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"Man of Grease" tells of legendary Montreal eatery ... one "Mish-Mash" at a time

Montreal has over 16,000 restaurants, and many of them are longtime favorites with residents and tourists alike, from fine eating establishments to greasy spoons that are filled with good eats and plenty of unique charm.



Stuart Nulman
Grapevine
Times

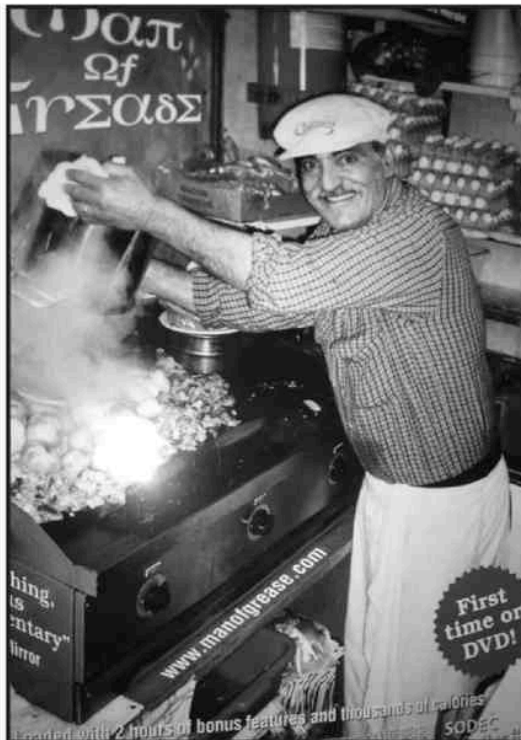
Cosmo, the legendary Montreal eatery located on Sherbrooke Street West in N.D.G., falls into the latter category. Established by Tony Koulakis, an immigrant from Greece, in 1967, Cosmo quickly gained a following for its menu of gridle-based fare that was full of

tomatoes ... all made complete with a side order of Tony's world famous hash browns (with potatoes that he peels en masse at his home on a daily basis). Definitely not for the health-conscious, but indeed an adventure in Montreal dining.

This much revered West End greasy spoon and its sinfully delicious food has attracted all types of Montrealers, who constantly occupy its 11 stools to sample Cosmo's freshly made menu for breakfast, lunch or dinner. For those who have loved the "Mish-Mash", or have developed a craving to have it for a memorable meal, a documentary that was filmed in 2000 has elevated Cosmo's legendary status even further, and is now finally available on DVD.

Called "Man of Grease", the documentary focuses on Cosmo and its lively, charming, passionate owner (who hung up his apron and spatula three years ago). "This is a film that people haven't stopped talking about since it was released 11 years ago," said Ezra Soiferman, the Montreal filmmaker who directed the documentary.

He presided over the DVD's official launch last week, which attracted a sold out crowd at the Cinema Space of the Segal Centre (which included many of Tony Koulakis' family and relatives ... unfortunately, for unknown personal reasons, he was not able to attend the launch). The evening included a screening of the 50-minute documentary in its entirety, and Soiferman gave a sneak preview of several of the special features on the DVD, which took three years to put together. This included a behind the scenes look at the premiere of "Man of Grease" at the 2000 Montreal World Film Festival, interviews with Koulakis' children Niki and Nikos (who now run the restaurant) and a digital album of photos that were



The cover of the newly-released DVD version of "Man of Grease", featuring Cosmo owner Tony Koulakis.

taken at Cosmo last year (which included recent pictures of Tony, whose eyes still burn with that same passion and enthusiasm for his calorie-laden menu that has made him famous).

It's also a fascinating portrait of a man who lived for – and loved – his work, 11 hours a day, six days a week. Koulakis – the proudly self-proclaimed "God of Potatoes" – reveals many of the ingredients why his low-key eatery has been so successful for over 40 years (including his proud claim that "EVERYTHING'S FRESH!!"). It also traces the first vacation that he took since he opened Cosmo, which was a sentimental journey to his native Greece (in particular, his birthplace on the island of Crete), and gives his Greek relatives a first time taste of the "Mish-Mash" that has made him and his restaurant a gastronomic favorite with Montreal diners.

"Man of Grease" is a fun, tasty documentary that will certainly raise your cholesterol levels

(and for all the good reasons), and brings the greasy spoon to a whole new level of appreciation of a genuine mom-and-pop business turned Canadian success story ... but don't see it on an empty stomach!

The newly-released DVD of "Man of Grease" costs \$20 each, and is available at Cosmo, located at 5843 Sherbrooke Street West, or online at www.manofgrease.com. And Soiferman has informed the Grapevine that from now until December 31, he will give customers a special holiday promotion: buy three copies of "Man of Grease" (which does make a great gift for Christmas and Chanukah), and receive the fourth copy for free.

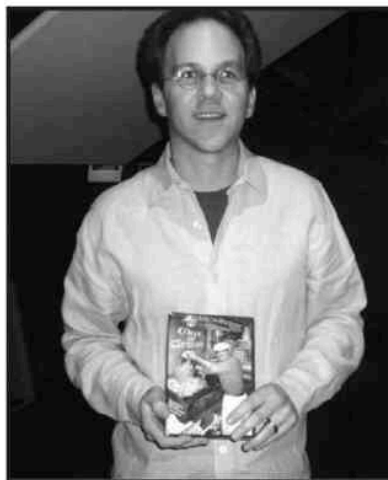
Another hot Montreal talent is comedian Franco Taddeo, who is headlining the "Comedy Soprano Holiday Show" at Ernie Butler's Comedy Nest at the Pepsi Forum on December 15, 16 and 17 at 8:30 each night (with a 10:30 p.m. show on Friday night). Star of his own CBC

comedy special and has appeared at the Winnipeg Comedy Festival, Taddeo will certainly entertain fans with an "unfuggable" night of laughs. Tickets are \$15 each and can be purchased by calling 514-932-6378 or online at www.comedynest.com.

It's not a usual thing to see a full-fledged hockey game on a Friday morning. But last Friday (December 2), nearly 3000 students from 14 schools that represented the English Montreal School Board and the Lester B. Pearson School Board filled the Verdun Auditorium to catch a game between the McGill University Redmen and the Royal Military College Paladins. The rare Friday morning game was part of the Rooths Sports Score with School Program, which helps local students to stay in school towards realizing their future goals and ambitions, a message that was conveyed during the first intermission by Steve Charbonneau, a former lineman with the Montreal Alouettes. It was a well-played match, with the Redmen winning by a score of 3-2. One standout of the game was McGill goalie Hubert Morin, who did some breathtaking saves, and if he keeps at it, could be a future star netminder for any NHL franchise that is lucky to sign him up.

The Dorval-Strathcona United Church is holding its 10th annual Christmas concert and food drive on December 15 starting at 7:30 p.m. at the church, located at 310 Brookhaven in Dorval. The evening will feature a selection of Christmas musical standards and other popular tunes from the likes of the Mimosas Wind Ensemble and the 306 (Maple Leaf) Wing Pipes and Drums. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door, along with a non-perishable food item. Proceeds will go towards the purchasing of food for local Dorval families through Dorval Community Aid. For more information or tickets, call Lorraine at 514-793-9879 or 514-631-6171.

If you have an event that you want publicized in the Grapevine, please send the information to my attention at: bookbanteat@hotmail.com.



Montreal filmmaker Ezra Soiferman, who directed the documentary "Man of Grease".

taste (not to mention a boatload of cholesterol). The cornerstone of Cosmo's menu is the "Mish-Mash", an omelet to end all omelets that's made up of eight eggs, bacon, ham, sausages, salami, onions and

scenes look at the premiere of "Man of Grease" at the 2000 Montreal World Film Festival, interviews with Koulakis' children Niki and Nikos (who now run the restaurant) and a digital album of photos that were