

# A little piece of Cobourg's epicurian world.

## Ben Burd

One of the best things about living in Cobourg is the constant change to the culture and atmosphere as newcomers buy in. And no change is as big and as large as the choice of food available in the last couple of years in the downtown. Tripadvisor lists sixty restaurants in the whole of Cobourg, but only about forty-five are actually standing in 2011. That's still a gourmands choice. Want a lunch spot? Want a dinner in an intimate setting or just a quick take-out? The choice is yours. For instance there are more than half a dozen eateries within a one hundred yard radius of the intersection of King and Division Streets. This article is not a restaurant review but a description of the facilities in that small area, so if you are a 'foodie' just explore them one at a time. All we at *Sideroads* will do for you is list them - you try 'em!

**Frenchies - Division St**, one hundred feet North of the intersection; East side.



Founded four years ago by Laurence Bibay this eatery sells “authentic Montreal food”. Open every day except Sundays, Laurence prepares all food from scratch and serves lunches and dinners. Off-site catering is also part of the business. Breakfasts are available on Saturdays. More as a service to the customers - “No-one makes money on lower priced breakfasts, but we do it for the customers, on Saturdays.” Laurence tells us. Asked if the earlier

closing times (Monday to Wednesday at 5pm - other days at 8pm) hurts business she says, “As long as we are busy we stay open, who’s going to turn customers away?”

Described as “As a little piece of Montreal” the menu fits - smoked meats, “The best smoked meat this side of Montreal”, “No Poutine”, and more French food - tortieres (the house speciality), crepes and paninis. This licensed establishment has come to the attention of Anne Hardy, the author of “Where to Eat in Canada”. Page 73 describes Frenchies as “A good buy and unusually inexpensive.” Come on down and check it out, a traditional French welcome awaits you.

**The Corfu Grill - King St East**, seventy five feet east of the intersection; North side.



Three and a half years ago three veterans of the local restaurant industry - Zac Ringas of the “Edward”(a floating restaurant moored in the Cobourg Harbour) and a previous chef at the “Matterhorn”, and father and son team: Costa and Chris Koukidis of the “Dover Seafood House”, in Port Hope, moved into a small storefront in Cobourg and established the Corfu Grill. Sticking to their Greek heritage they wanted Cobourg to experience

‘classical authentic Greek food’. Their menu reflects this and is heavy on roast lamb, moussaka (which is a Greek lasagna), chicken souvlaki and the house speciality shaved meat chicken gyro. Complimented with many Greek salads. Open from 11.30am to 8.30pm Monday to Saturday they catch the lunch and early dinner trade. Zac and Costas welcome all their old friends and invite new ones to sample their wares.

**Blue Rooster - King St East**, one hundred feet from the intersection; North side.



Sal Gallo, Patricia Rodrigue and Johnny Gallo are in the team that runs the “Blue Rooster”. Coming from Montreal where they made food for restaurants and provided recipes for other restaurants these folks came to Cobourg a year or so ago, “Because Cobourg needed a place like this. We like Cobourg and wanted to provide authentic Italian food. We want to make good food affordable” With all the food made daily from fresh

ingredients the best sellers are Italian sandwiches - paninis and others, pizzas and other Italian hot meals. With hours of business from 10am to 7pm, Monday to Saturday and 10-5pm on Sunday they aim to catch the lunch trade and early dinners as well take-out anytime.

**The Oasis Bar and Grill - King St East**, three hundred feet from the intersection; South side



This restaurant has been a Cobourg standard for nearly twenty years and exists to provide good food, hot music and selections of beer and wine. Since acquiring the Oasis in 1992, Don Owen and his wife and team, have grown a small one room restaurant into an emporium. The original 30 seats have boomed into 185 and three distinctive eating/drinking areas. The patio at the rear hosts live music twice a week, Crabby Carols is the place to watch the big screen TV and josh with friends and the main dining area is the place to go to experience an eclectic mix of foods on an ever changing menu.

What distinguishes this eating place from the others being visited is the size and breadth of the wine cellar at the Oasis. Quoting the website Don says, *“Our restaurant is not only an Oasis for food - it is also an Oasis for incredible wine. We have chosen the very best of wines from around the world at great prices.”* All wines have been chosen to compliment the food by the house win consultant - Neil Fortes. So check out the musical lineup on the website - [www.oasisbarandgrill.ca](http://www.oasisbarandgrill.ca) and come on down. Friday afternoons between 3pm and 6pm cheaper drink prices are on tap and on Thursday it’s an “create your own pasta” bar. Open seven days a week from

**Divine Cravings - King St East**, one hundred feet from intersection; South side.



Six years ago owner Erin Rollings took the best advise career advisors could give - “Look at what you like to do and make a job out of it!” Erin loves to bake and guess what she now runs a bake shop, with tables - a successful one to boot. Her food is different to the others listed here as she runs what would be called a “patisserie” in France a “panificio” in Italy, but the outcome is the same - personal service exquisite goods and plenty of smiles. Open 9-5 Tuesday to Friday and 10-4 on Saturdays she takes Sundays and



Mondays off. The inventory of baking: cakes, meat pies, breads and sandwiches is geared to the take-out trade but the store does have tables to eat-in and customers do, especially at lunchtime. "My best seller is the Garlic-cheese-knot, and cinnamon buns sell well on Saturday." Erin tells *SideRoads*. Asked about future plans, she says "I want to stay here and grow some more!" So check it out and if you around at Christmas pick up her seasonal treat - biscuits for your dog!

**Dutch Oven, King St West**, one hundred feet from the intersection; South side.



What can we say about the Dutch Oven that hasn't been said before? It has been in Cobourg for a long time, still serving the basic 'homestyle food' and baked goods it is famous for. The Dutch Oven, established in 1951, by Hawley Hoselton, moved into this converted bowling alley and former movie house in 1965 and became what it is today - a Cobourg legend. Open from 6-5.30 Monday to Friday and 7-5 Saturday. They also offer a catering business and boasts on their website that they have the finest cake decorator in Cobourg on the payroll. Home of many different social groups, meeting at all times of the day, this place exudes 'welcome'. Owned and run by Hawley's descendents this place still has the 'down home' feeling it has always had - a big part of Cobourg still going strong.

**Starlight, King St. West**, one hundred yards from the intersection; North side.



This restaurant is still in its infancy as food establishments go. Opened on May 1<sup>st</sup> of this year (2011) the Starlight is fast gaining a reputation for a large menu and fine food in the "Montreal" style. Owned by a family headed by a man called "Joey", no last name here, they have created a home for foodies. Calling their style "Mediterranean Moroccan" they serve many varieties of crepes and have 25 salads in their lineup. All of the food is made on site and that includes the pizza dough and many toppings as well as home made desserts of meringues

and cheesecakes with ice cream. Open for Breakfast lunch and dinners the three waiters and two chefs are on the job seven days a week starting at 7am. This family deliberately picked Cobourg, after visiting for the previous two years, to start again after having been successful in Montreal where they had a similar combination of small café and hairdressing salon. The salon at the Starlight is at the rear of the restaurant. Hoping to expand into live music this fully licensed spot is manned by “happy campers” and looks forward to increased trade as the word gets out.

It should be noted again that the intent of the article is to highlight the many choices of eating places in such a small area. The Restaurants were not reviewed for anything other than where they are and the kind of service they supply, so you have fun trying the foods.

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