elements that have always made his sound unique and with a confident step back from the occasionally over-relied upon genre-hopping his debut showcased. Kaytranada's been on the scene for a minute, but *Bubba* feels like an arrival. 8.5/10 Trail Track: "What You Need" ft. Charlotte Day Wilson (Darcy MacDonald)



AJJ, *Good Luck Everybody*
(AJJ unlimited LTD)

Mortality-facing, climate-crisis-fearing, Trump-slendering, rough-around-the-edges folk punk (well, more folk nowadays) is exactly the type of album I expected from AJJ's 10th studio release. While not all tracks were created equal, some being transparent in their message, even juvenile at times, each one fits together like a revisiting

of the angst on which their early discography was built. With a focus on current events, there's a maturity you can feel that the duo has earned through trial, error and a constant fight against the demise of their optimism. 8/10 Trail Track: "A Big Day for Grimley" (Keeghan Harrison Rouleau)



Bombay Bicycle Club, *Everything Else Has Gone Wrong*
(Mmm...)

Bombay Bicycle Club is the definition of a sleeper pick. I know I've been neglecting these guys whenever Spotify alerts me to a new single, but for any indie-psych lover, BBC puts out consistently catchy and well produced music for your daily commute. With *Everything Else Has Gone Wrong*, what you see is what you get, but if the post-classic-rock superstructure intro "Get Up" catches your fancy, the other 11 tracks are bound to satisfy. Is *Everything Else Has Gone Wrong* gonna be at the top of your playlist? No. But you'll definitely catch yourself itching for a few replays once you sink your teeth in for the first time. 7/10 Trail Track: "Everything Else Has Gone Wrong" (Keeghan Harrison Rouleau)

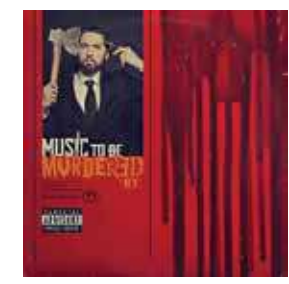
Theophilus London, *Bebe*
(Independently Popular)

Theophilus London returns more than a half-decade after the release of his Kanye West-produced sophomore album *Vibes*. His first since departing from Warner Records, the project demonstrates distinct influences of both London's Trinidadian and New York roots. His whimsical wit is complemented swimmingly by the breezy, island-inspired beats. It's just as indie rock as it is hip hop, with the likes of Tame Impala, Ariel Pink and Wu-Tang's RZA and Raekwon onboard to help illustrate such a notion. *Bebe* serves as a solid summery listen to help get through the gruelling dead of winter ahead. 7/10 Trail Track: "Only You" (feat. Tame Impala) (Mr. Wavy)



Free Nationals, *Free Nationals*
(OBE/Empire)

The Free Nationals (hitherto better known as Anderson Paak's band) dropped a record on the same day as the aforementioned Kaytranada LP. They would have been harder pressed than Kaytra to make any real year-end noise had this album come out even at the peak of summer, where it arguably belonged, especially given that it was announced nearly two years ago. In a year that saw Paak himself release two less-than-critically-adored (if Grammy-approved) projects nearly back to back, his homies in FN might have helped make sense of it all. Instead, their debut as a solo satellite in his orbit plays out not unlike the Roots when they back up and cover their favourite artists: fun, but hardly critical listening. There are some nice guests and moments here, but frankly the Free Nats probably would have had a more lasting impact releasing the best songs here as EP singles and leaving the fat on the cutting board. 6/10 Trail Track: "Cut Me a Break" ft. TI (Darcy MacDonald)



Eminem, *Music to Be Murdered By*
(Interscope)

Eminem's new album is titled *Music to Be Murdered By*, but honestly part of me would rather be brutally murdered than to hit replay. The album is joyless, with Shady opting to flex his technical skills rather than create music with heart. The rapper does however offer slivers of redemption. On "Darkness," he raps from the perspective of the 2017 Las Vegas shooter. Songs like this reaffirm what we already knew: Eminem is best when working with a strong narrative focus, a quality he unfortunately neglects more often than not. 4/10 Trail Track: "You Gon' Learn" (featuring Royce da 5'9" and White Gold) (Mr. Wavy)

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film

Gaze theory



Portrait of a Lady on Fire

BY ALEX ROSE

In Céline Sciamma's *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*, Adèle Haenel plays Héloïse, a young woman who lives in partial seclusion on an island in Brittany.

Héloïse is meant to be married off to an Italian nobleman. Tradition suggests that women who are to be married should be painted first, which Héloïse has always resisted. Marianne (Noémie Merlant) is hired as a "companion" for Héloïse, who doesn't know that she has in fact been tasked to paint her in secret. As they spend days, then weeks together, the two women grow increasingly closer — even after Héloïse sees the "secret" painting that results. Their friendship soon blossoms into a full-blown love affair, which, as you can imagine, is not the kind of thing that flies in 18th-century France.

Discussing the film with Haenel at TIFF last September, I brought up my own aversion to period pieces set in the general era of *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*. They always strike me as stately and polite and hermetic, as if they weren't showcasing flesh-and-blood humans but distant historical ideals of them. That's not something that affects *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*, which finds a delicate balance between the repression and passion at the core of its story.

"I think that when we talk about period pieces, we put a stress on reconstitution," says Haenel. "I think

reconstitution is central, but there's a supposition that veracity is the core goal, but in fact what we're reconstituting is the world we want to see. I think what can be annoying is that all period pieces are draped in this kind of permanent respect or something to that effect — a type of restraint that makes it feel as if the people in it aren't even really alive. It's too complicated, in fact, to do that. For this particular film, reconstitution was a major challenge. We needed to know what we were talking about. To give you an example: women smoke in the film. Women drink alcohol. That's all it takes for someone to go 'Oh, these people are alive, and that's not what we're used to seeing!' It's not just about, you know, tons of candles and every other cliché you might associate with the period piece."

Portrait of a Lady on Fire is very much about the act of seeing, about how Marianne has to constantly look at Héloïse without letting her know why she's looking, how Héloïse and Marianne look at each other, how everyone else looks at them and how sometimes the very act of seeing someone is more than enough. Sciamma lets these scenes play out in long but sparse takes — long shots in which almost nothing happens and the viewer is left to simply see, as the characters do.

"Every shot does have a meaning, but this movie isn't about making each shot one-dimensional," she explains. "It's not just about putting forth information for the plot, it's about showcasing moments in a life. It's very sensual, in fact. That's what looking at someone is about. It's not about immediately

drawing meaning from them, it's also about acknowledging that there's something infinite in a person. Céline's eye is very precise. The film takes its time, because in order to really see someone, you have to take the time."

One would also expect *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* to be a tragedy, or, at least lean heavily on the tragic implications of forbidden love, rapidly hurtling towards an inevitable downer ending. Without saying too much, it's extremely refreshing to see a film about a homosexual love story set hundreds of years ago that isn't about that.

"The film is very open, as far as I'm concerned," says Haenel. "It's not about the fatality of love — it's not saying that you can't survive that kind of love, or that women specifically are somehow less capable of surviving that kind of love story. It says, 'Sure, these women are prevented from living their true lives, but they totally have the capacity and desire and hunger to live.' That's what the movie is about: about the hunger for love, the desire to be in love and to live through a relationship. It's very alive in that sense. If there's a bigger message in the film and the places the film takes us, it's that love doesn't stop when conjugality ends, right? Meeting someone brings us somewhere and allows us to become a bigger version of ourselves — and that's very contemporary as an idea."

→ *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* opens in Montreal theatres on Friday, Feb. 14.

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A day in the life



The Assistant

BY JUSTINE SMITH

With *The Assistant*, director Kitty Green tackles systemic abuse in the film industry. Told in an observational style, the film makes the audience a witness to a day in the life of Julia (Julia Garner), an assistant in a large film company. A searing portrait of the mundane abuses she suffers, *The Assistant* threatens to unravel our perception of injustice in the industry as far more than just a case of bad apples but, rather, a system that encourages power imbalances, upholds antiquated gender roles and encourages a culture of silence.

In writing the film, Green spoke to women who worked for influential people across a variety of fields. More than the outrageous stories that come from those environments, Green was fascinated «more by the ordinary than the extraordinary,» especially in the ways gender divisions played out.

Conceived from the beginning as a day-in-the-life portrait, Green felt that if the film were to unfold over a more

extended period, its impact would be diminished. As easy as it would have been to establish how boring the work was in a montage, «it would have let people get off the hook.» Watching things unfold slowly and painfully has the effect of a «death by a thousand cuts,» where «every microaggression is rattling the character and destroying her self worth.»

Green, best known for her documentary *Casting JonBenet*, wanted to make the film as fiction to create an emotional entry point for the viewer. She wanted people to identify with Julia and all the people you walk past without really seeing. As the film has minimal dialogue, it relies heavily on the performance of Julia Garner, who needs to translate the emotional resonance of her experience in silence. Green first saw Garner when she appeared on *The Americans*, and the pair worked together to flesh out the character we see on screen.

While *The Assistant* is a work of fiction, it's made in an observational, almost documentary style with minimal camera movements, few edits and dense sound design. The soundscape was especially crucial in building the monotony. «The beeps, over and over again, the buzz of lights,» all contribute to a claustrophobic environment where it's often better not to ask questions. Mainly created in post-production, the film's sound design creates a deep sense of unease, making the silence feel ominous rather than comforting.

«We were looking at this culture of silence,» Green explains. The film delves into how a culture of silence enables and perpetuates abuse. It also shows hints at how cycles of

violence emerge. Many of the people Green interviewed spoke about how, once they would have assistants of their own, they would find themselves treating them poorly as well. «There's a scene [in the film] where Julia tells off the driver, and you can see how she might fall into that pattern, too,» Green says.

While *The Assistant* doesn't offer solutions in the strictest sense, the response to the film has brought awareness to the systematic problems facing a variety of industries. «Women seem to be really connecting with it, and a lot of people feel seen,» says Green. Men, she says, have had a harder time with it. «It makes some men uncomfortable. I think a little discomfort from men might be good for them though,» Green says. «We need a little discomfort to make changes.»

As universal as some of the experiences in *The Assistant* are, they still speak to a certain amount of privilege as Julia remains an educated, white woman with a support system. The film represents the tip of the iceberg of unequal treatment within capitalism, only vaguely alluding to the unseen and untold labours of other workers, like drivers and nannies. Even for a character as powerless as Julia, there are people even below her, fighting to be heard.

A percentage of *The Assistant's* profits will be donated to the New York Women's Foundation, which helps fund programs that help survivors of workplace violence but also work towards establishing safer workspaces.

→ *The Assistant* opens in theatres on Friday, Feb. 14

On Screen



Sonic the Hedgehog



Mafia Inc.



The Call of the Wild



Fantasy Island

BY ALEX ROSE

After a truly slow January, even by the very lax standards of dump-month abandon, movie releases are starting to pick up again. There's no greater proof that the studio thinks we're out of the doldrums than the release of yet another superhero movie.

This month, it's *Birds of Prey* (Feb. 7), a Margot Robbie-starring spinoff of *Suicide Squad* that sees Harley Quinn broken up with the Joker and taking on a crime lord (Ewan McGregor) with an all-female team of vigilantes. Early buzz has been fairly positive, especially considering DC's spotty cinematic output.

Delayed for months as production scrambled to fix the toothy nightmare unveiled in its first trailer, *Sonic the Hedgehog* finally sees release on Feb. 14. Ben Schwartz voices the titular hedgehog alongside James Marsden (as Sonic's human sidekick) and Jim Carrey (as antagonist Dr. Robotnik) in a movie that will almost certainly be unable to overcome its years-in-the-making status as a punchline — but who knows?

Speaking of bizarre concepts, I would be remiss not to mention *Fantasy Island* (Feb. 14), Blumhouse's serious horror reboot of the TV show from the '70s. This time, Mr. Roarke (Michael Pena) has entirely nefarious ideas when it comes to fantasies, and getting off the island isn't as easy as they made it sound. Frankly, this *Fantasy Island* reboot sounds 100 per cent like a joke, so perhaps the whole thing

isn't quite as straight-faced and irony-deficient as it looks.

Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Will Ferrell star in *Downhill* (Feb. 14), the American remake of Ruben Ostlund's *Force Majeure* from 2014. *Downhill* keeps the basic premise of a father and husband who bolts with only his phone during what appears to be a giant avalanche, only to find it was a false alarm. The film premiered at Sundance where it was mostly enthusiastically received, though most agreed it had nothing on the original.

Reboots and reimaginings are a popular topic this month, from the Harrison Ford and CGI dog-starring *The Call of the Wild* (Feb. 20), Benh Zeitlin's *Peter Pan* reimagining *Wendy* (Feb. 28) and Leigh Whannell's *The Invisible Man* (Feb. 28). Of the three, *The Invisible Man* looks the most promising; it reimagines the invisible man of the title as an abusive ex stalking a woman played by Elizabeth Moss. Considering that the film was first meant to be part of the failed "Dark Universe" spearheaded by *The Mummy*, almost any direction it winds up going in is likely to be more interesting.

It's been nearly 25 years since the Gwyneth Paltrow-starring adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma*, more than enough time for rock photographer Autumn de Wilde's adaptation, and debut film (Feb. 21), to make a mark. Anya Taylor-Joy stars as the titular heroine alongside Johnny Flynn. Dee Rees follows up the great *Mudbound* with *The Last Thing He Wanted* (Feb. 21), a political thriller adapted from a Joan Didion novel starring Anne Hathaway, Ben Affleck and Willem Dafoe. The film was met, unfortunately, with a resounding lack of enthusiasm when it premiered at Sundance.

Kitty Green's *The Assistant* (Feb. 14) was one of the breakout critical successes of Sundance, garnering almost exclusively raves for what is described as a "#MeToo horror thriller." Julia Garner (*Ozark*) and Matthew

Macfayden (*Succession*) star.

In more conventional horror news, *Brahms: The Boy II* (Feb. 21) picks off where the forgettable (but weirdly profitable) original left off. Katie Holmes stars as the mother of a boy who becomes "friends" with the extremely creepy titular doll.

Lakeith Stanfield and Issa Rae star in *The Photograph* (Feb. 14), a romantic drama that centres around the love story between the daughter of a famous photographer and the journalist assigned to write an article about her late mother. Though the film is being sold as a straight drama, it has a curiously comedic supporting cast, including Chelsea Peretti and Lil' Rel Howery.

Rodrigue Jean (*Full Blast, L'amour au temps de la guerre civile*) returns a little less than six years after his last effort with *L'acrobate* (Feb. 7), a love story between a middle-aged yuppie (Sébastien Ricard) and a housebound, injured Russian acrobat (Yuri Paulau), which premiered at the Festival du nouveau cinéma last fall.

Marc-André Grondin stars as a tailor's son who gets embroiled in shady organized crime dealings in Podz's *Mafia Inc.* (Feb. 14), a '90s-set gangster epic that also stars Gilbert Sicotte, Mylène Mackay and Italian star Sergio Castellito. Period gangster movies have always been iffy in Quebec, where the budgets are often too small to properly convey period scale, but Podz has always been an ambitious visual filmmaker and the film is based on a well-received book by André Cédilot and André Noël. In a similar vein is Marco Belloccchio's *The Traitor* (Feb. 7), Italy's entry in the Best Foreign Language Film category and a multiple award winner at the Italian Nastro d'Argento award. Pierfrancesco Favino (*World War Z, Rush*) stars as Tommaso Buscetta, the mobster turned government informant who was the first to benefit from the protected status of "pentito" (repentant).

Be part of Black History Month

BY NORA ROSENTHAL

As part of Black History Month, the MAC is presenting *Love Is the Message, the Message Is Death*, the 2016 video by artist Arthur Jafa. Set to Kayne West's song "Ultralight Beam," the video "grew out of the recognition of the widespread circulation of images of the abuse of black bodies on YouTube." The montage that Jafa created in response cuts together clips of black political and cultural icons with videos both of everyday life and of violence committed against black people by the state. It is dizzying.

Upstairs from Jafa's installation, Jean-Luc Godard's 1982 *Scénario du film Passion* is playing as part of the MAC's archival show of video work, *Points of Light*. In the film, Godard's silhouette announces: "Voici la blessure universelle" ("Here is the universal wound") and while Godard may be expounding on the creative process, having just watched Jafa's video – immense and in the darkened gallery, a very different experience from seeing it on YouTube – I found it impossible not to hear "blessure universelle" as anything other than a metaphor for what racism has cleft into all of our lives, and which generations of many ethnicities struggle to heal.

This year's Black History Month expressed hope through its focus on young people, as symbolized by its spokespeople, the singer Sahramée and the comedian Aba Atlas, along with 13 selected laureates: Svens Telemaque, Kharoll-Ann Souffrant, Rito Joseph, Hanna Che, Harry Julmice, Paul Evra, Oumar Diallo, Paul Harry Toussaint, Fatima Bah, Mariana Djelo Baldé, Isaiah Joyner, Fatima Wilson and Shaine Nicole. Michael P. Farkas, president of the round table on Black History Month, says of this year's theme, "HERE AND NOW," "Let's draw inspiration from the youth's commitment and its curiosity and open ourselves up to others and to new discoveries throughout the month."

Here are just a handful of the events happening this February to mark the 29th edition of Black History Month in Montreal.

FEB. 6, 15, 23 & 29: NUITS D'AFRIQUE SERIES

Music shows "focused on Africa's new generation of artists and spokespeople" will be taking place at le National, le Ministère, and that most beautiful of vinyl-booted show bars, Club Balattou.

FEB. 8: 30 YEARS IN 1 NIGHT AT EVANGEL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

"Montreal's longest running Gospel radio show – *Mind Soul & Spirit* – will celebrate its 30th anniversary on CKUT 90.3FM." The show will feature performances by Audrey DuBois Harris,



Sahramée

Jean Jean, the Fitz-Patrick Sisters, Priscilla Findlay and more.

FEB. 14 & 15: LEURS HISTOIRES AT THE PHI CENTRE

An exhibition and panel series organized by Collectif Elles presents "20 female Quebec artists of African descent" from across many different disciplines.

FEB. 21: AFRO DRAG: ANCESTORS PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE AT THE PHI CENTRE

"An interactive theatrical journey drawing on ancestral knowledge of black queer history" and narrated by BIG SISSY, whose bio describes them as none other than "a gender-bending, booty bouncing, perversion of funk, fully equipped with an arsenal of pop music."

FEB. 20-29: MASSIMADI

The Afro LGBTQ+ Film and Arts Festival is now in its 12th year, with events at la Sala Rossa, the McCord Museum, Concordia's J.A. de Sève Cinema and Maison d'Haiti and a

line-up "where queer Afro-descendant artists envision the future by digging into political, migratory, social and environmental issues."

FEB. 6, 13, 20, 27: BEING BLACK IN MONTREAL SERIES

Historical conferences and panels are happening on Feb. 6, 13, and 20 at CEDA, including a highly pertinent investigation into blackface's manifestation in Quebec, as well as a screening and discussion on Feb. 27 at the McCord Museum of *Black Indians*, a documentary about "people of dual Indigenous and African-American heritage."

In *Love Is the Message, the Message Is Death*, a young black woman asks "What would America be like if we loved black people as much as we love black culture?" That it's not enough to love a culture if you support the oppression of the people making it may sound obvious enough, but oppression is sly and takes many forms. So, what to do to combat oppression and to venerate black culture and black people this February? As a white writer who talks about culture, I've been thinking about what I can do to appropriately take part in Black History Month, and I keep coming back to the empathetic potency of memory; that when you internalize not just a cultural product but its creator, they become a part of you and the story you tell about yourself.

So, in addition to urging everyone to go out and support the many (over 150!) events going on this February as part of Black History Month, I think white people in particular can honour black communities by doing their homework. Think of it as critically necessary, but also joyful: learn about a black artist or filmmaker whose work speaks to you; about a black actress and the roles she's played. Read something by a black author; read it again. Do some research, in other words, the basis of all history, and let it sink into you.

When you take in Jafa with Godard, you see both differently. The greater the cultural breadth you internalize, the closer you are to destabilizing the power structures hidden so deep within yourself that you no longer perceive them, and maybe the closer you also come to seeing that universal wound for what it is.

→ Visit Black History Month's Montreal website for their full listings.



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Shwap, drop and roll



Annette Nguyen



Shwap

BY MADELINE LINES

Maintaining an ever-changing wardrobe is a fantasy for most. But aside from being expensive, it's wasteful. Enter the Montreal store where it can be neither.

Shwap Club is a permanent clothing-swap spot that offers the experience of shopping a curated secondhand boutique, minus the price tags. According to founder Annette Nguyen, the concept is among the first of its kind globally.

The Montreal-born, female-led concept builds upon the existing trend of pop-up clothing swaps that have seized our eco-conscious city in recent years, and has since inspired similar initiatives, like the Montreal Barter Club.

It was at her first pop-up swap, hosted in a friend's restaurant, that Nguyen was moved by the social nature of exchanging clothing. Equipped with a background in retail, but disillusioned with the antisocial nature of online shopping and fast fashion, she worked her way towards creating what would become the first Shwap Club location in St-Henri.

"I have a daytime job, and I work in front of my computer, so I don't really get to connect with people," Nguyen says. "I think it's great, nowadays, to give people the option of being part of a community and social shopping."

The membership model, which involves a \$90 annual fee to swap-till-you-drop, helps keep the concept afloat. Nguyen

priced it akin to what a pair of jeans or two would cost at H&M or Zara. It has also created a sense of community amongst members, who gather in the shop to leisurely socialize and browse without having to bring their wallets.

Some of the swappers from that very first pop-up are members to this day. Other members have become so ingrained in the shop that they'll pop by to tell Nguyen about landing their dream job, or that they finally got pregnant.

"I go to work in the day and I come here at night, and people ask me how I find the energy to do that," Nguyen says. "It's the community that gives me that energy, because they're such loving people."

Nguyen hasn't bought new clothing in a decade. She describes herself as loving classic closet staples and basics, and even declares, "I don't like fashion."

The inventory at the stores reflects everything from Nguyen's preferred tried and true basics to unique vintage or even designer pieces. At my first swap, I found a pair of snakeskin loafers that ended up being worth over \$200. In general, the stock is selected to be something the average 30-year-old woman could wear "to work, or out for a drink," says Nguyen.

Pieces are carefully selected, and aren't accepted if in poor condition (not washed, with stains, rips or missing buttons or zippers), and are generally expected to have been bought in the last three years. By doing this, the store stays stocked with gems that will not sit on the floor past their five-week expiry date, at which point they are donated to local shelters and charities.

"I'm all about being very transparent with how we do things, and why we do what we do. I've shopped at a lot of thrift stores, and what I didn't like is that they could be pretentious [in their selection process]," Nguyen says. "We want to make sure that people have a good experience, and that we're not being snobs, we're not ignoring them. That's really, really important."

Nguyen puts an emphasis on experiential shopping in training staff at Shwap Club. This often reveals the stories behind the stock, like the vintage striped Nike pants she was wearing the day we met, which belonged to a member's mother in the '80s in Brazil.

"If I went to a Zara, and there was someone at the door that would say, 'Hi Annette, how are you today?' or 'Oh, we have something that came in that I think you would like,' things would be different," Nguyen said. "But right now, it's not personalized, it's not fun, so I don't go."

With over 800 members at the St-Henri shop, Nguyen began planning for a second location. It opened in Mile Ex in mid-January. She hopes to open a kids Shwap in the future.

"A lot of people come here, and they have as much pleasure finding items as they do letting go of items that they don't need," Nguyen says.

→ Shwap Club is located at 642 de Courcelle and 6682 Jeanne-Mance. shwapclub.com

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The good Dale



Dale Nigel

BY RYAN DIDUCK

Roger Tellier-Craig, "Où s'inscrit tout indéterminé," *Études* (Second Editions)

The music critic Shawn Reynaldo recently sparked debate on Twitter with a blog post about journalists' modes of listening: are reviewers really hearing the music they evaluate in proper context? Reynaldo's purview is electronic dance music, a genre that is typically produced for the nightclub at high volumes, or for audiophilic home listening. The reality, Reynaldo speculates, is that most journalists listen through laptop speakers and airpods, which cannot reproduce this music's characteristic sub-bass frequencies. So they aren't really hearing the music the way the artist intended, invalidating their professional judgements of it. I must admit my scepticism toward this claim.

First, artists' intentions are unrelated to the audience's reception of their works: "Critical inquiries," wrote Wimsatt and Beardsley in their famous 1946 essay "are not settled by consulting the oracle." And Reynaldo implies a spatio-technological hierarchy here, which then assumes an ideal economic and social stature. When I made music, I tried to preview it on every conceivable sound system. Oftentimes, the true test of a mix was hearing it through a factory car stereo. Nothing fancy. Composed at the Conservatoire de Musique de Montréal, Roger Tellier-Craig's music exists at the very fore of academic sound design. But it would still be bonkers through a clock radio.

Written on Skin, Opéra de Montréal, Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Jan. 25, 2020

I love tragedy. When done well, a great tragedy can be indistinguishable from the most uproarious comedy. The 2004 Woody Allen film *Melinda and Melinda* cleverly tells the same story twice, through both comedic and tragic lenses. Audience members who caught David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* pilot at its Telluride Film Festival premiere in 1989 reported outbursts of laughter during the gut-wrenching scene in which Sarah Palmer discovers her daughter Laura's death. Written on Skin is unarguably tragic. And maybe it's just me, still the smartass kid who wisecracks his way through church service, but I

couldn't help but find it riotously funny. The last scene could be ripped straight out of *Soylent Green*: "It's people!"

Absurde, "Folding the Dishes," *Folding the Dishes* (Humidex)

In response to a desperate plea late last year by Plateau and Mile-End independent record store owners, mayor Valerie Plante announced on January 28th that municipal laws concerning opening hours and the fines incurred for extending them will be updated to accommodate special events like in-store performances and Record Store Day festivities. This is good news, and a signal that the city recognises the businesses that not only pay the most in taxes, but also those that contribute to Montreal's distinct cultural fabric. The circulation of capital within cities is never strictly economic.

Independent record stores in particular are under threat in every major city, partly because of dwindling physical album sales since the 1990s, but also due to encroaching gentrification, a process which paradoxically tends to eradicate the features that make neighbourhoods unique. But if you really want to discover and experience the vibe of any particularly vibrant place, go into an independent record store and tell the clerk to fill your bag with music made by local artists. Like, say you happen to be visiting Montreal: go into Phonopolis and ask by name for Absurde's *Folding the Dishes* 12-inch.

Positions & Cause à effet, Bradley Ertaskiran, Jan. 23, 2020

The old Parisian Laundry building on St-Antoine is a venerable edifice and impressive exhibition space, and its renaissance as Bradley Ertaskiran holds promise for the future of contemporary art in Montreal. Its co-curators seem to want to throw as much at the walls as possible for their inaugural event, a group show of eight au courant artists on the ground floor, plus a solo exhibit in the bunker of Nicolas Grenier's surrealist diagrammatic paintings. The whole schmear, which runs until March 7, is well worth a walk-through. And it gives us an inkling of the gallery's direction.

The standout piece for me is tucked discreetly into the main room's south-west corner: Carlos Reyes's "7129619 (3)" — a readymade jeweller's bust finished in crushed crimson velvet, a sun-faded silhouette where an extravagant

necklace might have once been on display. Amidst a gallery-full of works frenetically competing to say something — anything! everything! — except that they, too, are products just as bound by alternating cycles of signification and abstraction as any other assemblage of consumer items, Reyes's work quietly states just that, and speaks volumes besides. Here, we no longer have the object of luxurious enchantment. We have only its shadow, the scar of a trace, the trace of a scar, a removal that indicates the new ambience of our ruin. Some things say more in their silence.

Dale Nigel Goble, April 29 1972–Dec. 15, 2019

The artist Dale Nigel Goble mightn't have been particularly well-known in the global art scene. But if you walked around Edmonton's Whyte Avenue district in the 1990s, you would have seen his work everywhere. Goble was a prodigious graphic designer who created sandwich boards and storefront signs for the high-end fashion retailer Gravity Pope, the Black Dog pub and the pet shop Scales & Tails. And that was only within two blocks. Goble's whimsical take on Pop Art was Edmonton's coolest, most coveted aesthetic. And his warm and genuine personality made him magnetic.

Dale was also a great friend. When I needed a studio space, Dale recommended me to his building's superintendent, and we became neighbours. Dale's door was always open — mostly because of the fumes, but also because everyone was welcome to come in, hang out, listen to Radiohead, smoke cigarettes, talk about art, talk about life or not talk at all. If you stayed for long enough, Dale might enlist you to dry freshly silk-screened t-shirts or clean paint brushes. He generously gave me some of his paintings to decorate my studio, and I still hang those paintings in my home today.

When you lose a friend, generally they don't call you up to let you know that they're about to expire. And when they ultimately do, you can't call them back to say, "Hey, I heard you died! What was that like?" Dale had a handwritten sign on his studio wall, affixed with a strip of masking tape. It read: "Before you can be, you must do." Dale produced so furiously that it was almost as if he had a hunch that his life might be cut short; I remember that his father also died young. Dale did a lot. But he doesn't have to do any more. In all of his doing, Dale earned the privilege just to be.

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Selected by Yann Chateigné

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Kitty Scott



Gordon Matta-Clark, Guatemala City, 1975. Slide.

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