

Ottawa

## Ottawa's restaurants give each other 'a big community hug'

Restaurants are lending out patio space and kitchens to support the industry through the pandemic

[Jennifer Chen](#) · CBC News · Posted: Jul 28, 2020 4:00 AM ET | Last Updated: 10 hours ago



Corner Peach will bring its menu to the patio at Arlo Restaurant and Wine on Thursday. (Tobin Grimshaw)

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For the owners of Corner Peach, the loosening of the pandemic-related restrictions for restaurants a little more than a week ago didn't help the 30-seat haute diner much.

Like many others, Corner Peach pivoted its operations during the COVID-19 lockdown by adjusting its elevated-comfort food menu to more take-out friendly fare and added new services, like selling local groceries. But with such a small space, taking out a few tables to adhere to physical distancing rules wasn't feasible. And its Somerset Street West location doesn't afford it much space for a patio.

But this Thursday, Corner Peach will be once again dishing up its pre-COVID menu — at a different restaurant.

Arlo Restaurant and Wine, itself brand-new to Ottawa's restaurant scene, has offered up its spacious patio to Corner Peach, one of a number of examples of restaurateurs in this city lending each other a helping hand.

Corner Peach co-owner and chef Caroline Murphy told CBC that when the owner of Arlo's offered up their patio space, she jumped at the opportunity. "

"Me and my staff from the restaurant are just dying to get back together and cook and feel somewhat normal," she said.

In fact, Arlo was supposed to host a pop-up at Corner Peach back in April, just before its own Somerset Street West location was due to open.

"Now the tables have turned because they have this beautiful patio space and we don't have anything," Murphy said.



Corner Peach restaurant in Chinatown has changed to a take-out menu with burgers and sandwiches, and the shop has been converted to a corner store for now. There is no room for a patio and the indoor space is too small to socially distance diners. (Andrew Rashotte)

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## Full circle

The doors to Arlo were set to open just as the pandemic forced the city into lockdown this spring. The restaurant and wine bar had to do some pivoting of its own, foregoing indoor dining as they couldn't get their kitchen finished due to COVID-19 restrictions, said co-owner and sommelier Alex McMahon.

But not only did Arlo re-adjust its menu to outdoor fare to take advantage of its lovely enclosed outdoor space, they decided to offer it up to Corner Peach, too.

"I know they don't have much patio space, and we've got quite a lot," said McMahon. "Might as well share it."

And McMahon is also getting help. With his restaurant still under construction, Arlo needed kitchen space for food prep. Wellington Street West's Bar Lupulus stepped up, and offered its facilities.

"It's kind of full circle," said McMahon.



Paul Meek (l) from Kichesippi Beer offered Mario Burke (r) from Ad Mare food truck a space next to his patio during COVID. Meek says it's become a "great partnership." (Mike Hall)

## From downtown to Bells Corners

In Bells Corners, Kichesippi Beer Company saw an early opportunity to share its space. Back in March, when many offices shut down, owner Paul Meek noticed an Instagram post from a food truck owner.

With downtown looking more like a ghost town, the owner of seafood truck Ad Mare was having a hard time of it from his usual location on Slater Street, near O'Connor Street. Mario Burke, the owner, was looking to move out to Bells Corners or Barrhaven, to catch people working from home.

At that time, the brewery was selling beer and food for curbside pickup and delivery — they were making sandwiches and pizza slices, Meek said, "but not well."

So he sent a message to Burke inviting him to set up Ad Mare in front of the brewery, to "see if we can help each other out."

## A big "community hug"

Burke accepted. Business was slow at first, but about two months in, Burke was happy with the result, and asked Meek if he could stay.

"It didn't put us out at all," Meek said. "To see that it's now turned to something quite long term is quite fantastic."



Now you can enjoy a drink at the Kichesippi Beer Company with seafood from food truck Ad Mare. Brewery owner Paul Meek offered the food truck a place to park in Bells Corners during COVID. (Mike Hall)

When the brewery's patio opened up this spring, Ad Mare continued to provide food, and has now signed a one-year deal with the brewery. The food truck now has an electric hookup and a prep space in the building.

Ad Mare is at Kichesippi Wednesday through Sunday.

"He's fully moved in, and we couldn't be happier," Meek said, calling it a "great, great partnership." "It just feels like a nice big community hug."

While many restaurants get back up and running with indoor service and looser restrictions, it's not so easy for everyone to continue where they left off before COVID hit. Where some people in the industry are struggling, others are coming in to lend a hand. We talk to two restaurateurs in the game about how they've helped out. 9:53



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