

CULTURE FOOD & DRINK NOW'S WINTER GUIDE

# Food Review: Michelin-recommended Restaurant Lucie is a love letter to French cuisine in Toronto

From duck tartare canapés to caviar-topped dessert, every course feels intentional and deeply personal.

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Michelin-recommended restaurant Lucie pays homage to owner Yannick Bigourdan's late grandmother and childhood in the South of France. (Courtesy: restaurantlucie/Instagram)

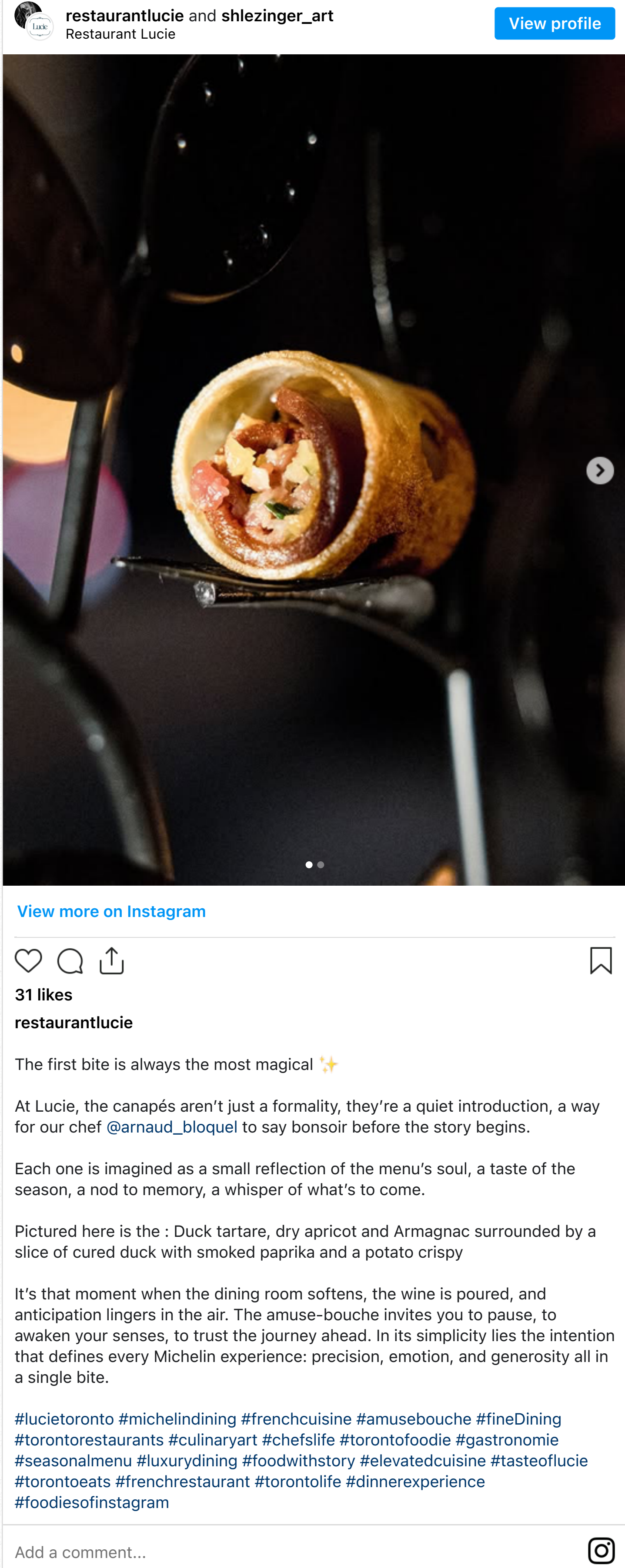
I have stepped into Restaurant Lucie before for an event, but sitting down for a full dining experience is a whole different story.

Tucked away in Toronto's Financial District inside the Scotia Plaza complex, this Michelin-recommended spot is a beautiful love letter from owner Yannick Bigourdan to his late grandmother. The restaurant name Lucie pays homage to his childhood in the South of France and his memories of visiting local food markets with her.

The 70-seat space is absolutely gorgeous with its deep burgundy tones, royal blue accents, and rich velvet drapes. Even with the elegant marble bar and sophisticated vibe, it never feels stuffy or intimidating. It is the kind of place where you can breathe and actually enjoy the company you are with while removed from the busy PATH.

Chef de Cuisine Arnaud Bloquel leads the kitchen and his background is just as interesting as the menu. Born in the South of France, he also grew up across the Caribbean in places like Martinique and the Guadeloupe Islands. Just like Bigourdan, Bloquel was shaped by his grandmothers who gave him an open mind for cooking and flavours. You can really taste that blend of traditional French technique and Caribbean soul in his cooking.

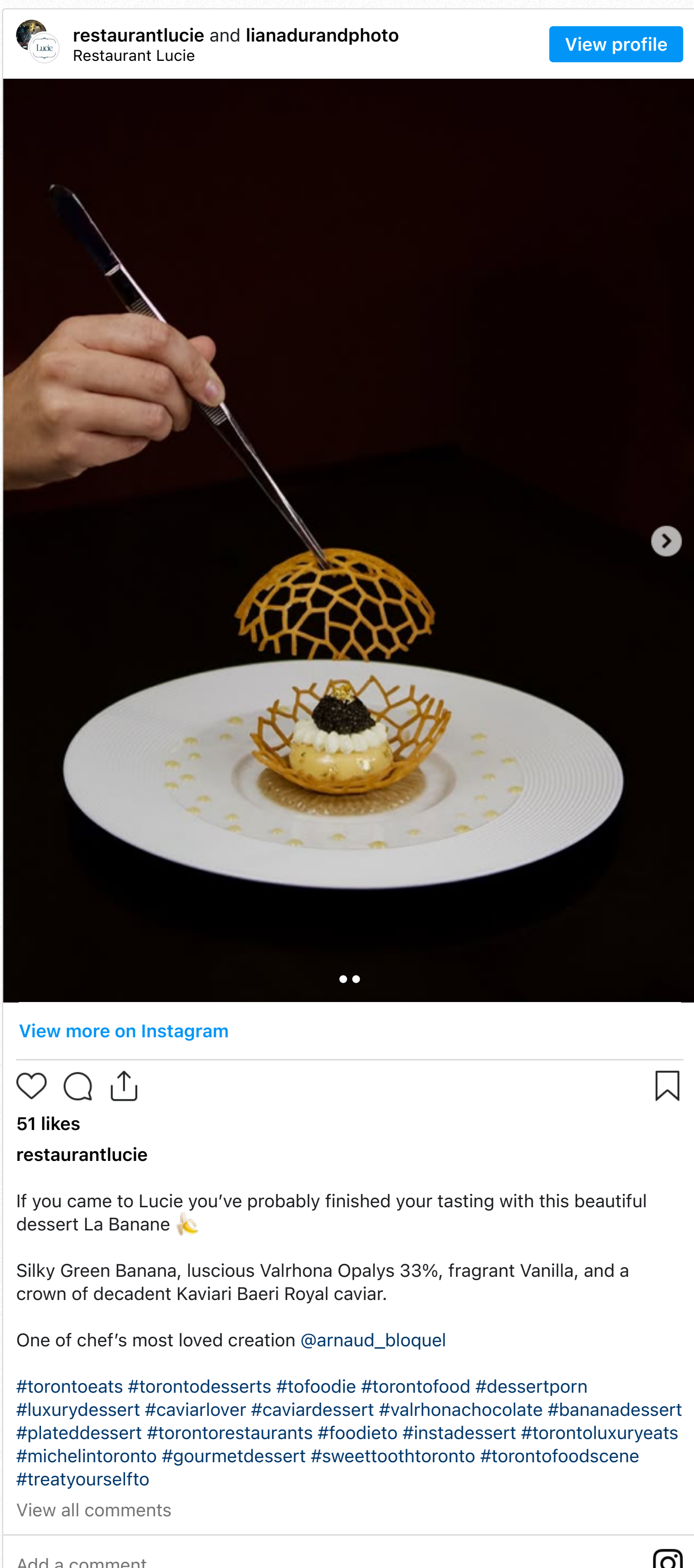
I enjoyed the \$185 five-course tasting menu which is a culinary journey. We started with three canapés that set the tone perfectly for the night. The fougasse tart was a crispy and creamy delight, while the Poitou beetroot mousse with toasted pine nuts felt like a savoury little dessert. My favourite bite was the potato ring with duck prosciutto and duck tartare. It is inspired by a tradition where French farmers would snack on potatoes and duck early in the morning.



After the snacks, the mahi-mahi amuse-bouche arrived and it was incredibly refreshing with its hit of finger lime and cantaloupe. Then came the scallop dish known as La Saint Jacques. This was such a creative plate that paired the scallop with green mango, shiso, and a touch of aged rum. The mango cream brought a brightness that made the scallop pop.

The Atlantic seabass was the absolute star for me. It is smoked on coconut husks and served with a sauce that I could honestly eat every single day. For the main, we had squab, which is such a treat because you'd typically see duck on French menus. It was served with fig and beetroot, and the fig leaves reduction tied it all together. The bird was perfectly tender and juicy, which is hard to pull off since squab can get tough and dry so quickly if it is not cooked exactly right.

Before the final dessert, we had a pre-dessert called La Griotte. It featured Morello cherry and Valrhona chocolate, which offered a nice contrast of sweet and tart flavours. Then, we finished with the star dessert that featured actual caviar. It sounds wild but the brininess of the caviar worked so well with the frozen green banana cream, vanilla and white chocolate. It was an explosion of contrasting textures and flavours, and definitely one of the more unique desserts I have had in Toronto. We ended the night with mignardises, including a lime macaron and a chocolate ravioli that provided a literal burst of cocoa and a truffle chocolate with a hint of smoked paprika.



**Restaurant Lucie** is doing traditional French cuisine the right way while adding a personal story to every plate.